

commentary

from other pens...

Skeptics worry while Inspectors scour Iraq

It's hard to imagine anyone whose words are more subject to international scrutiny these days than Hans Blix, chief of the U.N. team that began searching for forbidden weapons in Iraq last week. His judgments about what Iraq has and doesn't have could well decide whether there will be another war with Iraq, 12 years after the first one. When the United Nations authorized the inspection team in 1999, Blix's fellow Swede Rolf Ekeus was the Clinton administration's first choice to lead it. But other members of the U.N. Security Council believed Ekeus had been too confrontational toward Iraq during an earlier U.N. inspection effort. Blix emerged as the compromise choice. U.S. critics worry that the retired international law expert and collector of Oriental rugs lacks the steely determination required to expose the hidden weapons that the Bush administration is convinced President Saddam Hussein possesses.

The U.N. inspectors Blix oversees are on the lookout for chemical and biological weapons. Mohamed ElBaradei, an Egyptian who heads the International Atomic Energy Agency, is searching for evidence of nuclear weapons programs.

Secretary of State Colin Powell says he has confidence in both. "They are experts in this field and they know what the Iraqis have done in the past," Powell told NPR News last week.

"They know how the Iraqis have deceived previous inspection regimes. And I think both of these gentlemen want to do the best job they can because the whole world is watching this and so I think they'll be aggressive."

Of the two, Blix is receiving most of the attention, partly because of his long experience with Iraq. Blix ran the IAEA for 16 years and was considered to be tougher on North Korea than on Iraq.

Gary Milhollin, director of the Washington-based Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, is worried that Blix will preside over a white-wash. He cites Blix's record at IAEA.

"As late as 1990, the same year Iraq invaded Kuwait, Mr. Blix's inspectors rated Iraq's cooperation as 'exemplary.' But all the while Saddam was running a vast A-bomb program under their very noses," Milhollin wrote last week in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece.

He said some of the nuclear weapons production activities went on at the same places that were being inspected, and were hidden with the help of an Iraqi official who was himself a former inspector. The weapons infrastructure was uncovered and destroyed by U.N. inspectors years ago.

The Bush administration says the more intrusive inspections contemplated under the latest U.N. Security Council resolution make it more difficult for Saddam to hide forbidden weapons.

Blix seems doubtful about one innovation in the new inspection regime: giving the U.N. monitors the authority to interview Iraqis and their families outside the country and away from Iraqi government observers.

"There would be great practical difficulties in using such authority, unless there was cooperation by the Iraqi side," Blix told the council in October. The comment was not reassuring to U.S. officials.

The U.N. teams must report by late January on their progress in locating and destroying any Iraqi weapons forbidden under U.N. resolutions. If they report full Iraqi cooperation and disarmament, U.N. resolutions call for the Security Council to consider lifting economic sanctions imposed on Iraq. If they report Iraqi resistance, the council may debate military action to disarm Iraq.

