

from our viewpoint...

Not clear who leads in war on terrorism

It's far from clear who's winning the War on Terrorism, though the U.S. has not suffered greatly in the last few years, and the terrorists have taken a beating.

Around the world, leaders of al Qaida and its related groups have been killed by bombs and missiles, hunted down and arrested and run into hiding. While the Taliban has become aggressive in Afghanistan, it's nowhere near a victory.

Americans, however, and our news media in particular, tend to blow out of proportion every little skirmish in this war. Overall, we are winning the general fight, and our losses have been negligible.

Take the incident where a terrorist double agent who gained the trust of Jordanian and American intelligence officers detonated a bomb in a briefing room, killing eight CIA officers. The loss of eight officers is tragic, but in war, there are casualties.

While not insignificant to the individuals involved or their families, this incident, in the history of our battle, will be little remarked. It represents a series of mistakes in an individual operation, but not a failure of our intelligence system or a major defeat in the war.

Yet, news reports trumpet the bombing as if it was a major issue for the United States. You almost get the idea some people want us to lose, or at least to play up our every setback.

In the same vein, the "underwear bomber" does not represent a massive failure of our air transport security system, though it does point out some weaknesses. If security had not been so good, one expert noted, the bomber might have carried a real bomb — one that worked. Instead, he was captured, alive but horribly wounded.

It's easy to say the security apparatus should have spotted the bomber, who had been turned into our embassy in Nigeria as a possible terrorist by his father, but in truth, the system is not that good. It may not even be possible or desirable for the system to be that good.

The fact is, it works. Millions of people fly every day, and not one of them has been killed by a terrorist act in years. It could happen again, to be sure, but it seems less likely as time goes by. The terrorists are not winning and have mustered only feeble efforts against the U.S. since 2001.

In the meantime, they've been run out of their sanctuaries around the world and forced to exist in caves and inhospitable mountains. They are no longer the threat they once were.

That is not to say we've won this struggle, but it may never be won. Terrorists can claim victory from a single act, but the civilized world needs to be safe all the time. Eternal vigilance may be the price of 21st century civilization.

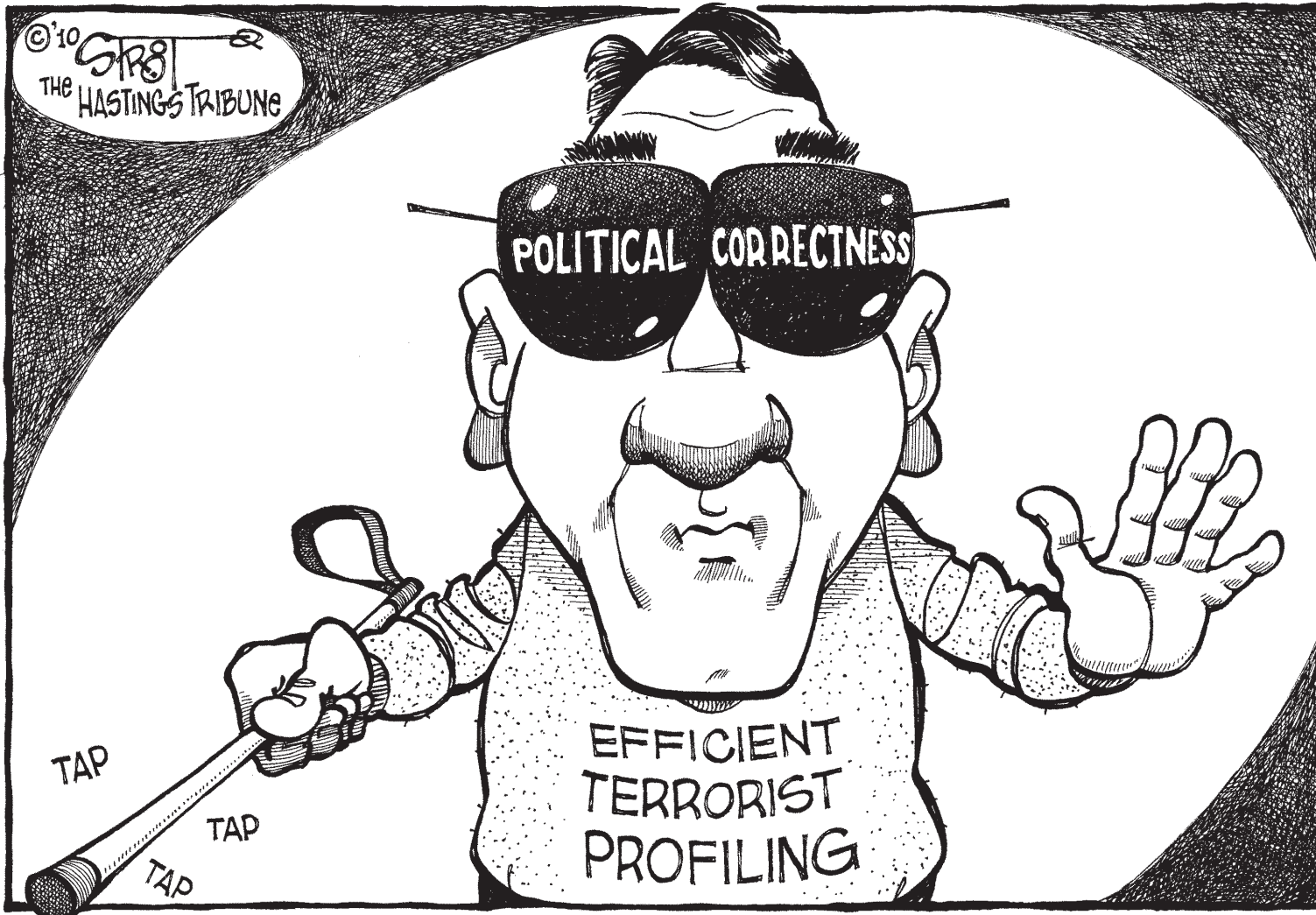
Yes, we might as well be prepared for further indignities at the airport checking line, though gate screening isn't terribly effective. Lots of contraband gets through, many fly who perhaps shouldn't.

