

Opinion



A Kansas Viewpoint

Red China is green with success

About three weeks ago millions of Americans were celebrating the birth and foundation of our country by shooting off fireworks into the night sky.

And China's cash registers were ringing louder than the fireworks' booms.

Last week, China reported its second-quarter economy grew an impressive 11.3 percent. That has been the fastest growth in 10 years. (A large majority of fireworks sold and enjoyed in the U.S are made in China. Crazy how Americans willingly use products made in Communist China to celebrate democracy.)

The problem is things are so good in China, economists are fearing further construction and bank loans in that country could feed inflation.

Those potential troubles in China are getting the attention of Europe and the United States. Economists in both areas have said Chinese exports are too cheap and China has become the job-outsourced capital of the world by making cheap products and then sending them back to places like Europe and the U.S.

But we can't put all the blame on China for that. We have to blame ourselves too.

America and Europe love those cheaper goods from China. Look at China's multibillion-dollar trade surplus. In May, the U.S. deficit with China rose by 4 percent to \$17.7 billion, reflecting big gains in imports of cell phones, clothing and textiles. China reported exports surged by more than 25 percent, while consumer inflation stayed low at just 1.3 percent.

What that means is China is selling much more stuff in the States than the States is selling in China.

If you want to find fault for \$3 gasoline in America, China needs more fuel to build more factories to produce and sell more stuff in America. Chinese residents are able to make money and purchase a car and the gasoline that goes in it. And there are a lot more Chinese people than Americans.

Many American company board rooms and CEOs are on their knees either worshipping the almighty dollar or saying "yes sir" to the stockholders demands for more profits. In turn, companies have closed shop in America and relocated to China because there is plenty of cheap labor and American shoppers who will buy the stuff.

China's biggest fear may be an increase in inflation. But Americans biggest fear will be the day a shovel full of dirt from the backyard includes the label stating "Made in China."

— John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press

About those letters . . .

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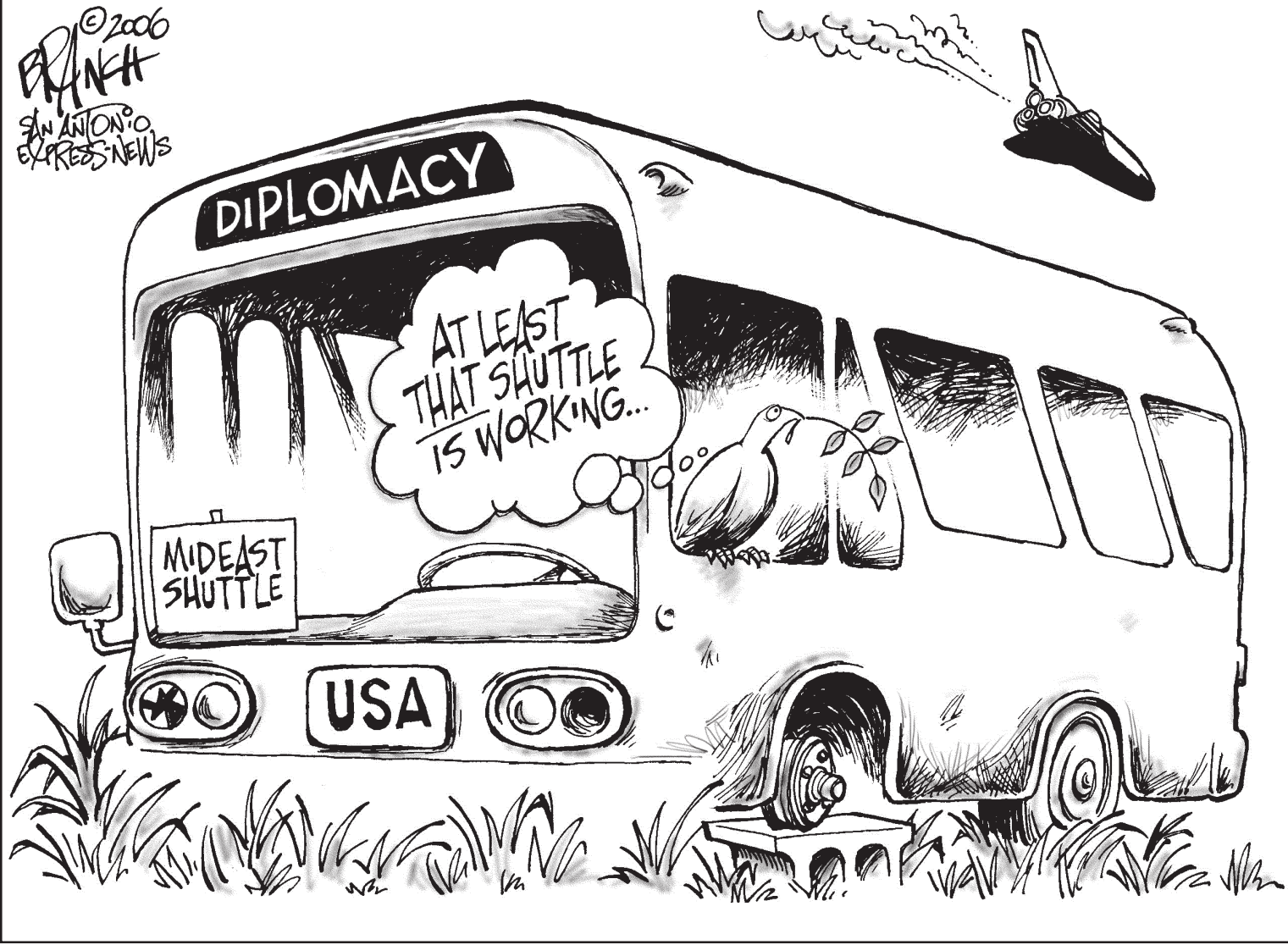
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Space race

Tisha Cox

● Off The Beaten Path



The afternoon of July 4 this year, with bated breath, I watched the beginning of fireworks of a different kind.

