

from our viewpoint...

# Winning was easy; getting out is tough

As the body count mounts in Iraq, questions about the United States mission there become more difficult to answer, and there are more people comparing the situation to the Vietnam war.

During his Veterans Day speech Tuesday, Goodland's Roy Dixon urged the audience to support the troops and speak up in support of the War on Terrorism. He suggested that anyone who disagreed was giving "aid and comfort to the enemy."

We find that to be a bit extreme, even if it was being said for effect.

No one we know really likes war or killing innocent people. The situation the American troops are dealing with in Iraq is not the same as Vietnam, but it can be as frustrating as what we experienced in that far-off Asian country.

In Vietnam, we were facing a divided country that had been fighting since the end of World War II, and there were two groups trying to take control. After the French were defeated in 1954, the country was split in half, with each side taking half, but it was clear neither would be satisfied with this solution.

When American troops were sent as advisors in 1958, it seemed like a simple action, and not one that would embroil us in a protracted war that would cost over 50,000 lives over the next 15 years.

In Vietnam, there was an ideological battle, and the north had support from neighboring Communist countries which provided weapons and money. Then there was the Ho Chi Min trail which brought those supplies into the battle area, and made any attempt at real victory almost impossible. The jungle didn't help either.

In Iraq, the American troops do not have a split country. A defeated minority is waging a guerrilla campaign to regain control. There are not any major allies to reinforce or re-supply these fighters, but they do have hidden supplies they are able to use.

The longer the Americans are seen as the occupying force rather than the liberators, the more of an edge goes to the guerrillas, whose only hope is to mobilize the people and get them to join their effort to throw out the "invading army."

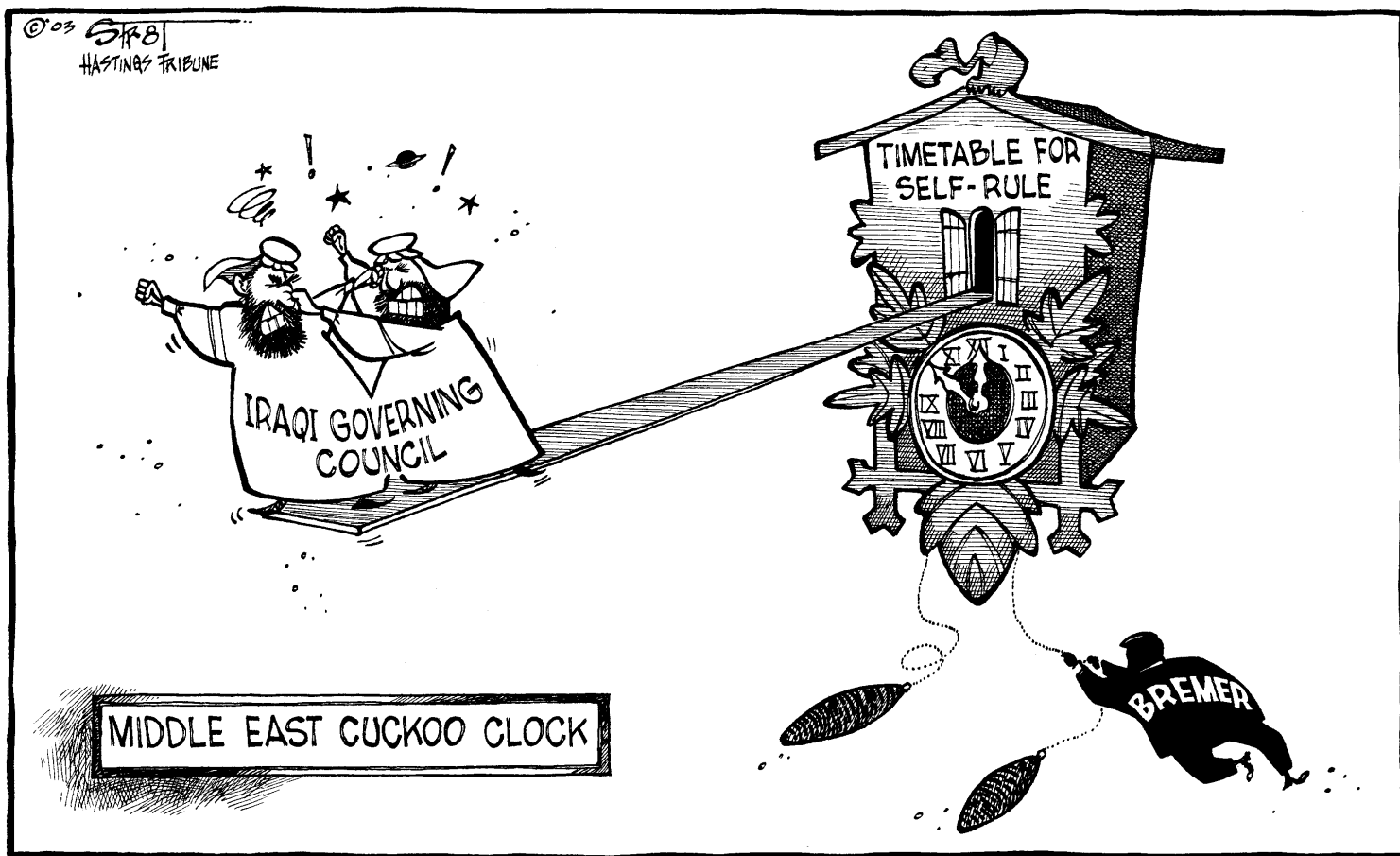
Going to Iraq was not a tough decision. Going into such a war without a clear map as to how to get back out without leaving the country in chaos is the problem. We knew going in it would be a clear victory over Saddam Hussein's troops because we were willing to put the necessary force in place to win.

