

# commentary

from other pens...

## Mideast turmoil bad time for summitry

Madeleine Albright had a stock answer whenever she was asked about a possible trip to the Middle East when the going got tough. "The leaders themselves are the ones who have to make the hard decisions in order to make the peace process work," the former secretary of state would say.

Colin Powell essentially sees things the same way. He doesn't see much point in travel to the region with suicide bombers operating in Israel almost daily and Israeli troops seizing territory in the West Bank. Beyond that, there are grave doubts here about the willingness of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to be a partner for peace.

"I am prepared to go anywhere, anytime, when it serves a useful purpose," Powell, who succeeded Albright as secretary of state, told CNN.

Powell has not been to the region in almost a year. He has made scores of phone calls to leaders there.

There are advantages, however, to face-to-face diplomacy. As Kenneth Pollack, national security affairs director for the Council on Foreign Relations notes, it's easier for a foreign leader to walk away from a commitment made over the telephone to a U.S. leader than one made across a bargaining table.

The Bush administration has been groping for ways to make a difference in the Middle East but it seems stumped. There is a clamor for top officials, including President Bush, to be "more active."

It is heard both in the Middle East and in Washington. "I think there needs to be something dramatic done, and that means the president has to step up his involvement," says Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Joseph Biden, D-Del.

Aside from Powell's phone calls to Arafat, the administration seems loath to give him much high-level attention. When Vice President Dick Cheney was in the region last month, he declined to meet with Arafat. Bush has talked to Arafat only once, by telephone last year.

Direct presidential involvement seems more plausible if the parties to a dispute seem genuinely interested in a settlement. This was the case in 1978 when President Carter summoned Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Camp David.

Sadat wanted the Israeli-occupied Sinai peninsula back. Begin wanted guarantees of peace. A bargain was struck; Carter's gamble paid off.

President Clinton brought Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to Camp David 22 years later but this gamble backfired. The Palestinian intafada, begun after the failure at Camp David, is still going on.

To most analysts, it seems preposterous for Bush to engage in summitry with the Middle East disputants at present.

"I don't believe great decisions are made at summits," says Kim Holmes, vice president of the Heritage Foundation, a conservative group. He says conditions for summitry are far less propitious now than two years ago when Clinton launched his Camp David initiative.

"There has to be painstaking work beforehand," Holmes says. Judith Kipper of the Center for Strategic and International Studies says American passivity is partly to blame for the current bloodshed.

She says the answer is not summitry but enhancing the mandate of U.S. envoy Anthony Zinni. Kipper says Zinni should have "the full persuasive powers" of the United States at his disposal as well as the ability to hold the parties accountable if their performance falls short.

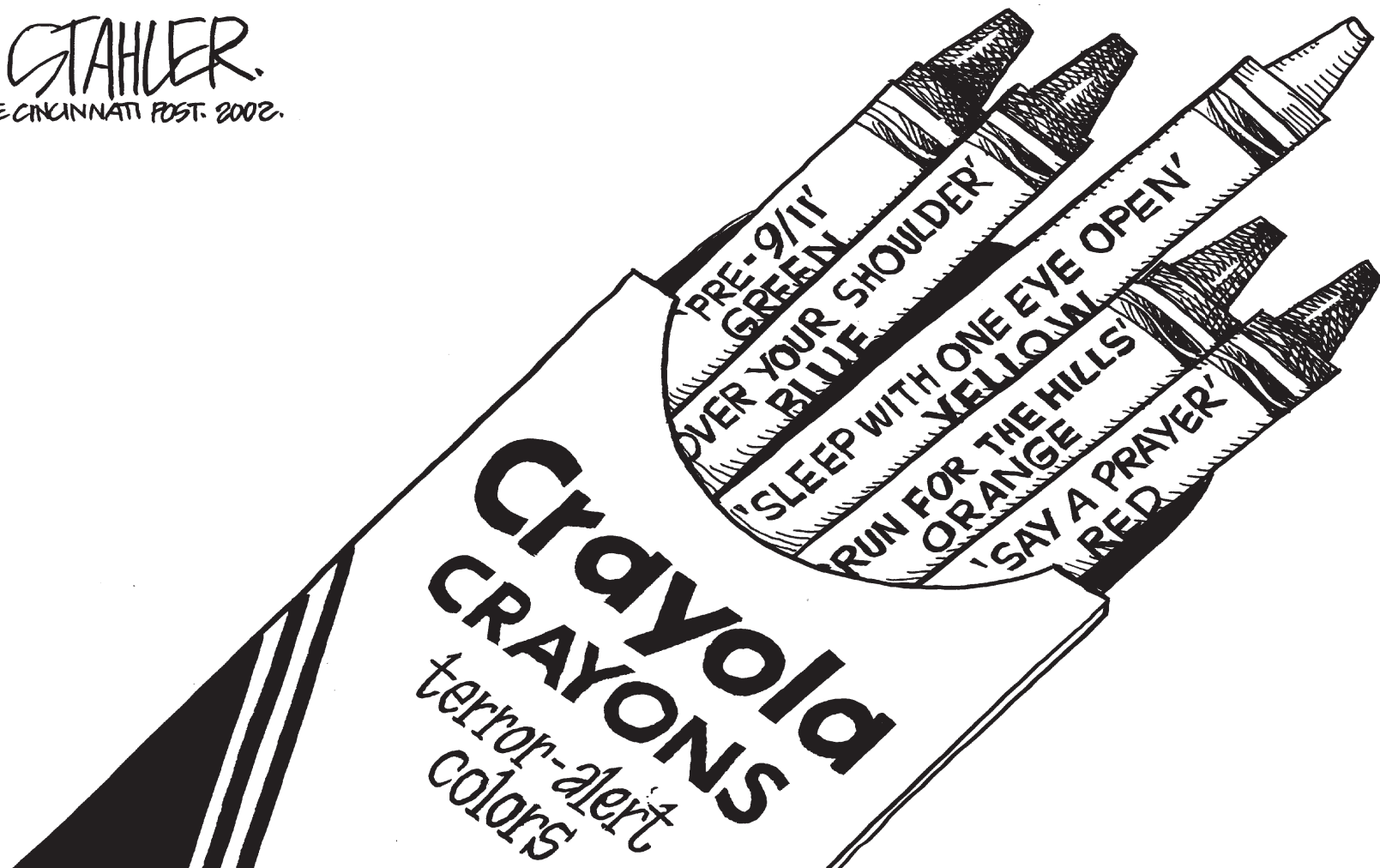
"There can be no cease-fire without strong, sustained, proactive U.S. intervention," she says.