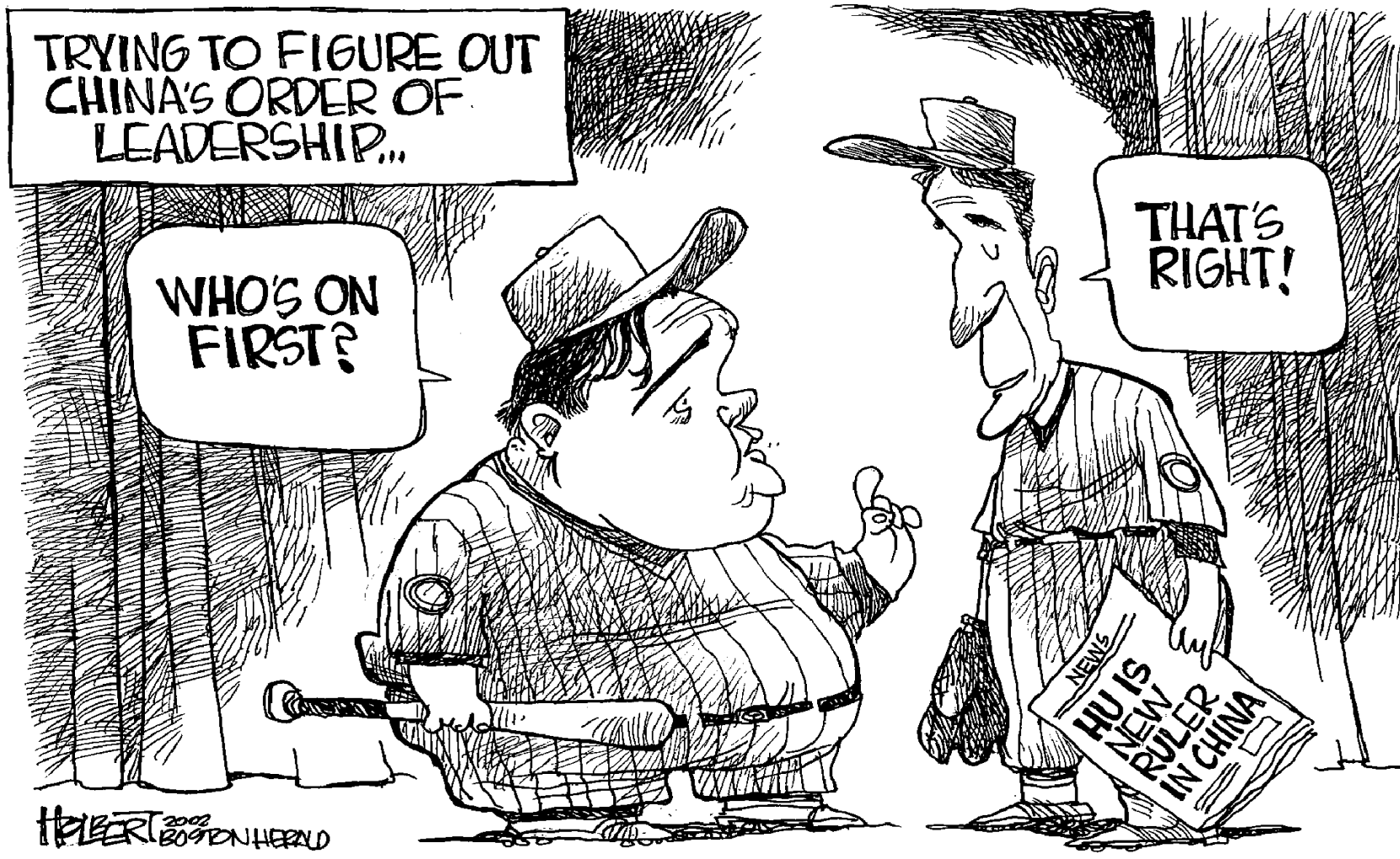
Bush seems doubtful the Iraqis will tell much to Blix's team. "So far, the signs are not encouraging," Bush said Monday.

Blix said he and ElBaradei don't see the issue of war vs. peace as hinging on the reports they issue.

"Our job is to report, and the decision whether there is war or peace or reaction — that is for the council and its members," Blix says.

He also says he is not going to let Washington push him around. "We're in nobody's pockets," he says.

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



The words we choose, the path we take

We often think of words as Post-it notes on the different objects and actions in our lives: phone, walk, book, eat. The words aren't anything in themselves. They simply provide — the thinking goes — symbols of the actual objects or actions so we can communicate about them.

This is not in the least bit true, of course, as writers and realtors can tell you. Words have artist's hands. They shape and color every object and action to which we attach them. An old, cramped house, for example, is suddenly transformed by the words "charming" and "cozy."

Mary Robinson has a particular sensitivity to words. It is not just because she is from Ireland, where she served as president from 1990 to 1997. It is more because of what she saw and heard after Sept. 11, as she traveled the world in her job as United Nations high commissioner for human rights. (She left the post in September.)

"Everything," she says, "is justified by that T-word."

The T-word is terrorism.

Robinson said the United States made a dangerous and costly mistake by choosing the words "war on terrorism" to frame its response to the Sept. 11 attacks.

"Calling it 'a war on terrorism' enriches the terrorists," said Robinson, who was in San Francisco



joan ryan

• commentary

last week for a Global Fund for Women fund-raiser. "It makes them freedom-fighters. It is very exciting for them to be in a 'war' against the U.S. It's the wrong dynamic."

Much more serious is the effect the U.S. "war" has had on government leaders around the world. They see the United States holding detainees from Afghanistan at the naval base at Guantanamo Bay without formal charges, trials or access to counsel. They see the United States putting the world on notice that the United States will enter any nation with or without permission in pursuit of terrorists. They hear the United States declare it will unleash pre-emptive strikes against any country believed to have weapons of mass destruction.

