

from our viewpoint...

Now is time to find way to build a plant

Now that the legislative session is over, and Gov. Kathleen Sebelius apparently has made her vetoes stick, isn't it about time to get everyone together and come up with a compromise that would get at least one power plant built in Kansas?

The governor offered a one-plant compromise earlier this year, but proponents apparently thought they'd prevail either in the Legislature or in court. They claimed one plant couldn't be financed, that they had to have two.

So far, though, they have none.

Here's a plan: Take the governor up on her offer. Write a plan to build one plant at Holcomb, alongside Sunflower Electric Power Corp.'s existing station. Get a permit to build it, and then wait for the lawsuits that are sure to come. (Sunflower quietly announced a delay in building the second plant earlier this month anyway.)

That would get the process moving for at least one unit moving forward. Our betting is that financing would be there, because the Colorado, Texas and, yes, Kansas rural electric cooperatives backing the plant need the power. They say they need it pretty bad.

And in that case, half a loaf would be a whole lot more kilowatts than none.

Kansas, the rural West and the nation are going to need a lot of power in the next 10 years. Probably, the need is there for both Holcomb plants, maybe even a third one already dropped, but for sure, one plant will pay its bills.

And we should be prepared to build one plant, especially one that would be the cleanest coal-fired plant in the state.

Why coal?

Because switching to natural gas would drive up the cost of the power a lot faster than coal, for one thing. Because coal is available and the plant could be built far faster than a nuclear plant, even another coal plant.

While the governor wants to push wind power — and that is a good idea — wind can't be depended on to carry the "base load," the demand when the wind is not blowing and the sun isn't shining. Other technologies are years away.

Nuclear, though enjoying a revival in popularity, has the same problems it always had: risk, waste, permanent pollution of the earth's surface. Do we really want to go back to that?

No nuclear plant has been built in the U.S. in more than 25 years, and it'd take darn near that long to get one going and built. Prices could be \$6 billion to \$8 billion a plant.

So coal if what we're stuck with, the Holcomb plant is about the best choice we have. It'd create 100 or more jobs in western Kansas and ensure our power supply for years to come.

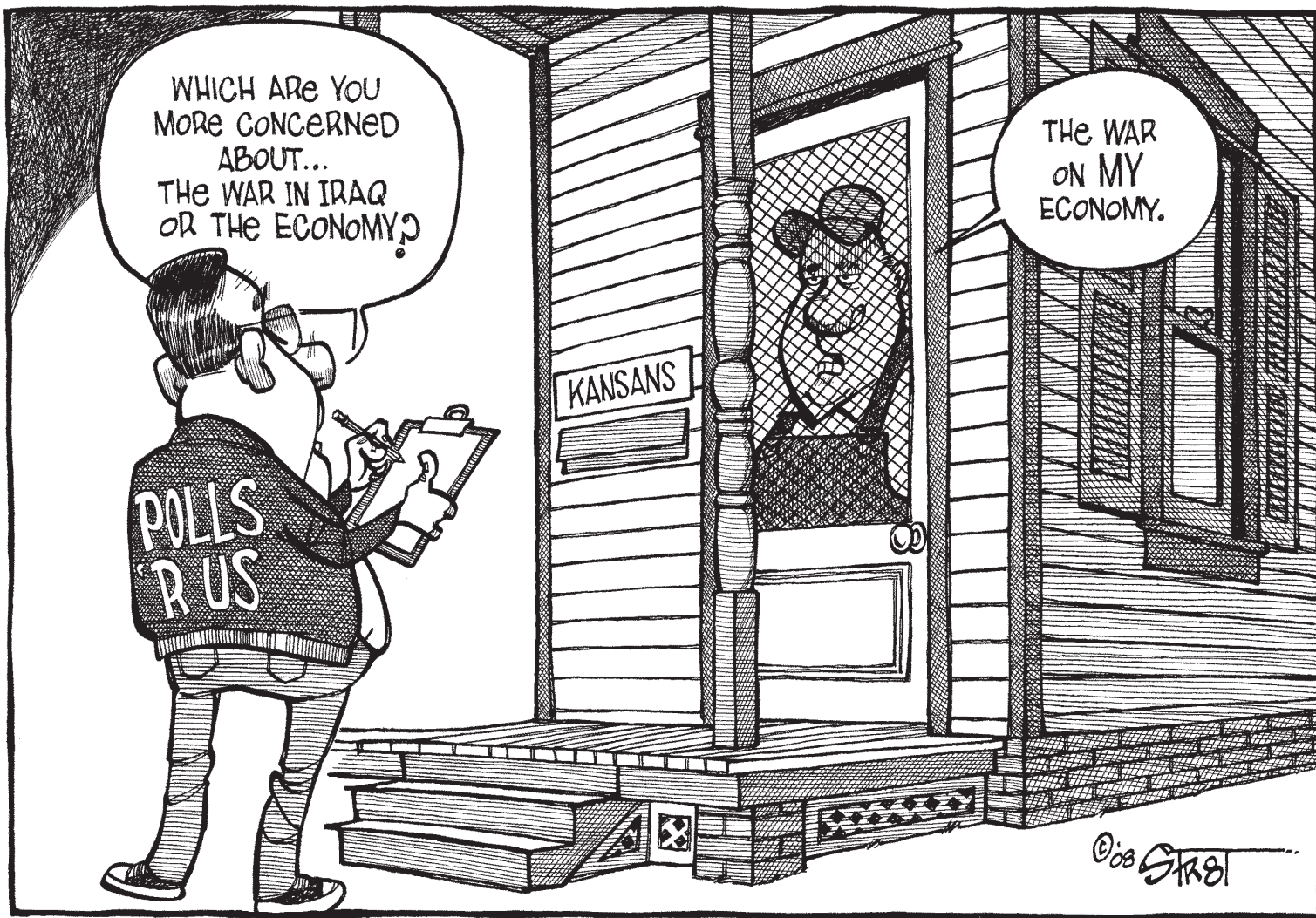
And by the time a single plant is built, it'll be time to ask for another. We'll bet on that.

