

commentary

from other pens...

U.S. has multiple voices on Iraq arms inspections

By George Gedda

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Saddam Hussein may be confused by the mixed signals Washington has been sending on the possible return of U.N. weapons inspectors to Iraq.

Monday, Vice President Dick Cheney made a case against renewed inspections.

"A return of inspectors would provide no assurance whatsoever of his compliance with U.N. resolutions," Cheney said. "On the contrary, there is a great danger that it would provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow 'back in his box.'"

Within hours, Secretary of State Colin Powell's spokesman, Richard Boucher, was offering a decidedly different view.

"We're doing our utmost ... to get U.N. inspectors back to Iraq," Boucher told reporters.

Government officials are supposed to be in sync, particularly on sensitive issues. That hasn't happened on U.N. inspections in Iraq.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld backs Cheney's view. He said last month he could not "begin to think" Saddam would accept the kind of "intrusive inspection regime" required to expose forbidden weapons.

Where does President Bush stand? He cast his vote a few months ago in support of inspections. Asked what would happen to Saddam if he refused to allow the inspectors' return, Bush said, "He'll find out."

A senior administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the dichotomy of views reflects the pluses and minuses of inspections.

When Saddam permitted inspections, some forbidden weapons were found and destroyed, the official said. At the same time, he added, inspections alone don't give you the assurance that Iraq is not hiding something.

Inspections, he said, are no substitute for the administration's bottom line policy: Saddam's removal.

The disharmony within the administration is matched by the din of dissonant voices from the outside — on inspections and related issues.

Almost everyone with an opinion agrees Saddam is a dangerous despot. The disagreement lies in how to deal with him.

Skeptics worry that unilateral U.S. military action could create an expensive (\$80 billion?) quagmire, casualty levels not seen since the Vietnam War and an international consensus aligned against Washington.

On the other side are those who say getting bogged down in details could lead to paralysis, giving Saddam more time to perfect — and to use — weapons of mass destruction the administration says he already has.

Charles Duelfer, who spent seven years as a member of the U.N. weapons inspection team, said he believes time is on Saddam's side.

"If this guy gets a nuke, then everything changes," Duelfer said, raising the specter of the Iraqi "incineration" of American troops.

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger told PBS last week he believes the war talk in Washington enhances the possibility of Saddam agreeing to comprehensive inspections.

The goal of a full disclosure through inspections "is not achievable without the threat of war, and therefore those two things have to be closely linked," Kissinger said.

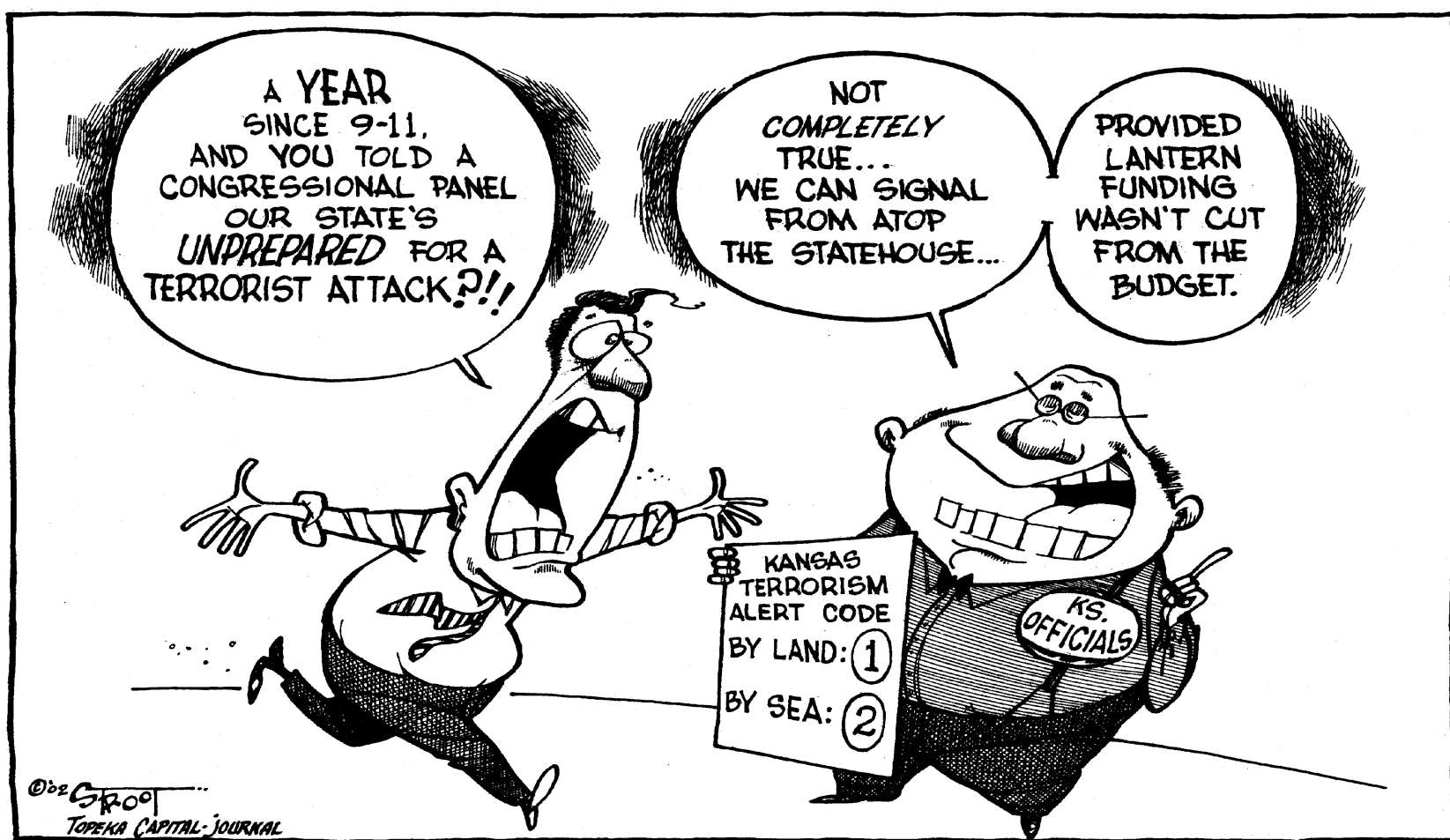
Saddam's behavior since Bush designated Iraq an "axis of evil" member tends to support Kissinger's view.

