

from our viewpoint...

# Secrets get people nervous about city

Some city commissioners apparently want keep the public in the dark about city business.

First the commissioners went through the process of selecting a new city manager entirely in closed session, with no public input.

Then during a meeting Last Monday, Tom Armour, interim city manager, seemed to be answering a question from Commissioner Annette Fairbanks about the effect of changing the City Commission's quorum from three to four of the five members. He said several cities have made such a change.

The quorum question came up in a public meeting over a year ago, but has not been mentioned in any recent open meetings.

The goal of the quorum change is to allow any two commissioners to talk to each other about city business outside of an open meeting.

If commissioners have discussed the quorum lately, it hasn't been at an open meeting. And policy discussions are not covered by any exception to the Open Meetings Law which would allow them to be held in closed session.

The open meeting law says a majority of a quorum — two in the case of the city — cannot discuss public business outside a public meeting. Changing the quorum to four instead of three would allow any two commissioners to discuss city business in private.

Even with such a change in quorum, the law would not allow those two commissioners to legally talk to any one of the other three about the same thing. Taken to an extreme, there could be two sets of commissioners discussing city business and one would be the odd man out.

Across the country, the people demanded open meetings laws after the Watergate scandals. They wanted to prevent elected officials from making decisions without the people seeing not just the end product, but the process and the discussion.

The city has had a lot of closed meetings lately, and allowing another level seems counterproductive. We are sure, though, that some of the commissioners feel they need to "pre-discuss" the city business outside the hearing of the citizens.

Changing the quorum could have serious consequences. Four commissioners would be required for any commission action. With the mayor being an investor in one of the new plants being developed west of town, he has a conflict of interest any time discussion comes up dealing with the plants.

This does not seem to encourage more secrecy by changing the quorum.

Everyone wants the best for the city, but it is important to be sure the public's perception matches the actions being taken by the city commission. — Tom Betz



# Look out, world: Here comes India

By Dick Morris

China has replaced the Soviet Union in our lexicon of villains, and the age-old American preoccupation with the growth of this Asian giant has metastasized into full-fledged paranoia. But the truth is much more sanguine.

India, not China, is the coming giant of the 21st century. And India, unlike China, has no history of imperialism or inclination to global domination.

This year, for the first time, India passed China in economic growth. Its gross domestic product (GDP) shot up by more than 8 percent and now amounts to more than \$3,000 per capita, on a purchasing-power-parity basis. China's GDP, about \$5,000 per capita, is still larger, but not for long.

The key to China's coming failure and India's growing success is Beijing's dependence on manufacturing exports for its wealth and New Delhi's focus on its service sector. China exports more than \$500 billion of products to the rest of the world, including more than \$125 billion to the United States (while we sell China only \$25 billion each year — this is not a typo). Because of its low-wage economy and massive manpower, China can undercut the rest of the world in labor costs and produce goods for less than anybody else.

But this race to the bottom of the global economy will be won not by the lowest-wage economy but by robots. In the coming decade, the growth of robotics will end most manufac-



## from other pens

• commentary

turing employment. Manufacturing will go the way of farming — a few percentage points of the global work force will produce all our products, just as it now grows the bulk of our food.

China's impoverished workers will lose out to American and Japanese robots, and the source of its economic growth with likely wither in the coming decades.

India assured its future power by switching away from the socialist economic model in the early '90s and has moved closer to a free-market system each year since. With the fall of the state-oriented Congress Party, the government has pushed free-market economics more forcefully.

India's economy is firmly rooted in the service sector. Almost half of its GDP comes from services, spurred by almost \$4 billion of investment by American companies. Because of its widespread English fluency, India is in a position to tap into the growth of the U.S. and U.K. economies and to provide low-cost, high-quality services, particularly to the high-tech market. Try calling any computer help line and listen to the accent on the other end.

English will trump Chinese as the language of the global economy, and services will ex-

ceed manufacturing in the information age. India, not China, is equipped to exploit both of these developments to fuel its rapid progress. India's middle class, now numbering more than 300 million people, will develop purchasing power to sustain rapid growth from its internal market in the near future.

And India is not imperialistic. It has never focused on aggrandizement or gaining regional power. With the visit of India's prime minister to the White House, we should focus on its increasing ascendancy and celebrate the fact that we will, indeed, have to deal with an Asian giant, but it won't be China. The huge state sector that weighs down the Chinese economy, the lack of English fluency and the communist aversion to permitting free access to the flow of global information all militate against its following the Indian model.

India will likely make a great global partner for the United States. In a recent Pew research survey, Indians expressed warm feelings for the United States and gave us a positive rating relatively unique in the world. A recent book, *The Anglosphere Challenge* by James C. Bennett, stresses the pivotal nature of English fluency in the information-age economy to come. The growing role of India is testament to that observation.

Dick Morris was an adviser to Bill Clinton for 20 years. © 2005 Dick Morris, All Rights Reserved. e-mail DickMorris at dmredding@aol.com

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# Evolution cannot be!

To the Editor:

Evolution cannot be!

It taketh more false faith to believe the "theory of evolution's myths, distortions and unexplained gaps than 'In the beginning, God created the heaven and earth.'"

Order commeth not from chaos. Cameras, cars, etc., are not the results of explosions and earthquakes! "Whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." IQ test: How many do "U" know?



## from our readers

• to the editor

Sex... "Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and fe-

male." How could a male cell evolve over zillions of years? Likewise, female — then how did they meet?

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handy work." Ps. 19:1

Frank Sowers  
Benkelman, Neb.

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