Sure, most of the power will be exported at first. So are the cars, grain and airplanes Kansas makes. This is about jobs as well as power, and the governor ought to recognize that.

Western Kansas needs those jobs.

Compromise may not be anyone's first choice, but it'd be a lot better than building no plants, wouldn't it? Sunflower ought to consider that, because the world will need the power.

— Steve Haynes



Banking on food



tom purcell
• commentary

"I was upset about the rising cost of food, too. But then I got smart."

"Smart?"

"Look, when food costs began soaring, I complained as much as the next guy. I complained about fuel costs driving up shipping expenses, which drove up the cost of produce and meat. I complained about the emerging middle class in India and China."

"What's wrong with an emerging middle class?"

"Nothing, except that middle class folks have the means to eat well. They're driving up the demand for decent grub, which is also driving up costs. I spent a lot of time complaining about Congress."

"What does Congress have to do with rising food costs?"

"Our esteemed politicians are pumping big subsidies into ethanol production. Ethanol is made from things such as corn. Today, nearly a quarter of our corn production is being used to make fuel. That has increased the demand for corn, which has driven up its cost. It's driven up the cost of beef, too — cows eat corn."

"That's no good."

"But the thing that really got my goat is the speculators. According to The Washington Post, they've pulled their money out of the housing market and pumped it into grain futures. On top of all the other food woes we've been having, there is a drought in Australia, which means there is a wheat shortage, too."

"Let me get this straight: The same investors who helped create a housing bubble are now

driving up the cost of grain futures?"

"That's right. And if Americans think they have it bad, imagine how hard it is for the world's poor to afford dinner nowadays. Riots are breaking out all over the world as frustrated folks struggle to feed themselves."

"That is terrible. Could you explain what you mean when you say you got smart?"

"Oh, that's easy. You see, I'm just an average Joe trying to feed my family. I concluded there is no way I can beat the conditions that are driving up food costs, so I may as well join them."

"Join them?"

"I read an article by Brett Arends in The Wall Street Journal. He encouraged folks to load up their pantries with food — that with food inflation running at 4.5 percent a year, food was a better investment than keeping your money in money-market funds. That gave me a great idea."

"Go on."

"Well, I pulled all my money out of the bank and bought food — lots and lots of food. I built a giant refrigeration unit in my back yard and packed it full of ground beef and chicken. With ground beef and chicken up more than 5

percent, I sold it for a nice little profit."