The greatest obstacle to a victory by the forces of reason may be our will to continue. The more we hear about bombings and death, the less we want to face the threat. Americans, in particular, do not relish long-term conflict, but this one will not go away soon.

Go away it will. All threats fade, all movements run their course. Even the dreaded communist monolith went away, leaving only a hollow shell to scare us in the end.

For now, though, we need to gain some perspective on what's happening, step back and realize our side has not fared badly, though the battle is far from over.

And think about the consequences of ignoring this problem and letting the terrorist movement grow and fester. — *Steve Haynes*



Safe food is top agriculture priority

Today's consumers are continually bombarded with scads of conflicting food-safety information. Before today's shoppers believe all the stories and headlines, they should consider the producer's side.

Very few celebrity spokespeople, activist leaders or the urban press seek out farmers, ranchers or agricultural leaders when they champion food safety concerns. Contrary to what some consumers and media may think, growing and selling safe, nutritious food is a farmer's No. 1 goal.

Farmers are in business to provide products for their customers. They care what consumers think about their milk, oats, wheat, beef and other products. When consumers asked for leaner meats and low-fat dairy products, the beef, pork and dairy industries respond.

A clean, healthy environment is important to everyone, but probably most important to farmers. A farmer's well being and livelihood depend on his natural resources. While buildings and farm machinery are important tools, a farmer's most precious assets are his land, soil and water. If a farmer destroys his resources, he won't be in business long.

Environmental stewardship has always been important to farmers. It always will be.

Quality and safety of food are as much a concern to farmers as they are to consumers. Farmers shop at the supermarket like everyone else. They eat the same foods. Farmers are consumers too. Farmers not only care about



Insight this week

• john schlageck

the health and safety of their families, but also consumers.

Farmers use technology responsibly. They constantly learn new farming methods and practices by attending training sessions and courses.

New farm technology is expensive. It is in the best interest of farmers to use it carefully and sparingly. Misuse would add to the cost of production, which would result in an even lower return on their investment.

Farmers use agricultural chemicals only when necessary. When they use chemicals, farmers follow label directions designed for public health and safety. When a rancher uses antibiotics and other animal health products for their stock, they follow proper drug use practices. When new advances in biotechnology are discovered, farmers must abide by stringent testing and monitoring practices that ensure only safe products in the marketplace.

Food produced in the United States is safe. More than three decades of Food and Drug Administration testing has shown the majority of fruits and vegetables have no detectable pesticide residues. This underscores that American

farmers use pesticides properly.

Each year federal agencies spend millions of dollars to support food and agricultural safety and quality inspection. The Food and Drug Administration uses millions to inspect and to check processors of "high-risk" foods. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to monitor and trace outbreaks of food-borne illness, from its many labs nationwide.

Farmers and ranchers fully support efforts to evaluate and enhance the current regulatory and food monitoring system. They fully understand Americans should be able to feel confident the food on their tables is the healthiest, safest anywhere in the world.

Agriculture is committed to working with all parties toward maintaining safe food. Decisions affecting the course of agricultural production into the next century must continue to be based on sound science and never on fear or false information.