Hans Blix, head of the U.N. agency that would carry out inspections if Saddam agrees, told NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday the Iraqis stonewalled the agency until Bush raised the possibility of a military strike last winter. They have been showing "greater interest" since then but have yet to invite the inspectors back, he said.

Blix disputes Cheney's view that renewed inspections may be counterproductive. Inspectors, said Blix, a former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, "can see a lot that satellites cannot see."

"Inspections cannot give 100 percent certainty," Blix said. "But they can act as a very good deterrent."

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



With remodeled eyes I can dump the glasses

I got my eyes remodeled last week. Like about half the country, I've been looking at laser surgery to correct my bad vision.

I even talked to a couple of eye doctors about it two years ago, but at that time they were only doing nearsightedness. If you had farsightedness or a stigmatism, you were out of luck, and I had both.

Now, however, they just cut a hole in your eye and buzz it with a laser beam to reshape it. Nothing to it.

Right! Before you have this done, you need a precheck. The doctor checks your eyes and gives you an information sheet and you have to read it and initial each section. Its contents are nearly enough to scare you away.

Worst case scenario — blindness. While no one has ever gone blind from the new Laser Assisted IntraStromal Keratomileusis (LASIK) procedure, it's a possibility.

Other, more common side effects of the procedure are overcorrection or undercorrection, double vision, increased sensitivity to light, corneal ulcer, droopy eyelid and retinal detachment and hemorrhage.

That's enough information to send you back to get your glasses.



cynthia haynes

• open season

However, I was real tired of wearing mine. They were thick and I was beginning to hate to see myself in pictures wearing them.

I signed up and headed for Denver. The procedure itself takes about 10 minutes per eye.

Pre-operative instructions include eating a normal, alcohol-free meal, shower, and wear no perfumes or body lotions. No eye make-up, face make-up or facial jewelry — well duh.

Bring money. The bill must be paid in advance and they don't take personal checks.

They put a hair covering over your head and booties over your shoes. Then they put a star over the eye or eyes you are having operated on. It's just like in kindergarten, only you get decorated, not your paper.

In the operating room, you sit in a chair like in a

dentist's office but they recline you more. Your eye or eyes are deadened and they tell you to look at a bright light. While you are watching the light, they cut a flap in the surface of your cornea and use a small suction device to hold it back while the laser reshapes your eyeball. The flap is put back down and you are done.

Back in the waiting room, you get plastic shields put on your eyes to protect them and you are out of there. Back home (or in my case, at a cousin's house) you go to bed and sleep the rest of the day, partly because of the surgery and partly because of the tranquilizers they give you before and after.

You have to wear the shields to bed and use several types of eye drops for about a week.

The next day, however, I drove myself home after a checkup with the doctor. My vision was 20-25 in each eye and I could read without glasses, something I haven't been able to do for nearly 20 years.

The doctor says that my near vision will deteriorate and my far vision get better over the next few months and that I will probably need reading glasses.

How do I feel? Great.

But my eyes feel naked.

Please don't stare. It embarrasses them.

Help celebrate Patriots Day on Sept. 11

To the Editor:

September 11 has officially been recognized as Patriot Day by Public Law 107-89. The American Legion, other veteran groups and citizens are encouraged and urged to recognize this day.

The City of Goodland, Mayor and City Council, have been requested to proclaim and process this day as an official City Day to remember the victims of that tragic day. Mayor Rohr and the City Council have been asked to encourage our community to commemorate this day to show the world that in times of tragedy as a people Americans become stronger in protecting and preserving our precious liberties.

