



Free Press Viewpoint

Osama's end marks milestone in fight

The U.S. finally tracks down Osama bin Laden after all these years. Twenty years after he began targeting America. A decade after he brought down the twin towers of the World Trade Center in his second attempt.

What does it mean? Not the end of the war on terrorism. As Winston Churchill once said, "Now this is not the end. Not even the beginning of the end."

But it surely is a victory along the way. During the last decade, the U.S. has done much to cripple al Qaeda and the other terrorist organizations operating against it. Commando raids, covert action, Predator strikes, rockets, guided bombs, all have taken their toll on these groups. They are weakened, but they have not gone away.

The road ahead will be long and arduous. Unless the United States wants to abdicate its role as the leader of the Free World, we will have to continue to press the fight as best we can.

We should make it clear, as President Obama did Sunday night, that we are not at war against Islam. We have millions of friends among the nations of Islam. We claim millions more as our own, as Americans in every sense of the word.

We are at war, and must be at war, against the radical Islamist movement. These groups seek to enslave not just Muslims worldwide, but the entire world. They would put us all under a theocracy where no freedom of thought would be allowed, the slightest dissent punishable by death, the mention of any religion other than their own, twisted version of Islam forbidden.

The world cannot allow that. As we did 70 years ago, we need to stand together and fight for freedom.

The battle is more difficult today. Then, the enemy ruled nations that rose up to smite us. Our predecessors prevailed. Today we say, that truly was their finest hour.

Today, the enemy comprises a dozen shadowy groups, some living in caves, some hiding in cities, some no doubt within our own borders. It rules no great nation, has no great army. But its ambition is both boundless and evil.

It is hard to sustain a battle against this enemy you cannot see until it strikes.

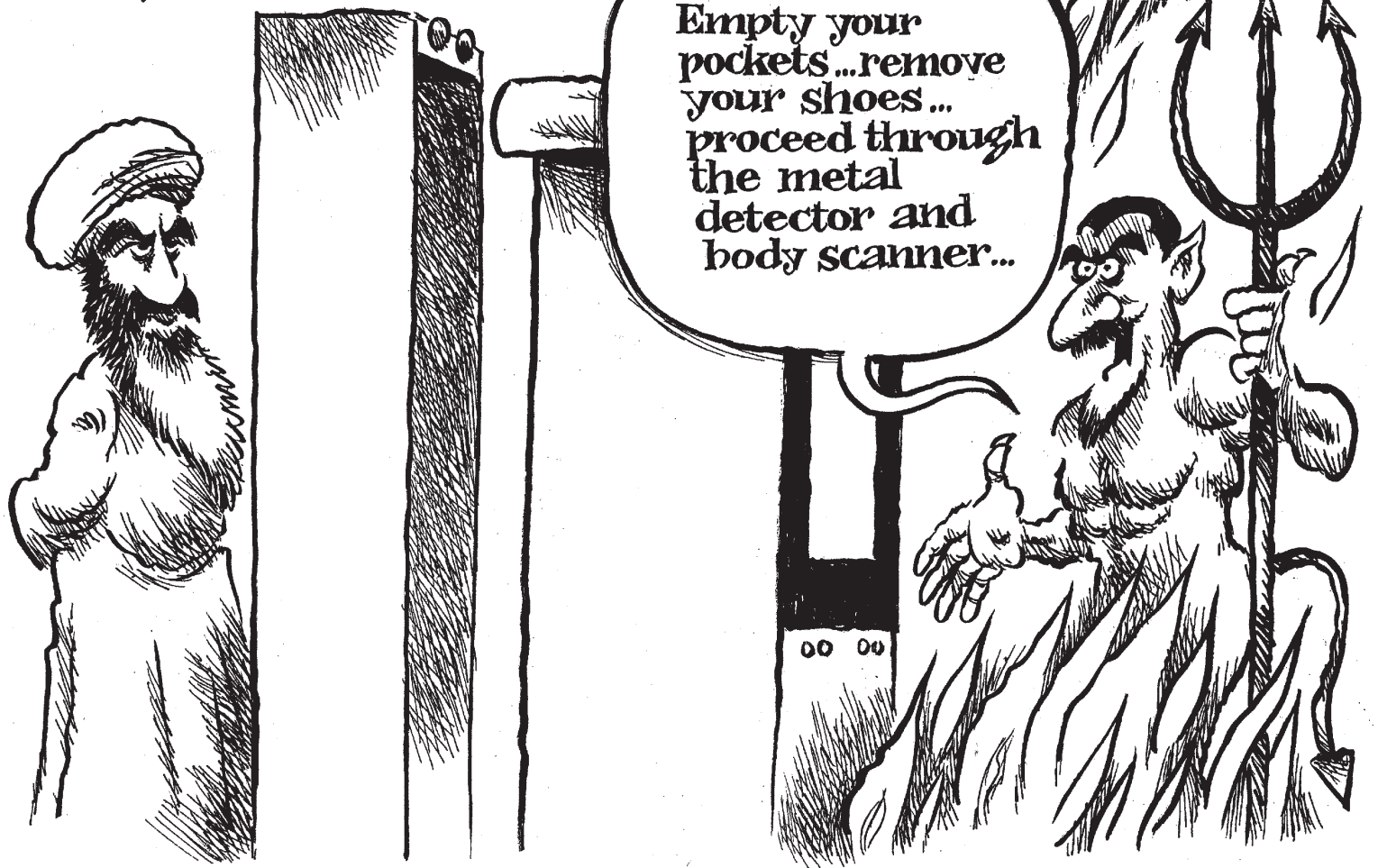
And we must find more effective, less costly ways to fight. How long can we afford to spend \$2 billion a week to keep troops in Afghanistan? How long can our allies sustain their costs?

