

commentary

from other pens...

Some countries stuck on U.S. terrorism list

By George Gedda

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Congress decided years ago a good way to fight nations that sponsor terrorism is to impose mandatory sanctions against them. That may seem to be a reasonable response to terror perpetrators but advocates of the policy are becoming hard to find these days.

The issue comes to a head each spring as the State Department releases its annual report on terrorism trends worldwide and uses the occasion to highlight a problem that has given headaches to many a president.

Countries with a grievance against the United States sometimes resort to terrorism in lieu of declaring a war they could not win. Last fall, terrorists — still unidentified — attacked the USS Cole in Yemen, leaving 17 sailors dead. Secretary of State Colin Powell took note of that tragedy on Monday in releasing the latest terrorism report.

Seven countries have been designated by the State Department as sponsors of terrorism, meaning they are barred from receiving economic assistance, arms-related exports and U.S. support for their loan requests in the World Bank and other international lending institutions.

Privately, U.S. officials grumble about the process, complaining politics keeps some countries on the list that should be off and vice versa.

The seven offending countries (the list has remained unchanged for years) are Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria. Vince Cannistraro, former head of counterterrorism operations for the CIA, wonders why Pakistan is not on the list.

He said Pakistan supports Islamic insurgents in Indian Kashmir and also is a prime backer of the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan. The Taliban harbors Osama bin Laden, the Saudi exile who is wanted for the bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.

"The Taliban is in power because of the Pakistanis," said Cannistraro. Designation of Pakistan as a terrorist state would rob the United States of leverage in efforts to prevent a fourth Pakistani-Indian war — probably fought with nuclear weapons. Pakistani support for terrorism, while a concern, is not the dominant issue for the U.S. in its ties with Pakistan.

Asked why Pakistan was not on the list, the State Department's top terrorism official, Edmund Hull, acknowledged the country's misdeeds but said Pakistan has helped the United States in bringing suspects to justice in the East Africa bombings and on other terrorism cases.

The CIA's Paul Pillar, author of a new book, "Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy," pointed out the difficulty in getting removed from the terrorism list. "No state has ever come off for reasons having to do with real improvement," Pillar said.

He recalled Iraq was deleted in the early 1980's, not because Saddam Hussein renounced terrorism but because of a U.S. tilt toward Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war. Iraq was reinstated on the list after invading Kuwait.

North Korea remains on the list even though the most significant act by Pyongyang mentioned in the report occurred in 1970 when it provided a haven for communist airplane hijackers from Japan.