Farmers and ranchers must remain engaged in helping shape long-term policies. They must continue to maximize their production capacity with an ever-watchful eye on food safety, quality and the environment.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for more than 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.

Good things happening in new year

Thumbs Up to Andrew and Ashley, parents of Sydney Maria Eve, Goodland Regional Medical Center's First Baby of the New Year; the new budding Goodland cheerleaders, who performed at halftime of the Jan. 8 basketball game; and Tanner Oharah and Devin Mangus, for lending their talents to the Cowboys Pep Band.

-td-

It's taken me a while to get used to not hearing the voice of Kay Melia on the radio. I moved to Goodland in 1965, a few years after Kay moved here. We booth relocated to Goodland from Hays, where I worked for the newspaper and he for the radio station. I became so used to hearing Kay's voice that coming back to Goodland to retire in late September 2009 and "tuning in" but not hearing that familiar voice, just didn't sound right.

He was so good to me back in 1989 when the newspaper I edited for nearly 25 years (The Goodland Daily News) was sold and the new ownership wasn't overly excited about retaining me, thus a day and a half later my long career here ended. Kay and Marty Melia picked me up, dusted me off and put me to work at the station for a spell. But that wasn't all. When I was later accepted to become a member of the staff at TMP in Hays, the Melias put on a going away party for me and my two boys, Todd and Lance, which drew a nice crowd.

There's a word to describe this: FRIENDS!



tom dreiling

• time out with td

And good friendships last...and last. Thanks again, you two!

-td-

When I was just a kid, Saturday afternoons were special. Those were the days Roy Rogers and Gene Autrey and all those cowboy heroes of that time, took to the movie screen. And those were the days my Dad dug into his pocket to give my kid sister Mary enough money for her, brother Jim and me to see the shows. Why Dad insisted it was Mary that would handle the money was never fully understood, but the fact we even got to go to the movies was all that mattered to us.

When we found the seats we wanted in the theater, we often envied other kids snacking on candy bars and pop corn. It would be nice if we could do that, but having enough money for the movies was good enough for us. This went on for a few years until we reached the age where we acquired friends and went to the movies with them. By that time we were each given an allowance for chores done around the house.

Years later when Jim and I had occasion to

be with little sister Mary — she was always our little sister — we talked about the past, and the topic of the Saturday movies came up. We particularly remembered other kids in the theater snacking on pop corn and candy bars and wished we'd been able to do that, but knew we couldn't. Well into that topic, Mary said, unexpectedly, "I have a little secret to share with you two guys." We were puzzled as to what she meant, so we said, "What do you have to share?" Without any expression on her face she said, "That movie money Dad used to give me also included enough for treats."

"What!" We were stunned at that revelation. We asked her what she did with the extra coins, and she said she put them in a box in her dresser drawer "for a rainy day." When pushed for more details, she said she held out the treat money as her fee for managing the "movie account." Then she laughed. It was a sort of gotcha expression.

Imagine keeping that secret for 20 years! And how many candy bars and boxes of pop corn did we miss out on? And she probably ended up with enough to buy a new umbrella every time it rained!

-td-

Have a good evening. And if you think we, as a country have problems, might I mention Haiti? Please remember those people in prayer at the house of worship of your choice this weekend.

County ought to join regional recycling

To the Editor:

I say "Hurrah" for the Western Plains Resource Conservation and Development Group for Northwest Kansas!

You reported in the Jan. 12, issue of *The Goodland Star-News* that Board President Sandy Rodgers and Greg Nemecheck, of that organization, in their recent annual report to our County Commissioners, noted they would like Sherman County to consider becoming part of the regional recycling program that has a hub in Colby. I strongly endorse their recommendation.

As they noted, and as I pointed out in my letter to you on Oct. 12, 2007, this regional recycling program appears to provide for all the coverage



from our readers

• to the editor

we now have under a contract with a Southeast Colorado firm, but with at least two very significant additions. The Kansas firm provides for recycling of plastic and cardboard.

As I noted then, plastic virtually DOESN'T GOAWAY ... at least for hundreds or thousands of years! And we all know how much plastic we use ... it is everywhere ... and remember it comes from petroleum.

So, why do we resist a program that recycles it? Why do we continue to glut our precious earth, kill our wonderful and necessary wildlife, use more of our dwindling resources than necessary and leave a legacy of problems for our following generations when there is a better way?

Goodland has started down the responsible and right path of recycling. Now we must expand such a path to include one of our most prolific and dangerous pollution sources ... PLASTIC! We owe it to those who made Kansas what it is today by leaving it the same or better for tomorrow.

Randy Coleman
Goodland

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