

from our viewpoint...

Where do we put those terrorists?

The new president will have to decide what happens to the hundreds of alleged terrorist prisoners being held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The U.S. government can't keep the prisoners on the base, which is Cuban territory under a long-term lease to the U.S. that dates back to the Spanish American War.

Guantanamo survives as a capitalist enclave in communist Cuba because we simply refused to leave when Fidel Castro took over more than 50 years ago. Its nearly total isolation — there are no open gates that allow commerce with Cuba and only sea approaches to the heavily guarded base — made it a perfect site to hold terrorists. Or so it seemed.

The Bush Administration wanted the prisoners outside the U.S. court system, where lawyers could have tied the cases up for years. The foreign site kept the prisoners more out of the courts and out of the public eye at first.

However, scandals involving treatment and alleged religious abuse managed to leak out. Lawyers began to file court cases on the U.S. mainland. And many around the world objected to the extralegal way they were being treated.

The true radicals among the crowd refuse to bow at all to U.S. authority. A former chief of public relations for Al-Qaida, Ali Hamza al-Bahlul, was found guilty of 35 counts of conspiracy, solicitation to commit murder and providing material support to terrorism this week.

He ordered his lawyers to stand silent, making no plea or case, and vowed to continue the fight against America. It's hard to see how we can release someone like that, especially after he was convicted of masterminding videos and Internet sites for Osama bin Laden.

Others, such as a group of Chinese Muslims captured in Afghanistan, have no place to go. The U.S. no longer sees them as a threat, but cannot send them home to China, where the government would arrest them. The Bush Administration, for many reasons, does not want them here, either.

Still, that leaves al-Ahlu and others like him, real terrorists. But where to put them, and others convicted in special military courts on the Navy base?

No state wants them. Kansas' senators, usually eager to grab any jobs offered by the government, both wrote to reject the idea of building cells at a military prison in Leavenworth.

Wherever they might be held, these political prisoners — we call them war criminals, but their own people do not — would be a target for escape and retribution. Released, they would only return to their crimes.

Keeping them forever in Cuba is not much of an option. The Democratic candidate, Barack Obama, already has vowed to close the prison there. A Republican president eventually would have to do the same.

Nor does it seem likely that another location could be found on foreign soil that would not draw world protests, possible terrorists raids and other problems.

The only real alternative would be to build a special camp somewhere in the U.S., but in an open society, that would be hard to hide. Opposition would be strong.

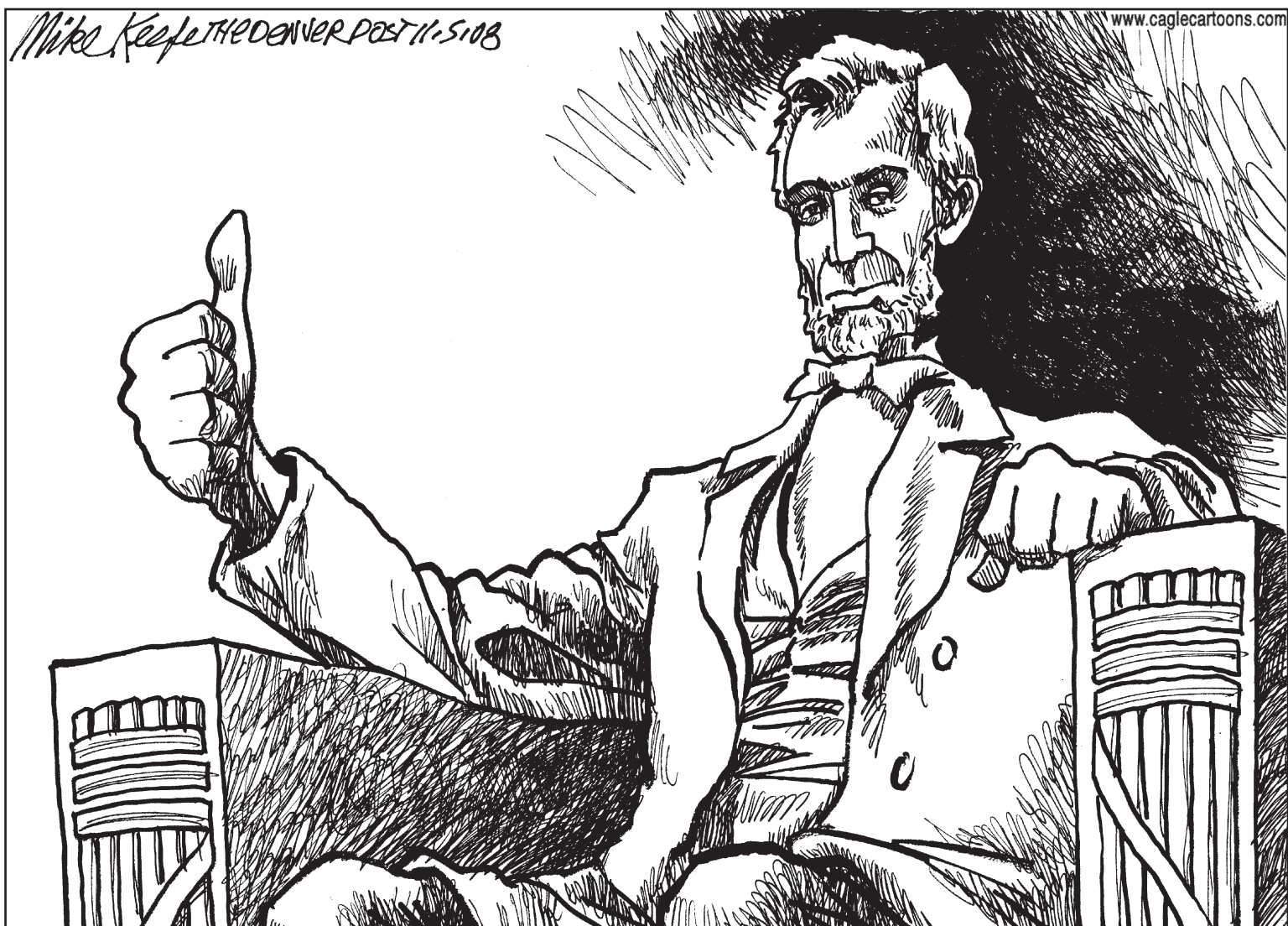
It is a dilemma. No one wants to see the prisoners released, the terrorists at least, and no one wants to have them near. It's no wonder Guantanamo looked so good at the start.