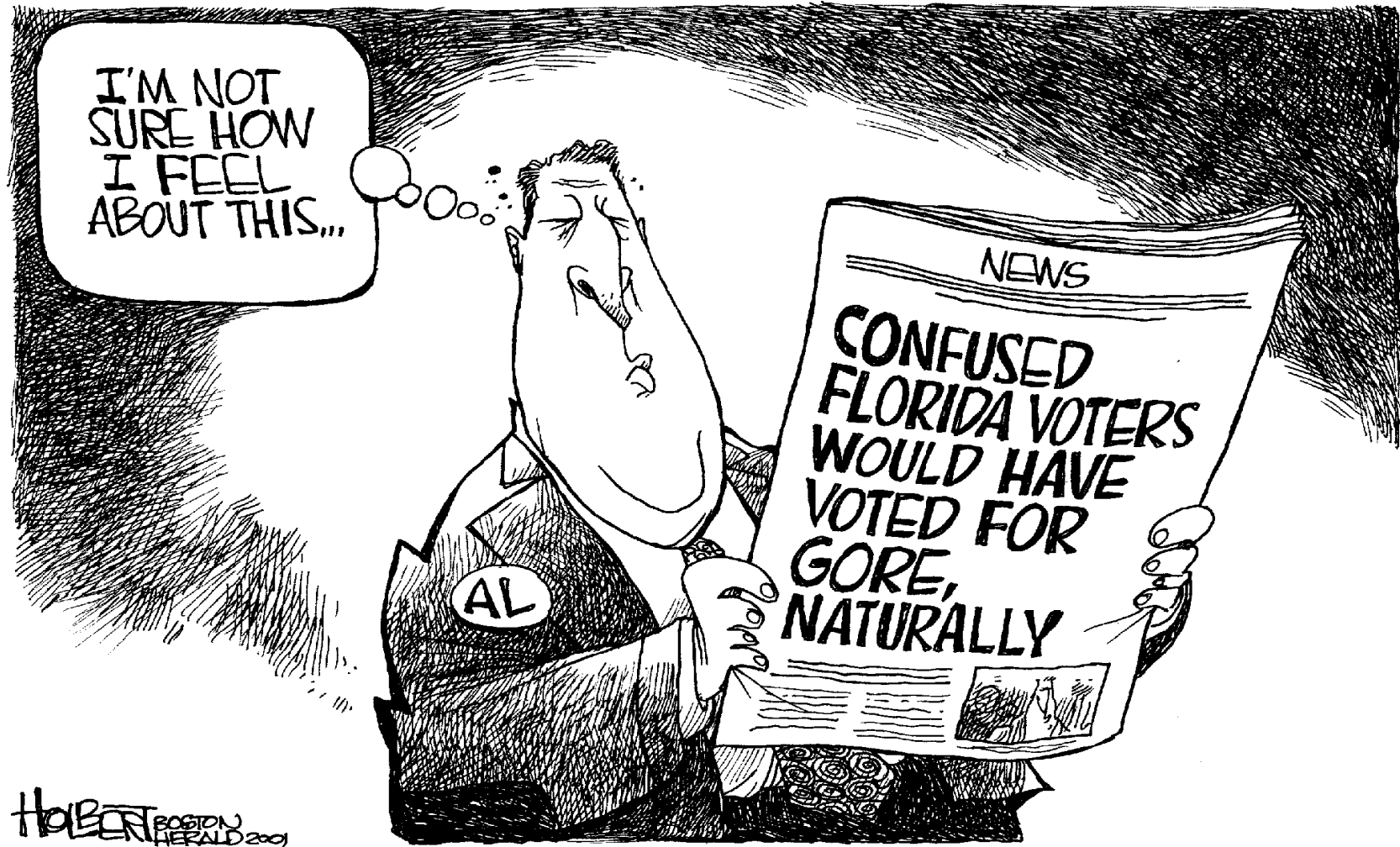
Pillar said the chief concern in ties with North Korea is not terrorism but persuading Pyongyang to surrender its long-range missiles. He noted North Korea complained last year that its terrorism list designation was an impediment in negotiations with the Clinton administration.

Larry Johnson, a former State Department terrorism expert, said Greece backed Kurdish rebels in Turkey for years but was spared membership on the terrorism list because it was a NATO ally.

"I'd like to see politics taken out of the process," said Johnson. "But this is like the quest to get money out of politics. It will never happen."

Pillar said the executive branch ought to be able to decide on sanctions against terrorist-prone countries on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the whole range of U.S. interests.

EDITOR'S NOTE — George Gedda has covered foreign affairs for The Associated Press since 1968.



Green spears announce coming of spring

The flowers are in bloom. The robins have returned. There's perfume from fruit trees in the air. All the signs of spring were here, but I still wasn't convinced until last week. It rained, hailed and snowed in one day. Well that looked like spring (or fall) but, I wasn't convinced.

Teen-agers appeared in shorts and sandals. Not good enough. I've seen my children wear shorts when it was 10 below zero and sandals in two-foot-of snow.

The asparagus started to appear in the garden. Now, I know it's spring.

Asparagus spears peeking out of the barren ground make me sure spring has arrived.

A knife to cut and a steamer to cook and I'm ready to get out my summer apparel and enjoy the



cynthia haynes

• open season

sunshine. When we lived in Colorado, we used to stalk the wild asparagus. The bushes would grow up along the fence rows and canals, which carried water to the thirsty potato and barley fields.

We would send the children out each evening to bring back our supper vegetable.

They hated it. It's not that they don't like asparagus. They just hated having to go anyplace without television or video games.

The asparagus wasn't free. We had to put up with the kids whining, and they lost a couple of good knives in irrigation ditches.

Now we grow the tender shoots in our own backyard and in the spring when we are in Colorado, Steve and I go along the fence rows and the canals with knives and sack to pick our supper vegetables.

The children will not join us in this pursuit. In fact, they think we are crazy.

Oh well, just wait until they are on their own and have to pay \$2.19 a pound for asparagus. They may take knife and sack in hand.

Or more likely, they will hand them to their children and tell them that when their parents made them go out and cut asparagus spring came in March and they had to dig down through the snow to find the tasty shoots and they had to walk — from Kansas — to find the wild asparagus.

