

commentary

from other pens...

U.S. seeks way to help Colombian democracy

Colombia is Latin America's most embattled democracy. The country is buffeted by guerrilla groups of the left and right and by widespread human rights violations.

War has driven 2 million Colombians from their homes. There are drug cartels, organized corruption syndicates, the worst economic crisis in a century and kidnappings at world record levels.

The list of woes is much longer.

The United States has been trying to be helpful, but on most fronts it's hard to detect much progress. U.S.-sponsored crop eradication has managed only to slow the rate of increase of illicit drug production. A peace initiative begun by President Andres Pastrana in 1998 has made little headway, although hopes for a cease-fire have risen lately.

CIA Director George Tenet said last week that leftist insurgents in Colombia "who make much of their money from drug trafficking are escalating their assault on the government, further undermining economic prospects and fueling a cycle of violence."

Congress supports efforts to counter traffickers who peddle cocaine in U.S. markets, but lawmakers have been resistant to any U.S. role in helping Colombia defeat leftist rebels. However, in the post-Sept. 11 anti-terrorism atmosphere, officials believe they have a bit more room to maneuver.

Of the 30 or so groups designated by the State Department worldwide as foreign terrorist organizations, three are Colombian — the FARC and ELN leftist rebel groups and the AUC rightist paramilitary group.

The FARC has been attempting to paralyze the Colombian economy through attacks on the infrastructure. It came close to knocking out a dam that provides water to Bogota.

More successful have been attacks on a 480-mile oil pipeline that runs from northeastern Colombia to the Caribbean coast. Attacks put the pipeline out of commission for 266 days last year at a reported cost of \$500 million to the Colombian economy. Also damaged were the interests of the U.S. oil companies that use it.

Amid misgivings by some in Congress, the Bush administration wants to spend \$98 million to train and equip the Colombian military to protect the pipeline. It would be the first time support for the military would extend beyond counternarcotics activities. The administration is hopeful that, given the anti-terrorism mood these days, Congress won't object to the policy shift.

The most outspoken critic has been Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., an influential voice on foreign aid matters. He said the proposal "draws us further into a military quagmire, and the Congress should be very reluctant to go down that road."

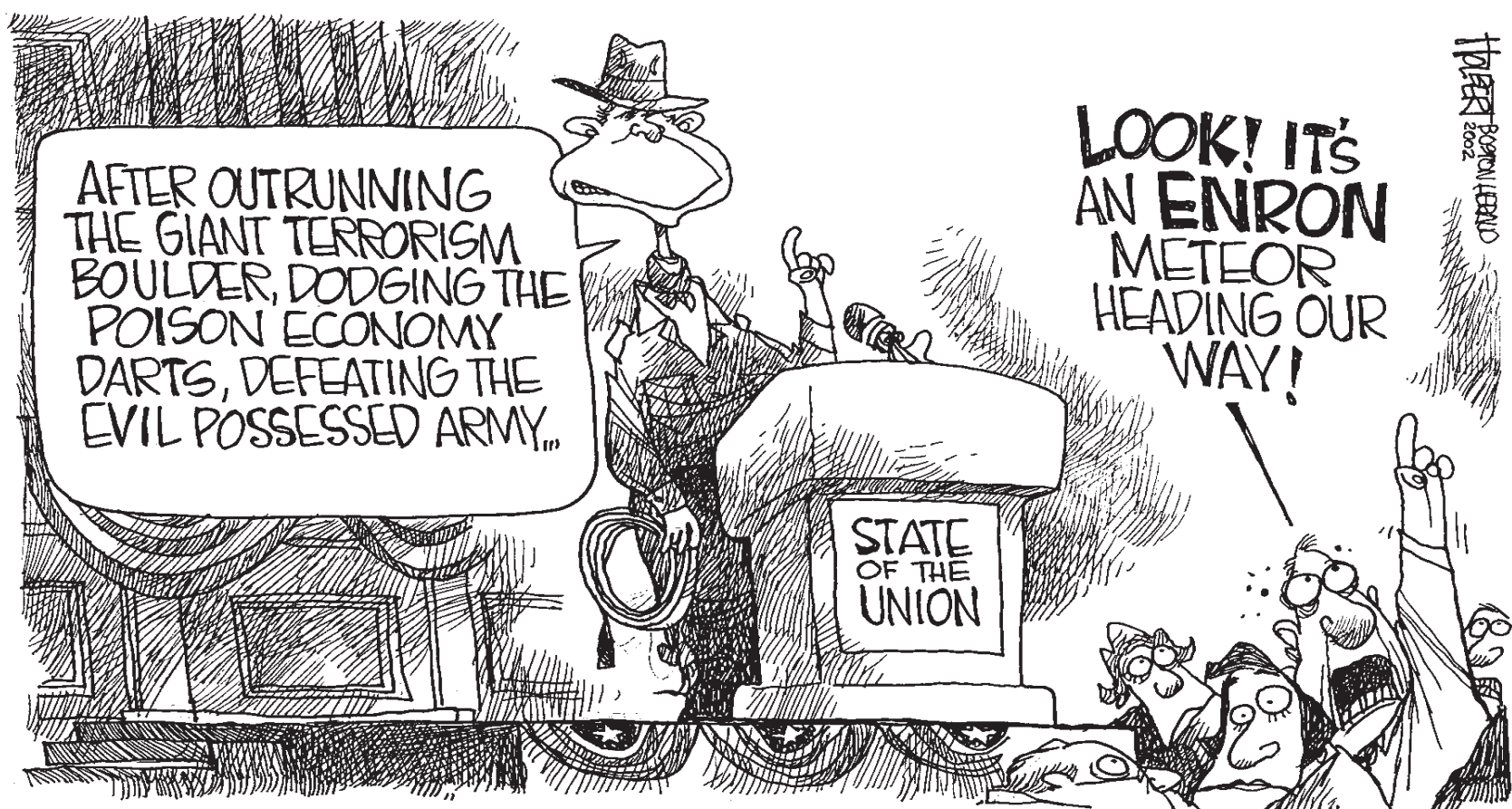
The administration has visions of also providing training to help the Colombian military protect other key installations from rebels, including power plants. It also wants to share intelligence with the Colombian military to help its pursuit of FARC rebels.