"You are buying and selling meat?"

"For starters, I took my profit and invested in cereal. With grain costs skyrocketing, I got an 8 percent return on a few thousand boxes of Lucky Charms. And then I poured those profits into milk, cheese, bananas and peanut butter. Those investments are growing 10 percent a year."

"You're a regular General Mills."

"I was rolling now and used my profits to invest in flour and rice. Both are shooting up more than 13 percent a year, and I found myself sitting on a pile of cash. It was about then that I struck the mother lode."

"The mother lode?"

"Eggs. The wife and I built a barn out back and stocked it with hundreds of chickens. The cash began really rolling in then. The cost of eggs has shot up more than 30 percent this year."

"Didn't your neighbors complain about all those chicken in your backyard?"

"My neighbors are my biggest investors. The point is the sky is the limit. Arends says the trend is for food costs to get even worse. That will be good for business."

"I have to praise you for your ingenuity. What do you plan to do with your profits?"

"Invest in gasoline. The wife and I are clearing just enough to fill our tank once a week."

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Protecting free press takes international help

By SHIEH JHY-WEY

Minister of Government Information
Taiwan, Republic of China

In recent months, the international press has criticized the government of the People's Republic of China for its trampling on human rights through the violent suppression of peaceful demonstrators and lamas in Tibet.

Now it is time for the international community to put a stop to another violation of human rights that has come about due to Beijing's political machinations — the denial of international press freedoms from Taiwanese journalists.

Every year since 2004, the United Nations Department of Public Information has refused to issue press credentials for the World Health Assembly to Taiwan's journalists, prohibiting them from covering that body's annual meeting. The stated reason for this is that Taiwan is not a member of the World Health Organization, a U.N. agency.

In the health debate, Taiwanese people's health rights and their right to information are being violated on political grounds, a reality that runs contrary to the global understanding of the U.N. as an international body obliged to uphold justice through the fair and equal treatment of all peoples.

Freedom of the press is a value that should transcend politics. Article 19 of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Yet Taiwanese journalists' annual struggle to gain access to the assembly proceedings causes the stated convictions of the U.N. to ring hollow.

The health organization's *World Health Report 2007*, with the theme, "A Safer Future: Global public Health Security in the 21st Century," stresses the importance of information sharing and international cooperation to combat disease. The report emphasizes that the organization must allocate more resources to setting up a comprehensive epidemic preven-



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tion network.

Moreover, Article 3 of the agency's International Health Regulations states that their "implementation... shall be guided by the goal of their universal application for the protection of all people of the world from the international spread of disease."

But the the organization has weakened its own epidemic prevention mechanism by excluding Taiwan — and has further sought to conceal this loophole by barring Taiwan's journalists from reporting at the the assembly. If the international community again turns a blind eye to the actions of this policy's main instigator, China, and permits its continuation, such a course can only serve to threaten the global disease prevention network.

In democratic nations, journalists are seen as independent, not as the mouthpieces of their national or regional governments. Democratic Taiwan fully respects its journalists' press freedoms and works to protect their independence and autonomy. According to the U.S.-based human rights organization Freedom House, Taiwan enjoyed the highest degree of press freedom in Asia in 2007.

where to write

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Regrettably, press freedoms have not been equally respected in the U.N.. Despite its vow to safeguard human rights and protect freedoms of the press, the U.N. has banned Taiwan's journalists from covering assembly activities and prevented them from fulfilling their duty to the people of Taiwan's collective right to information.

As the 2008 the assembly prepares to meet on May 19, we make the following appeals:

- Given that the right to information and freedom of the press should not be limited by national borders, freedom of the press should not be regarded as the prerogative of the organization's member states only.

- The goal of the the organization is to attain the highest possible degree of health for everyone, regardless of nationality or membership. The the agency and its parent organization, the U.N., which champion global equity and human rights, should respect the rights of the 23 million people of Taiwan to health and information.

- However China may oppress Taiwan on the international stage, the global free press should not be made the victim of an international political dispute. The U.N. and its agency should not allow political considerations to supersede freedom of the press and the spirit of journalistic independence.

Out of respect for the principle of parity, these organizations should lift their discriminatory ban on Taiwan and issue press passes to Taiwan's journalists.

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