Thank you good people of Goodland

Dear Editor: We would like to express our great appreciation to several people in Goodland, Kansas who helped us with a difficult situation on Friday, April 6th around 8:00 p.m. While driving 1-70 to Wichita from Longmont, Colorado to visit our parents who were celebrating their 64th wedding anniversary and our mother's 87th birthday, we hit a piece of broken axle in the road which caused a puncture of our gas tank resulting in the fast exit of gasoline from our car. Being without a serviceable cell phone we "flagged" down a vehicle from the state of Washington whose occupants contacted 911 for us. Here is where the "kindness of Goodland" began. Within literally 5 minutes, State Patrol officer Rich Hageman responded. After assessing the situation and making sure we were safe, he contacted a tow truck driver who turned out to be Virgil Baumfalk. Not only did Virgil tow us to his shop, he also helped us: get in touch with "Road Assistance" for our SUV; arrange a room at the local Comfort Inn for us; reserve a rental car for us to use the next day so we could continue our trip to Wichita, drove us to the Comfort Inn and; he kept us warm with hot chocolate and good conversation! In addition Virgil towed our SUV to Denver on the very next day (despite it being his birthday)!

Once we arrived at the Comfort Inn Elena Rodriguez, the desk clerk on duty that evening, welcomed us and helped carry our many belongings to our room. The next day, we obtained our rental car from Terry Selbe and Pam Mendenhall at the Goodland Machine and Automotive Shop.

What could have been an extremely disappointing weekend, turned into meeting wonderful people who went out of their way to make us comfortable and secure... let alone giving us great stories to share with our family and friends. We made it to Wichita for the celebrations (and eventually back to Colorado). It is heart warming to know there are still people like Rich, Virgil, Elena, Terry and Pam, who will "go out of their way" to help others. Needless to say, we will always be indebted to "the good people of Goodland, Kansas!" Thank



from our readers

• to the editor

you so very much. Bob and Diane Roggow Longmont, Colorado

Dear Editor, "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is that good people do nothing."

I was appalled at your paper's headline "Teachers Fired," a month before school is out.

When we are concerned about student respect for teachers over our nation, I would expect more from educated people.

How are those teachers, in that situation, supposed to keep their dignity?

As a retired teacher, a longtime resident of Goodland, I strive to make this a better place to live.

Elaine Cross Ellison Goodland

Dear Editor: On behalf of the American Heart Association I would like to thank the citizens of Goodland for helping to make this year's Cardiac Arrest event such a success. The event raised \$8,000 to benefit the American Heart Association and help in the fight against the Nation's Number One Killer Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke.

The American Heart Association has funded nearly \$1.7 billion in cardiovascular research since 1949. Thanks to such fund raising efforts as Cardiac Arrest, the American Heart Association has also developed useful educational programs targeted toward all ages in order to teach them how to combat heart and blood vessel diseases.

I would like to thank the following people and businesses who have helped to make this success-

ful event possible: Parole Board: Jim Alcorn, Judy Ashton, Vera Beneda, Rebecca Downs, Donna Fenner, Tina Gould, Pastor Scott Grimshaw, Lori Leonard, Crystal Linsner, Brenda McCants, Nina Mersch, Donna Pickman, Jo Simmons, Lynn Swayne, Sheila Wilkening; Judge: Steve Evert; Sherman County Courthouse; Michelle and Rod Cooper, Gambino's Pizza; Shawn Pettit, Pizza Hut; Scott Schroller, Wal-Mart; Eileen Dautel and LeAnn Friedrichs, Cowboy Loop; Darlene Stegman, Subway; Byron Elliott and Chuck Engel, Coca-Cola of Goodland.

Again, thank you to the citizens of Goodland for your support of the American Heart Association. We're fighting for your life!

Randall C. Braden Northwest Regional Director Topeka

To The Editor: There were several errors in your article on April 16, "Goodland man accidentally shot". Levi Schlosser was not with his father and uncle, but with his father and a neighbor. It did not happen east of town, but west of town. It was not a .22 rifle, it was a .22 pistol. And, he was not practicing target shooting. Levi had the gun laying across his lap. It slipped and discharged when it hit the ground. (You did get his name and age right.)