Officials admit they must move in Congress with caution in the more assertive approach, lest they sabotage the bipartisan congressional consensus on Colombia. Congress approved \$1.3 billion in assistance two years ago and an additional \$439 million this year.

It imposed human rights performance requirements that Colombia must meet or face an aid cut. At month's end, the administration is expected to certify compliance with the requirements.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Washington Office on Latin America are likely to challenge the certification. All said last week that the rights situation in Colombia has deteriorated.

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



THE ADVENTURES OF TEXIANA GEORGE and the TEMPLE OF DOOM

Landing that 'big' one was highlight of the day

A fishin' we will go. A fishin' we will go.

We had vacationed in one of the premier sport fishing places in the world for years without ever wetting a line. It was just too expensive.

Cabo San Lucus, Mexico, has been known for years for its fishing fleet. In the early years of the century, fishing was all that kept the tiny village, caught between the sea and the desert, alive.

Eventually a cannery was built and the little place grew. As time went by, the cannery was closed and sport fishing started in earnest. Yachts from all over the world tie up in the harbor as their inhabitants wine, dine and fish for marlin, dorado, wahoo, sailfish, roosterfish and tuna.

As the sport grew, smaller operators began offering their boats to less wealthy clients, people who wanted a day on the water and, hopefully, a trophy to take home.

The fishing is still not cheap, but you no longer have to be a millionaire to try your hand.

Last year, was the first time we tried fishing. We hired a boat and took the whole family out on the water. Our son slept all day, youngest daughter got sick and I got a sunburn, but Steve and almost son-in-law Nik each caught a dorado, or mahi mahi. Steve even hooked a giant marlin, but it got away.



cynthia haynes

• open season

It was a good day.

This year, there were just four of us to try our hand at catching "the big one."

We left the harbor at 6 a.m. in the dark in the Ursula 3 with a captain and first mate. At the harbor mouth, we bought bait and presented our licenses. Then we headed out onto the Pacific Ocean.

The ship, which had seemed so roomy in its harbor berth, was suddenly very little out on the ocean. It was windy with waves peaking at six to eight feet, but very few whitecaps.

Our stomachs had been fortified with Dramamine before we left, so we could all look upon the sea with a smile and enjoy the sunrise.

About 9 a.m., we came into a school of dolphins. There were dolphins everywhere, dozens, maybe hundreds of them, jumping, feeding and playing with their young.

Right about then, two of our poles got bites at the

same time. Nik grabbed one and Steve the other and started to reel like crazy. Steve landed a nice yellowfin tuna but Nik's either got away or was tossed back by our first mate

The mate rebaited the poles and Steve retired to the other end of the boat. Again, two poles went off at the same time. This time Nik and I grabbed them and reeled like crazy. While Nik had no problem landing his tuna, the pole was almost too big for me and the captain came back to give me a hand. Soon, I too, had a two-foot tuna on the deck.

That turned out to be the highlight of the day. For another five hours, we wandered around on the ocean, searching for fish, before heading back for land.

Yellowfin tuna makes very nice fillets — four big ones per fish. We cut one up, had tuna steaks for dinner, and took the rest back to the condo and froze them down.

You can bring fresh fish back to the U.S., so we bought a couple of Coleman coolers for twice what we would have paid in the states and brought our catch home. Steve figures, pound for pound, it was about as expensive as going to Colorado for elk.

But last night, we had tuna for supper and it didn't come out of a can.

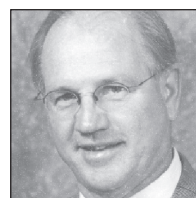
Yum.

Technical College part of what makes city great

The major thing that attracted me to Goodland and specifically Northwest Kansas Technical College was the fact that the college is extremely well developed.