The Goodland Daily News can help in publicizing all actions that honor this day. It is suggested that our community fly American flags, church bells ring at noon and other ways our citizens wish to recognize this day. Communities across our great land will also be joining in recognizing this day.

Patriot Day can become a day to remember the victims. It can also be a day to remind us of our military personnel who gave, and continue to give, their lives in the war against terrorism.

All veterans and loyal American will appreciate all the effort you give in helping to make this a



from our readers

• to the editor

day that will truly be a Patriot Day.

W. Ken Baum, Commander
American Legion Post #117
Goodland

To the Editor:

I am a fourth generation cattleman, farmer, and community servant and I would like to say thank you to those involved in the Kansas Drought Forum. I attended in Goodland on Monday.

In observance of the testimony and responses from the government officials at this forum, it seemed there may be some misconception of the government's responsibilities. I will be the first to admit the stories and statements that were given by those official's attention.

However, it is my opinion that the drought disaster we are currently in could be referred to as

the straw that broke the camel's back. Policies, regulations and administration of these are in my viewpoint what is currently holding us back from progress. The drought is only an obvious additional problem.

Sometimes agricultural laws and regulations are written with the utmost research, but we find our profession in situations that are not favorable to such laws. Consequently, we find ourselves with the repercussions of our own ignorance.

It is my experience that the government is not going to "fix" our problems — we need to fix our problems ourselves, and if you think that they will then you are badly mistaken. We can turn to the government for help, but only for band-aid help.

If we want to truly progress and establish our future then local input, control, and commitment is the answer. We as an agricultural community need to use this forum as a tool to educate ourselves. In order for this minority sector to succeed and prosper, we have got to get involved in our livelihood and be aggressive. If we sit on the fence, then we as a group will never be more than a puppet.

Jon Starns
Kansas Association of Conservation Districts
Area 1 Director
Brewster

The children's Circus Salaam Shalom

"Before a boisterous crowd of about 100 at the City Museum," reported the St. Louis Post-Dispatch on July 29, 17 Jewish and Muslim children from Circus Salaam Shalom "somersaulted, backflipped and stilt walked to thunderous applause."

These children, ages 5 to 14, have been performing this summer under the direction of the Circus Day Foundation of which my daughter, Jessica, is executive director. She's been a circus performer for nearly 30 years and runs the Everydaycircus in St. Louis.

"No matter who we are and where we come from, we can find a common place, where our individual boundaries touch, overlap — or better yet — disappear in the face of what connects us," she says.

In forming Circus Salaam Shalom (meaning "peace" in both Hebrew and Arabic) she has gathered for circus classes children from the Central Reform Synagogue (which she and her children attend) and from the black Muslim Clara Muhammad School.

The parents of these circus children have also been connecting. "After the first eight-week spring session," according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, "parents and children visited one another's houses of worship to pray for peace in special services." Alicia Abdullah-Clay said her son noted that he had never before seen a white person at a mosque.

"To make the circus formation," one reporter pointed out, "children on the top tier must fully trust children on the bottom tier not to move or re-



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• commentary

lax their muscles. The children on the bottom must trust the children on the top not to jab or kick them as their flexed thighs become stairs to the top."

And their parents must trust that there are educational benefits in this interfaith pyramid. Says Central Reform's Rabbi Susan Talve, "seeing the kids working together, watching all of our parents smile and so proud of the same thing — our precious children — gives hope for the future."

One of the performances took place at the Clara Muhammad School on Malcolm X's birthday on May 19. The St. Louis newspaper, Jewish Light, reported — and as I've told Jessica — my friend Malcolm X, on his way back from Mecca about a year before he died, sent me the following postcard: "In my recent travels into the African countries and others, I was impressed by the importance of having a working unity among all peoples, black as well as white."

A parent from the synagogue, watching her two daughters on the 1-1/2-inch-wide wire-cable tightrope, 27 feet above the floor, said, "I remember the old saying from the 1960s: 'Think globally, act locally.' We are building peace between faiths right here." And Alicia Abdullah, watching her son, said:

"The children know there are differences between Muslims and Jews because they hear their parents talk about differences. But if they are left alone, with nothing to poison their minds, they get to know each other, play together."

As the St. Louis Post-Dispatch noted, "It's easier to understand someone once you've stood on their shoulders, leaped through their arms or dangled from their body."

Or, as my daughter, Jessica, adds, "By clowning around, you learn to take yourself and others seriously."

There will be circus classes for the Circus Salaam Shalom Circus in the fall, with the first new show in December. But Jessica has a deeper vision of showing how circus skills can "teach the art of life." She is planning the creation of a St. Louis Children's Circus, composed of kids from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds in the city and surrounding county.

A virtue of circus arts, she told the online STLtoday, is "there's room for everyone to succeed, regardless of background, size or shape, grade-point average or any of the other categorizations that may be barriers elsewhere." She's taught deaf children, adolescents with Down syndrome and elderly people.

When Jessica was almost constantly on the road, her letters to me would end "Every day is a circus day!"

For more information about the Circus Day Foundation, the Web site is www.circusday.org and the phone is (314) 436-7676.

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