The White House doesn't rule out a Bush-Sharon-Arafat summit. Presidential spokesman Ari Fleischer said Monday Bush will take whatever steps that he deems would be constructive.

U.S. influence will continue to be applied, he said, "but at its core, Israel and the Palestinian Authority have to demonstrate the will to work toward peace."

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

STAHLER.  
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## May we not forget the real meaning of Easter

People adhering to many religions celebrate Easter. Some celebrate Good Friday, and others observe the whole week as Holy Week. The purpose of these services is presumably to commemorate the sacrifice Jesus Christ gave when he died for our sins.

But many give little thought to that, and most of those who do will not think about it again until it is time to celebrate again next year. Easter is filled with thoughts of bunny rabbits and egg hunts, traditions that originated with pagan festivals celebrating the return of spring and honoring a fertility goddess Astarte.

Christ's sacrifice is not often the main focus of such celebrations and is quickly forgotten as soon as the holiday ends. But that sacrifice is the reason we have hope for the future. We are indebted to God for giving his son as a sacrifice and to Jesus for willingly enduring the suffering and death in order that we may live and God's purpose for the earth is fulfilled.

Revelation 5:9 says, "With your blood you bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

This indicates a price had to be paid for our salvation, and that price was Christ's blood. Why was such a sacrifice needed? Because Adam's sin was passed to all his offspring, making us all sinful and subject to death.

Romans 5:12 says, "Through one man (Adam), sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned."

As sinners, we are not able to save ourselves or anyone else from death as Psalm 49:7, 8 says, "Not one of them can by any means redeem even a brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; and the redemption price of their soul is so precious that it has ceased to time indefinite."

In providing that sacrifice, Jesus endured ridi-



sharon  
corcoran

• use it or lose it

cule, a mock trial, abuse, torture and an agonizing death.

Matthew 26:59, 60, 63-65 says, "Meantime the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin were looking for false witnesses against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none, although many false witnesses came forward. . . . So the high priest stood up and said to him: 'By the living God I put you under oath to tell us whether you are the Christ the Son of God!' Jesus said to him: 'You yourself said it. . . .' Then the high priest ripped his outer garments, saying: 'He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? See! Now you have heard the blasphemy.'"

Thus, God's own son was sentenced to die under a charge of blasphemy for telling the truth, that he was God's son. He then suffered abuse at the hand of Roman soldiers.

John 19:1-3 says, "At that time, therefore, Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. And the soldiers braided a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him with a purple outer garment; and they began coming up to him and saying: 'Good day, you King of the Jews!' Also, they would give him slaps in the face."

After an all-night trial and hours of abuse, Jesus was too weak to carry his own torture stake when he was taken to be hanged upon it.