Being a native, Kansan I have had the opportunity to visit every technical school and college in the state and most two-year colleges. Let me assure you our technical college is superior to most in the state. Also having visited several surrounding state colleges, we rank again as a premier educational institution. Goodland is most fortunate to have such an asset.

Given the invitation to write for the Chamber newsletter, I want to communicate about some of the other ways the Technical College contributes to Goodland and the region.



kenneth clouse

• college notes

I am still learning about the various functions around Goodland, but one of my goals is to see that the college is an integral part of our community and the region by our contributions.

The college's presence brings to the region a tremendous economic impact. The college employs in excess of 60 staff and has an annual payroll of \$1.9 million. The college spends another million annually in consumable materials, supplies and

repairs. Most economists that I have listened to indicate that dollars spent in a community turn over five to seven times. This turnover, calculated on the modest end of five times, equals some \$14.5 million to our region and the community of Goodland. These dollars go to purchase such things as housing, rent, food, gas, tires, repairs, construction, etc., all of which create jobs within our region.

I submit to you the college is one of the many businesses that make Goodland and Sherman County a great place to live.

I believe and I hope you can agree that the college has a large influence on our economy by the education provided by the college. Helping individuals improve their lives and acquire better jobs is our mission.

Putting a face on violence

Karen Neuberger pads across the design room at her KN headquarters in slippers and pajamas. She bears an uncanny resemblance to Martha Stewart: blonde, pretty, calm, wildly successful.

At age 55, Neuberger is the queen of pajamas, selling the KN line to 2,000 stores around the world. She's a regular on "Oprah." Her PJs have clothed characters on "Ally McBeal," "Dharma & Greg" and "Mad About You." She has branched out now into casual wear, bedding, candles, lotions and lingerie.

Her life seems a million miles from that morning when she felt the barrel of a handgun at her head and the hands of a stranger at her clothes. But the fear and anger of that morning still catch her off-guard now and again, the way a violent dream sets your heart to pounding in the midst of an ordinary night's sleep.

So, like many powerful American women from Glenn Close to Lily Tomlin to Gloria Steinem, she has thrown her money and support behind V-Day, the global movement to stop violence against women, inspired by Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues." Neuberger is sponsoring V-Day events at several stores that carry her clothing line (including some Macy's locations) and donating the proceeds from her special V-Day pajamas.

She doesn't know how many other famous women in the V-Day movement have been victims of violence. Maybe a handful, maybe most. That's part of the problem. We don't attach our faces to the violence. Neuberger's neighbor is Nancy Snyderman, a doctor, author and television personality. Neuberger recently read in Snyderman's new book that her friend also had been raped as a young woman. Surely we'd be astounded to know how many of our women friends and relatives have been victims.

"I'm in marvelous company," Neuberger says.

On that morning in 1974, Neuberger was a 28-year-old new mother living in Duluth, Minn. Her husband was serving in the Army in Korea, so she and her baby daughter had gone to visit her friend Vicki in St. Paul. While Vicki was at work,



joan ryan

• commentary

Neuberger was doing laundry.

The door to the laundry room was less than five feet from Vicki's apartment.

Neuberger dashed out to plug another dime into the dryer, leaving the door open for a few seconds. In the hall, a man in a sport coat and slacks passed by.

"As I stepped back into the apartment and closed the door, the man stepped out of the bathroom and put a gun to my head," Neuberger says. He pulled her into the bedroom, where her baby was sleeping in a playpen.

"I didn't scream. I didn't want her to see this or hear this," Neuberger says. During the two-hour assault, the man allowed Neuberger to fetch a bottle to keep the baby quiet. Later, he made himself a sandwich in the kitchen.

"At one point, I faked being unconscious and heard him leave," she says. "I jumped up to lock the door and he was standing there. He had faked leaving. I thought then that he would kill me."

But he finally left, and police caught him that afternoon. He had raped other women in the area, but there hadn't been enough evidence to arrest him.

This time, police found him with Vicki's stereo in his car.

"I didn't break down until I saw Vicki," Neuberger says. Her voice catches and tears well up in her eyes. "I picture myself all strong about this, but I still cry."

Women's organizations have been rising up against violence for the past 30 years. Some might wonder, then, why V-Day is drawing attention. They say there's really nothing new about it. True. It's just that the problem hasn't gone away.

Today, one in three women worldwide has been raped or sexually abused, according to a United Nations report. One in six women in the United States has been the victim of a sexual assault or attempted sexual assault, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For Neuberger, V-Day isn't about rubbing shoulders with celebs or wearing a politically correct lapel pin. It's about her daughters and all the daughters.

"When you're aware a sickness is occurring," she says, "you have to at least start looking for a cure."

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The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

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Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkansan.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nwkansan.com

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$22; six months, \$38; 12 months, \$72. By mail in Kansas, Colorado: three months, \$28; six months, \$50; 12 months, \$95. (All tax included.) Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$25; six months, \$40; 12 months, \$75.

Incorporating:

The Sherman
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Founded by Thomas McCants
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THE SHERMAN COUNTY
STAR
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