Perhaps, in hindsight, taking these people into the regular courts and regular federal prisons would have been the smart thing to do, but it may be too late for that.

There is no easy solution here, just tough questions.

— Steve Haynes

Mike Keefe THE DENVER POST 11-5-08



A view of the election from across the pond

The election is over, and a new day is dawning on America and the world as we digest what historic events we have seen.

More than five years ago my wife, Ava, got to know a lady in England through the Internet. The couple, Liz and John, have visited with us and we traveled together for several days down to Santa Fe, Houston and New Orleans (before Katrina).

Over the years we have talked about politics in both countries, and John has been very interested in the election this year.

I received this e-mail from him Wednesday morning, and sent him my reply:

Dear America,

What a clever country you are! And so many of you have shown such, unexpected, common sense. Crossing this particular Rubicon is a small step for a man but a giant leap for mankind, as someone once said.

I see it as the glorious and timely emancipation of a race and almost a fulfillment of what Martin Luther King said 45 years ago. Obama's election will change the perception of America throughout the world and that, very much, for the better.

Wasn't McCain's speech accepting defeat gracious. He showed considerable dignity.

If Obama's election could well be his legacy, what is W's? Is it 9/11, Iraq, Afghanistan or New Orleans? Has he left anything positive behind that we don't know about over here? Will history treat him kindly?



tom betz

• t, t & o

I'll get off my soapbox and put this ramble out of its misery. It has been a long night. Why can't you lot have your elections at a more sensible time.

Tomorrow there will still be a financial crisis but today the world is beautiful.

As they say over here,
Gobama
John

John,

It was a fun night. It went smoother than I expected, and Obama had a wider margin that I expected. I told people the winner would be declared by 10 p.m. our time, but they beat that by about 30 minutes.

I pretty much knew Obama was the winner when he won Pennsylvania and Ohio. He ended up winning some states most did not expect, and it was good to watch Colorado go into the Democratic column.

Yes, I felt McCain's speech was one of the best he has given in many weeks, and that it truly came from his heart. I felt it showed how deeply McCain is committed to this country.

I thought Obama's speech was more realistic

than many people expected. I think he used the opportunity to echo much of what McCain said, and to give people a blueprint of what to expect in the coming days. I believe he will truly try to reach out to bring the country together. Having a clear winner without the voting problems of the past two elections should make it easier to work through the healing process.

The Democrats picked up five seats in the Senate and I believe 22 in the House to give them a better working majority, but not a veto proof House or a filibuster proof Senate.

I think Obama is serious about trying to help American industry, but it will be an uphill battle. I think the financial situation is slowly working its way out. It is certainly not over, but we can see that with the election results the American people put it at the top of the list of what Obama must focus on in the first 1,000 days of his term.

As I watched the celebration in Grant Park in Chicago I was reminded of a very different scene in that same park 40 years ago when the Democrats self-destructed with the riots at the Democratic Convention in 1968. It was a chance at closure from those bad old days and a chance to look forward to much better days.

Obama gives us a new face to the world, and I think you are right the new face will help our image. It has been a long time coming, and am glad I have been able to cover at least a small piece of this historic event.

Thanks for your thoughts.

Our laughable election

Just in time for this year's electoral excitement, Wall Street Journal columnist John Fund has revised and updated his 2004 book, "Stealing Elections: How Voter Fraud Threatens Our Democracy (Encounter)."

From felons voting and absentee voter fraud to the shady registration drives of ACORN, Fund's book surveys the bureaucratic ineptitude and deliberately fraudulent ballot-rigging tricks that have destroyed the credibility of our elections system among the American public and made it a laughingstock among industrialized nations. I spoke by phone to Fund Wednesday, Oct. 22, as he rode a train from Washington to New York City.