However, now we must walk that tightrope between being the liberator and the invading conqueror as we try to give the new Iraqi government the support it needs to put the country on the road to democracy.

The biggest challenge is to maintain the pressure on Saddam's remaining supporters, and to find this dictator, who like Osama bin Laden has slipped through our nets. His continued ability to frighten his countrymen makes the American task difficult to say the least. His ability to hide is like fighting in the jungles of Vietnam.

We can expect citizens of this country and those of our supporters to question what is happening in Iraq, because it is not a pleasant situation with a clear solution. The fact there are people criticizing the current actions should not come as any surprise. In every war, there have been people who criticized what was happening, and that is a part of what makes the United States a marvelous place to live.

Iraq is another test for our people, and for the principles upon which the nation was founded. We must continue to fight terrorists wherever they are, and at the same time be able to discuss and argue about the best way to carry out that fight. — Tom Betz



# Cat enjoys helping make the bed

I felt guilty when I made the bed this week. I had no help, but I did it anyway. I didn't expect Steve's help. He can be counted on to rip the sheets, blankets and mattress pad off the bed, stuff everything down the laundry chute and even go down the basement and do the laundry.

When it comes time to remake the bed, fold the clothes or hang the shirts, I know he will be very busy, far, far away.

What he does, he does well, but there are some things that he hates, and remaking the bed is one of them.

He will remake the bed if I'm out of town, and he will even do it if I'm in town, but he'll put it off until 2 to 3 a.m. I've usually been asleep for several hours by then.

I do have help most weeks, however, when I bring up the warm covers.

As soon as she sees the laundry basket with sheets and blankets, April Alice gets in the middle of my bed.

The first few times she did this, I shooed her off. She just got back in the middle, so I made the bed over her.

That was just what she wanted.

First, I put on the clean mattress pad. The bed



**cynthia haynes**

• open season

had a large white, cat-sized lump in it which worked its way to the edge as I reach for the fitted sheet.

By the time I start to fit the first corner of the sheet on, the cat is on top of the mattress pad ready for another layer.

So it goes with the top sheet, two blankets and the coverlet.

She likes the winters best, because in the summer there is only one blanket. In the fall and spring, there are two, and in the dead of winter there are two blankets and a comforter as well as the mattress pad, sheets and coverlet to get made into.

Last year, we bought some new sheets and a new mattress pad.

I was worried.

The edges of this new mattress pad went all the way under the mattress instead of just down the side. The new bottom sheet also fitted not just the

top and sides, but a good two to three inches under the mattress.

How was the cat going to get out?

The first time I put on the mattress pad and reached under it and pulled the cat to safety. She didn't like it very much, but I figured she'd smother if she couldn't get out from under all that bedding.