They see how the "war" has loosened the rule of law in the United States. The government has granted itself the powers for accessing private information of its citizens and visitors, for wiretapping their phones, retrieving their e-mail and voice mail.

Foreign leaders, Robinson said, are pointing to the Bush administration's heavy-handed, Big Brother tactics at home to provide cover for their own human rights violations: silencing dissidents, undermining civil liberties, abandoning due process, invading privacy, inciting violence, ordering summary executions.

We would be seeing a very different scenario unfold, Robinson believes, had the United States characterized the attacks as "crimes against humanity." The response could have been a worldwide manhunt in which every country was obligated to root out, and bring to justice, all those responsible for planning and aiding the attack. It would have been a prosecutorial response with at least some accepted and recognizable rules, instead of an amorphous war with virtually none.

The attacks of Sept. 11 were what they were. Words cannot change the event itself. But the words our government consciously chose in the aftermath of Sept. 11 determined what path we would take into the future. "War" gives a government the opportunity to cross legal and ethical lines.

It should not give citizens an excuse to tolerate them.

Joan Ryan is a columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle. Send comments to her e-mail at joanryan@sfgate.com.

Law professor raises questions about Iraq policy

An interview with a Palestinian-American law professor raises some interesting questions about American policy and whether we are headed toward an all-out war with Islam.

Osama bin Laden might like that, though the result would not be pretty, and his side would not prevail.

But while the U.S. might win an ultimate confrontation with the Islamic world, our might begs the question of whether that's where we want to go.

We don't really have any good reason to be at war with Islam.

While Islam is one of the world's great religions, it's a minority on the face of the earth. Muslims deserve recognition, but they should know better than to push for confrontation with the rest of us that cannot be won.

The professor, L. Ali Khan of Washburn University, told the reporter that since he came to this country in 1979, there has been one crisis after another between the U.S. and Muslim countries: the Iran hostage crisis, bombing of Libya, the Sudan and Afghanistan, conflicts with Syria and Iran, the Gulf War, economic sanctions, constant



steve haynes

• along the sappa

fighting with Iraq, U.S. troops in the Muslim holy land.

The U.S., with its unwavering support of Israel, angers many Muslims, he said, making us a target for terrorists.

"A lot of people don't understand (that terrorists) have no distinction between the innocent and the guilty," he says. "Once they declare you as an enemy, everyone is fair game."

That's quite a statement, but true nonetheless, and nothing that should shock a nation which bombed Germany and Japan back to the stone age.

But what does that say to us?

Are we wrong to support Israel? I don't think so. After the Holocaust, Jewish refugees needed someplace to go. The Zionist movement made sense to a horrified and guilt-ridden world.

The Goodland Daily News
 (USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)
 Member: Kansas Press Association
 The Associated Press
 Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
 National Newspaper Association
 e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Tom Betz, Editor/Editorial Page
Rachel Hixson, Managing Editor
Pat Schiefen, Copy Editor
Sports Editor
Sharon Corcoran, Society Editor
Eric Yonkey, Bill Wagoner, Advertising Sales
 Skilar Boland, Adv. Production Sheila Smith, Office Manager

Nor'west Press
Jim Bowker, General Manager
Richard Westfahl Ron VanLoenen Judy McKnight
Betty Morris Mary Jo Tapparo Lana Westfahl
Teneile Lovelace John Lapka

nwkansas.com
 N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services (nbetz@nwkansas.com)
 Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

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@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnav@nwkansas.com
 The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.
 SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$25; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$79. Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. By mail daily in Kansas, Colorado: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

Incorporating:
The Sherman County Herald
 Founded by Thomas McCants 1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR
 Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey 1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers
 Haynes Publishing Company

Cub Scouts say thank you

To the Editor:
 Cub Scouts from Goodland Pack 142 would like to thank the community for supporting them with their popcorn sale this year.

The pack sold \$21,802 of popcorn, of which 70 percent (\$15,261) stays in the Coronado Area Council. This is the pack's main fund raiser for the year.

Pack 142, with over 40 youths, is sponsored by the Methodist men.

For information about scouting in Goodland or the popcorn sales, contact Josh Dechant,



from our readers

• to the editor

cubmaster, at 785-899-7026 or Richard Stramel, pack committee chairman, 785-899-6480.

Richard Stramel
 Goodland

where to write

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 302 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774
- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521
- U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1217 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 225-2715
- State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7676
- State Sen. Stan Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7399
- Kansas Attorney General Carla J. Stovall, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767

berry's world



A "WIN-WIN" SHELL GAME