Still, the war will continue. We must win. We will win, as we did 65 years ago. As we did 30 years ago.

The future of civilization is at stake. The very concept of freedom is challenged. And as past generations did, we must respond. Through the grace of God, we will respond.

Osama was but one visible symbol of this movement. He is gone, but the war will continue. Eventually, freedom will prevail. — Steve Haynes

MARGULIES
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Finally, Florida fits the plans

I've always wanted to visit Florida.

Steve's been a few times. He even attended the 1969 Orange Bowl to watch his K.U. Jayhawks beat, then lose to Penn State.

But that was back when he was in college and we had just met.

Since then, we've traveled all over the country and all over the world. But never to Florida.

So, when the invitation to attend a wedding on Miami Beach arrived, I was thrilled, excited and overjoyed.

Steve thought it sounded expensive.

I whined.

I won. Aw, it was a family wedding. He wanted to go, too.

Although we hadn't seen the bride for several years, she's always been a favorite of ours, and we were dying to meet her future husband, a retired British military man.

So as the weather warmed up in Kansas, and our flowers all started to bloom, we took a plane to Florida to enjoy the sun and beach.

Wait a minute. Something is wrong with this. Why was I heading into the world of humidity and sun cancer when spring had finally arrived in our little corner of the world?

Because, like I said, I've always wanted to visit Florida, and we both wanted to be part of this wedding. If we'd had to go in August when the temperature and humidity both were 99, I'd have jumped at it.



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

The wedding went off without a hitch. The bride was beautiful, the groom dashing and the ceremony on the beach.

Which was the only time I stepped on sand during my entire trip.

We visited downtown Miami Beach on a couple of emergency shopping trips. I had to have a beach bag to carry all my junk to the wedding – purse, camera, sunscreen, hat, bottled water. Then Steve found out that he had packed six shirts, two pair of shorts – and no slacks. Another quick trip downtown.

We took a boat ride and enjoyed the beautiful Miami skyline. We ate Cuban food and listened to people talking in a dozen languages.

I watched the storybook royal wedding on television, then watched my daughter's sister-in-law marry her Englishman in a different, much smaller, but equally beautiful ceremony the next day.

While the bride and groom tried to figure out how to pack up her household for the move to England and the other wedding guests scat-

tered, we headed north with our children, driving by the fabled towns of Palm Beach, Daytona Beach, Cape Canaveral and St. Augustine.

We didn't have much time to explore most of those places. We did spend a little time in Jacksonville while oldest daughter met with others on her Internet work team.

(I have no idea what she or her husband do. They work in the Internet and she works for Billy Morris, who owes several newspapers. So, she's still in the newspaper business, sort of, I think.)

Our time in Miami and Jacksonville was way too short. We had to get back up to Augusta, Ga., so we could visit our granddaughter, Taylor, and her mom, and the kids could get back to work.

I got rained on, got sand in my shoes, suffered mosquito bites and a very mild sunburn while in Florida.

I met and saw people from all over the country and the world. I tasted interesting food and drank way too many mojitos.

I got to see Florida and had a great time doing it.

And, I only had to wait 63 years.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes@nwkansan.com

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Budget committee still hard at work

Last Wednesday, the Legislature returned to Topeka for the veto session, scheduled to go until Wednesday, May 11. Veto session is traditionally dedicated to addressing bills approved or vetoed by the governor and working on the state budget. In the short time we have left, many items remain on our to-do list including Kansas Public Employees Retirement System reform and finalizing the budget.

The Kansas Constitution requires the Legislature to produce a budget each year. Prior to adjourning for our break the House and Senate passed their respective budgets and a conference committee began meeting to negotiate the differences.

At the start of negotiations there were approximately 280 differences between the two bills. To further complicate the process, revenue estimates were revised down by about \$20 million. Between the proposed budgets of Gov. Brownback, the Senate and the House, only the House budget remains in the black by an approximate \$48 million. As I sit here in the Statehouse, the conference committee continues to meet to hammer out the difference and we will not leave Topeka until an agreement is reached.



Rick Billinger

• This week in Topeka

I will closely watch how the budget negotiating process plays out. Reaching a compromise will be a challenging task requiring flexibility, patience and focus by all involved. The budget passed out of the House by only 6 votes. I look forward to working with my colleagues to assemble a responsible budget that sets our state on a path toward economic recovery.

I enjoyed visiting with my constituents and attending numerous meetings in the district while I was home. I met with several organizations including the Kansas Livestock Association, the Association of Counties and a Tea Party meeting. I also visited with the Association of Judges and Court Clerks, spoke with school superintendents and attended the Colby Community College Endowment auction and dinner, the Northwest Tech College Endow-

ment auction and dinner and the Colby Chamber of Commerce Award Banquet.

We are working diligently to provide more funds for our school systems and will continue to do so.

Thank you to everyone who has returned the surveys to me. There has been a very good response. There is still time to complete surveys and send them back. I will tally them and publish the results. Thank you for your input on these matters and I appreciate hearing from you on these issues and any other issues.

Rick Billinger is the state representative from the 121st District. He currently serves on the Commerce and Economic Development, Education Funding, Insurance and Local Government committees. He welcomes input on issues which will come before the Legislature. Contact him at rick.billinger@house.ks.gov or call (785) 899-4700.



Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