Mark 15:19-21 says, "Also, they (the Roman soldiers) would hit him on the head with a reed and spit upon him and, bending their knees, they would do obeisance to him. Finally, when they had made

fun of him, they stripped him of the purple and put his outer garments upon him. And they led him out to impale him. Also, they impressed into service a passerby, a certain Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country. . . . that he should lift up his torture stake."

After hanging on the stake over six hours, Jesus died. He was laid in a tomb and three days later was resurrected to life. After appearing to his disciples and spending some 40 days with them, he ascended to heaven where God gave him a high position.

Philippians 2:9 says, "God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name."

In that position he sees what we do and say and our attitudes. He knows if we have no real appreciation for his sacrifice. What can we do that shows we appreciate what he did for us?

1 Peter 2:12 says, "Maintain your conduct fine among the nations, that, in the thing in which they are speaking against you as evildoers, they may as a result of your fine works of which they are eye-witnesses glorify God in the day for his inspection."

Hebrews 13:15 says, "Through him let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name."

Luke 22:19, 20 says, "Also, he took a loaf, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: 'This means my body which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me.' Also, the cup in the same way after they had the evening meal, he saying: 'This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf.'"

Jesus commanded his followers to commemorate his death annually in a solemn celebration free of pagan traditions. And year-round we can glorify God with our words and actions, thus showing that we truly appreciate the love Jesus Christ and God showed in making such a sacrifice to give us salvation.

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## Big is good



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I've had a chance to study many of the inexplicable aspects of male behavior throughout my life, and the one that continues to impress me is man's ability to stand and wonder at some amazing feat that has absolutely no practical application to life as we know it. For example, there's an annual contest where men build huge catapults and then use them to see how far they can throw a Buick. I've never been there, but I'm guessing the spectators are predominantly male. Men will always choose magnitude over content. Give us a huge fireball or an earth-shattering collision or even just a really loud noise, and we'll line up for tickets. We don't care about the long-term benefits. The more frivolous the huge thing is, the better we like it. Most men believe that no matter how useless something is, if you make it big enough, it becomes worthwhile. That's probably why most of us overeat.

### THE EVOLUTION OF GAMES

We didn't have video games when I was a kid. We were stuck with having to play football or baseball out in the sunshine with our friends, rather than having the luxury of being able to sit alone in a darkened room playing Bloodlust with a joystick. To me, the biggest difference is not the social or financial repercussions of these different approaches to entertainment — it's the role of the player. One is active, the other is passive. When you play a video game, no matter how many times

you get killed, it doesn't hurt nearly as much as taking a foul ball in the groin. That's because in a real game, you are a hands-on participant; but in a video game you are merely an involved spectator. This is a dangerous precedent. From the games I learned as a kid, I knew that I wanted to take an active role in my own life. You should all want to be a participator, not just a spectator — especially during your marriage, and even more so during conception.

### WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW

Middle-aged men think they know everything. Their wives think the complete opposite. The truth lies somewhere in between. Here's a short list of things that middle-aged men always know:

- Where the benches are at the mall.
- What the government is doing wrong.
- How to make a really loud fashion statement.
- How to grow a good lawn.
- How to pass the time waiting for your wife to cool off.
- How to make a complete hairstyle out of dwindling resources.
- The location of the nearest men's room.

### THE BALANCE OF NATURE

When you look back through history, there have been many examples of what I call the beauty and the beast syndrome. Cyrano de Bergerac, Quasimodo, Henry VIII, etc. I'm talking about the stories where a really ugly guy is going after a very beautiful woman. Now, at first it seems like a cruel twist of nature that ugly guys would be the most virile, but I don't see it that way. If you take a man and give him an over-active libido, and also make him good-looking, well, we all have a pretty good idea of what he's going to waste his life doing. So, in order for guys with overactive thyroids to lead productive lives where they make a contribution to society, nature makes them ugly. Women need to find them somewhat repulsive just so the men

will be free to find jobs and join service clubs. On the complete opposite end of the scale, you have men with almost no interest in women. In order for them to have a chance to procreate, nature makes them handsome. So, my theory on men is that the better-looking they are, the less virile they are. I'm not sure how scientific that opinion is. It may be largely based on me looking at my passport picture.

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "You don't have to think fast if you move slow." — Red Green  
Red Green is the star of "The Red Green Show," a television series seen in the U.S. on PBS and in Canada on the CBC Network, and the author of "The Red Green Book" and "Red Green Talks Cars: A Love Story." Watch for the feature film Red Green's "Duct Tape Forever" at a theater near you.

## berry's world



Jim Burns  
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"WELL, SON, I'M GLAD WE COULD WORK OUT OUR BUSY SCHEDULES SO THAT WE CAN FINALLY LOG SOME FACE TIME."

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