It was the launch of space shuttle Discovery, the second launch of a shuttle since the Feb. 1, 2003, accident that resulted in the loss of Columbia.

Despite weather, the launch went off without a hitch — as flawless an event as NASA could have hoped for.

It just so happened I caught part of the re-airing of National Geographic's "Space Race: The Untold Story" a couple of days after Discovery's landing last week.

"Space Race" chronicles the race between the U.S. and Russia to get into space and the two men chiefly responsible.

Because of men like Wernher von Braun and Sergei Korolev, we have a human presence in space.

Von Braun was an engineer whose dream was to get humans into space. Unfortunately, he was working on his dream in Germany under the scrutiny of his army during World War II.

He was given an ultimatum — join the Nazi party or never be able to realize his life's dream of developing rockets. He went on to develop the V-2 rocket for the German army during World War II.

Toward the end of the war, he and 500 of his scientists surrendered to Allied forces, but that is a column in itself.

He could be considered the father of the American space program. He eventually became the director of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., and was the chief architect of the Saturn V launch vehicle, the booster that helped land an American on the moon.

At the same time von Braun was helping get America into space, Korolev was the lead engineer for the Soviet space program.

I understand they were also trying to get a man to the moon, but of course, they beat the United States into space on several counts.

The Russians put the first satellite into orbit — Sputnik; the first dog, man and woman into space.

We beat them on the important count — a man on the moon.

What I find most interesting is how all of the good things that have come from a human presence in space have spun off from the military.

The original purpose of developing long-range rockets was to arm them with nuclear payloads to destroy each other.

Fortunately it never came to that, but it is ironic the country that was the United States' biggest adversary during the space race and the Cold War was also the one that helped maintain a long-term human presence in space.

Without the Soyuz, which Korolev helped develop, we might not have been able to keep the International Space Station manned and maintained.

I wonder if many have even stopped to consider the irony, or the magnitude, of the fact international cooperation between two countries

that used to want to nuke each other into oblivion have put aside their differences, at least in one respect.

After the accident that destroyed Columbia, the shuttle fleet was grounded, and it also looked like the fate of the International Space Station was at a crossroads.

NASA had many options, including the most obvious option of bringing down the crew and keeping the station unmanned.

However, the spirit of cooperation won out, and for the past three years, crews and supplies have been sent into space by rocket.

And if there is one thing the Russians are good at, it's putting up big payloads fast.

I think the U.S. owes them some gratitude, and our space program could learn a thing or two — like patience.

NASA has a culture of complacency — people resting on their laurels once they achieve a position within the hierarchy.

I just hope with the return to space they and others realize that a launch or re-entry is never routine.

Never has been, never will be.

Because what is "routine" about leaving the safety of Earth, and getting a chance to see it from the side of night?

I hope people never forget the race to space started because of a desire for military might but evolved into something greater, as President John F. Kennedy said, "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy but because they are hard."

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Sanctity of life

Ken Poland

● Ken's world

We have prominent political and religious leaders who advocate torture and assassination of our perceived enemies. We manufacture implements of destruction and ship them around the world. We at one time or another have furnished weapons to most all of the mid-eastern countries who are now using them to destroy one another. What does that say about our commitment to preserving the sanctity of life?

"When will our consciences grow so tender that we will act to prevent human misery rather than avenge it?" - Eleanor Roosevelt

I would put it, "When will we start shipping butter (necessities of life) instead of guns?" I don't remember the context, but I recall someone suggesting that had we shipped butter instead of guns, World War II might have been averted.

Some would have us to believe that abortion is the greatest threat to life and that God considers it to be far more grievous to Him than any other taking of life.

What about "sanctity of life"?

God created man and set him above all the rest of His creation. He "sanctified" man (set aside for a special purpose). Judeo-Christian theology puts man just one step below God — created in the image of God.

Greed, covetousness and lust have violated the sanctity of life, since the beginning of mankind. According to the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, Cain violated the sanctity of life, out of jealousy. Anger, jealousy and fear has prompted man to destroy his fellow man throughout history. Security of property trumps the sanctity of life, for many people. Religious wars promulgated by either Christian or non Christian powers have intentionally violated the sanctity of life.

Today, we have a group of political religionists who carefully sort out the Old Testament references to justify taking the lives of some and fail to consider what Jesus was saying when he admonished his followers to love their enemies. We willfully ignore the scriptures that tell us to love our neighbors, even our enemies as ourselves. We continue the practice of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Vengeance is mine says the Lord, but we don't lift that verse up when we strategize our policies. That lets us torture our enemies, because they tortured us.

Mallard Fillmore

● Bruce

Tinsley