When I put the bottom sheet on, I wasn't so worried. I turned to get to top sheet before preparing to rescue the cat.

As I turned, I mused that this was going to get to be a real pain if I had to remove the cat manually every week.

However, by the time I turned back with the top sheet, the cat was sitting in the middle of the bed, on top of the bottom sheet and ready for action.

I've watched, but I'm still not entirely sure how she gets out from under those new bedcovers.

When I made the bed today, though, she was downstairs. I called, but Steve had music going and she either didn't hear or, well, she's a cat, she probably just ignored me.

I felt guilty anyway as I put one unlumpy piece on the bed after another.

Oh well. I'm sure she'll be there tonight to help me try out the clean covers.

# Everyone's got one good fish story

Cynthia wanted me to write a fish story. I'm not sure what she needed it for, but I think the deadline was sometime last week. Or maybe last month.

I've been too busy to go fishing much lately, and that's no way to live. Man should go fishing every week. Woman, too.

When you're fishing, you can't be fighting or causing trouble or getting into trouble. Unless you've got an illegal rod, or go over limit, at least.

When you're fishing, you gotta relax. Fish stories are something else. First, you gotta have time to fish. Then things happen. Weird things.

My best fish story was the day I caught a bird. Really.

I was fly fishing on a creek in Colorado. I was working my way up the creek, casting my fly into the holes up ahead. I made a back cast, when all of a sudden, I got a tremendous strike.



**steve haynes**

• along the sappa

That seemed a little odd, since usually you get a bite when the fly is on the water. Not back over your head.

As I whipped the line forward, though, it was heavy. Way too heavy. Then on the forward cast, I saw why.

A flycatcher had nabbed my fly. He was hooked, thrashing about at the end of my line.

I pulled, he flapped. I whipped, he flew. Still hooked.

Finally, the bird zipped when the line zagged, the hook came free and my little feathered friend flapped off.

I'm sure the experience took years off his

life. I was a little startled myself.

A friend out in Colorado, a banker by trade, still doesn't believe this story. He says I just make these things up.

I tried to tell him that I don't have that good an imagination, but it's no use. I strongly suspect that he's never caught a bird on an elk-hair caddis. I know he never went fishing enough.

There is one way you can tell this story is true, though, and that is the fact that over the years, the bird has never grown.

If this had been one of those fish stories, it'd be an eagle by now.

"And you should have seen the one that got away . . ."

But no, it's still just a little flycatcher. Besides, an eagle would have waited until I had a fish on the line to snatch it.

That's my fish story. Fat lot of good it did me. Now she wants a hunting story.

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## By Sen. LARRY SALMANS

I recently attended a conference which dealt with the subject of natural law, its definition, importance to public policy and impact on various societies, including our own.

Even though natural law is embodied in the Ten Commandments and in our Constitution, it is not just American or even Christian; it is universal, written on the heart of every human being. Even those who deny belief in a Supreme Being find themselves using these principles to pass judgment on the ideas of others.

We have people in our country who have strong feelings about where the Ten Commandments should or should not be placed, but to deny the natural law embodied in them is to deny one's innermost self.

There are some things that are wrong in every culture. One is murder. Others are lying, stealing and adultery. Specific definitions of



## from our readers

• to the editor

what these actions entail differ, but the basic concept of right and wrong is universal.

Have you ever heard of a country where a soldier was admired for running away in battle, or where a man felt proud for double-crossing a friend? What about a reward for brutalizing the handicapped, the very young or the very old?

When "universal law," which could be defined as the "universal common sense" of the human race, is suppressed or denied, it is invariably replaced by "uncommon sense." Irrational thought and actions become the norm, fully justified with clever rationale to mask

feelings of guilt.

We can suppress, modify, and even justify breaking natural law, but ultimately we end up breaking ourselves. Natural law appears to be the glue that holds a society together. Without its foundation and a structure based upon it, we feel unstable and insecure.

Laws provide stability and security, which in turn provide the platform for a stable society. Without it, each person becomes a law unto themselves, with little regard for their fellow man. This focus on self leads to anarchy and eventual destruction.

As we look back on the ash heap of civilizations, we see that the demise of many closely followed their disregard for natural law. One of the most obvious in our times has been Hitler's Nazi Germany.

Larry Salmans of Hanston is state senator for the 37th district.

## garfield