Q: Please give us a brief idea of what your book tells us about the nature of our voting system.

A: It tells us we in many ways have as sloppy, as chaotic and as varied an election system as we had in 2000, when Bush and Gore spent 37 days fighting about Florida and the country didn't know who the next president would be.

If you compare voting conditions to the conditions of a dry forest at the end of summer, when there is a danger of fire, the flammable material is just as present as it was in 2000, except now a lot more people have matches.

Q: Why did you feel you had to write this book back in 2004?

A: Remember, 75 percent of this new book is fresh material. It's basically been completely rewritten and updated. I wrote the old edition and the new edition because I felt people were not sufficiently informed about how vulnerable our election system was to breakdowns, incompetence and outright fraud.

Q: What's an example of an update or revision that you've added since 2004?

A: The Washington governor's race of 2004. There's fresh material on Barack Obama's relationship with ACORN that is very timely and very newsworthy.

Q: Will readers of your book be encouraged or depressed by what they learn?

A: I hope they'll be entertained, because some of the stories are hilarious, frankly. I don't want to frighten them. I want to educate them. I want to educate them that we have the sloppiest elections system of any industrial-



bill steigerwald

• newsmakers

ized country. We have the least secure elections system of any industrialized country. And we can take practical steps to make them better, but all of this is drenched in partisanship and one side always wants to block the reforms it thinks are less advantageous to it or encourage reforms that are more advantageous to it. In other words, it's become a partisan football.

I cover both Republican malefactors in my book and Democratic malefactors. My job is not to serve as a partisan advocate; my job is to serve as someone who says, "Look, political power is so important in this country, there's so much political power lodged with the government, that people will often cheat in order to get that political power. And no political party has a monopoly on virtue." I present example after example. Right now we have an honor system in our elections; basically we take people at their word that they are who they say they are, that they are casting a legitimate vote. I want to replace that with a system similar to what Ronald Reagan urged — trust but verify.

Q: Who seems to like your book more, Republicans or Democrats?

A: The majority of examples in my book are Democratic voter fraud examples. The reason for that is, Republicans used to have big-city machines — Chicago; Philadelphia, by the way, until the '50s was a Republican machine; St. Louis. Those Republican machines have faded. Nassau County was the last one on Long Island. What's left are Democratic big-city machines.

Voter fraud is most frequent in big-city machines because two conditions are present at the same time: You have a large pool of voters who rely on politics for their livelihood or can be bribed or seduced into casting an illegal vote; and you also have the voting officials who are often beholden for their jobs to the machine and will often look the other way if they see fraud or they may even be part of the fraud.

Those are usually found in big cities or rural machines, old-style political machines, and those are more often than not controlled by Democrats. So it's not that one party is more virtuous than the other, but Democrats have more of an opportunity to commit voter fraud and, believe me, in big-city machines and rural machines, they often take advantage of that.

Q: What's the most overrated problem, voter fraud or vote theft?

A: Look, there's also a second problem which everyone says — voter suppression — which is Jim Crow tactics to try to keep down minorities from voting. I don't say it doesn't happen. I cite examples in my book of it happening, but they are not recent. The only recent examples of voter suppression or intimidation that I can find are people will leave fliers in neighborhoods that say "Republicans will vote on Tuesday and Democrats vote on Wednesday." Or, "You have to clear up all your parking tickets before you vote or you might be arrested." These are anonymous fliers and I certainly deplore them. If anyone is found to have manufactured them and distributed them in neighborhoods, they should be prosecuted, because they are trying to trick people, fool people.

The bottom line is, I don't say voter suppression doesn't exist. We spent a long battle in the 1960s over that. We have to make sure we never again have people who try to intimidate or prevent people from voting. There are two civil rights. We have the civil right to make sure people can cast a vote — we fought a battle in the 1960s for that, the Voting Rights Act. We should preserve and extend those gains. There should be a second civil right — not to have your vote canceled out by someone who shouldn't be voting, someone who's voting twice or someone who doesn't even exist. You can be disenfranchised just as easily if your vote is canceled out through fraud as if somebody stood in the courthouse door and prevented you from entering a polling place and voting.

Bill Steigerwald is a columnist at the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. E-mail Bill at steigerwald@caglecartoons.com.

The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association

e-mail: star-news@nwkanssas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Tom Betz, Editor
Pat Schiefen, Society Editor
Sharon Corcoran, Reporter
Jordie Mann, Jessica Corbin, Advertising Depr.
Sheila Smith, Office Manager



Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager
Richard Westfahl, Betty Morris, James Jackson
Lana Westfahl, James Ornelas, Tasha Shores
Barbara Ornelas, Judy McKnight

nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(ntbetz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day, July 4th and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., 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 Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkansas.com.

The Goodland Star-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, \$29; six months, \$46; 12 months, \$81. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$39; six months, \$54; 12 months, \$89 (All tax included). Mailed individually each day: (call for a price).

Incorporating:

The Goodland Daily News

1932-2003

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