With a local phone call and about one minute of your time, you could have reported the facts. Dawn Schlosser Goodland

Editor's note: We did make a call. We received our information from the sheriff's office.

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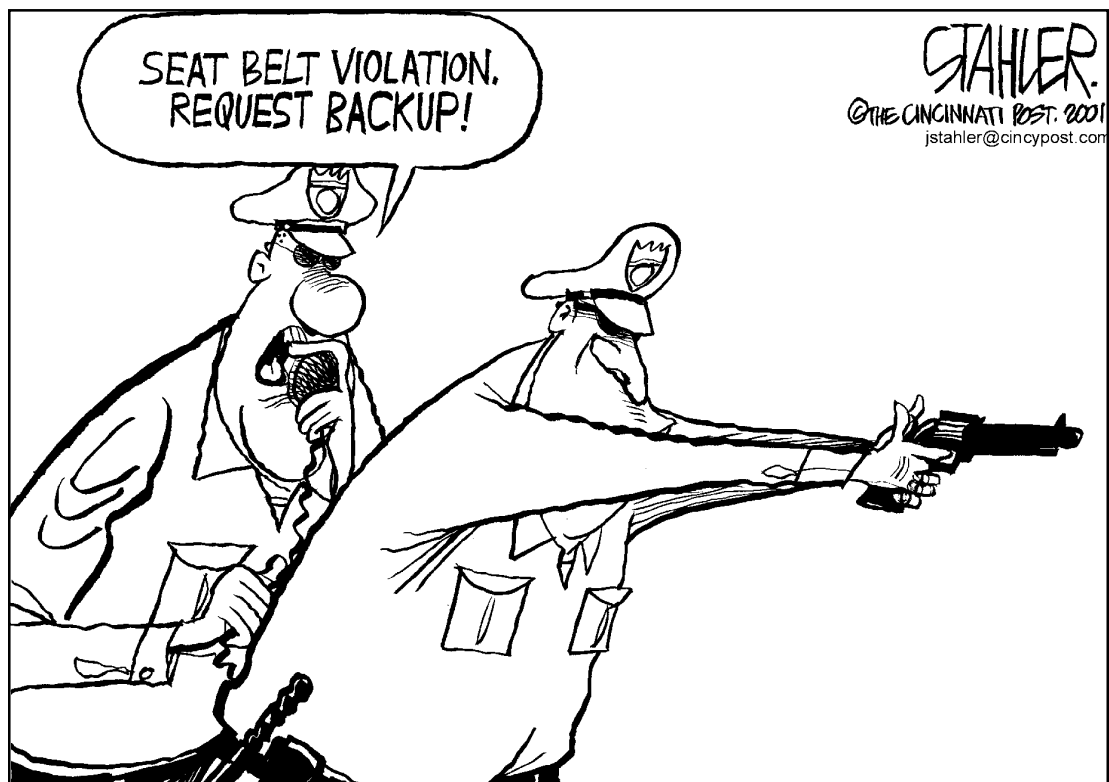
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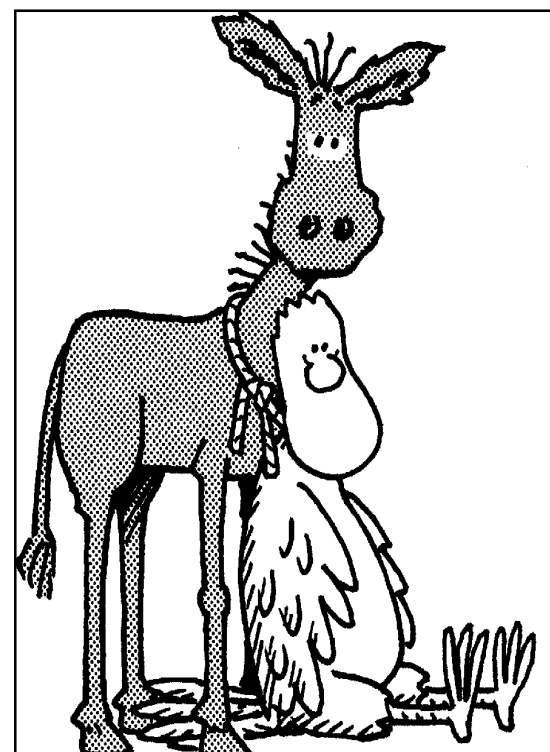
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As in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* [1798]

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