

from our viewpoint...

## Battle against meth will get interesting

For the past few years, states have noticed the trouble meth has caused and have taken a stance against it by creating and approving their own laws.

Many of those laws are based on controlling the sale of over-the-counter medications that include pseudoephedrin, a main ingredient in the production of meth.

Now the federal government is considering creating a nationwide law to hamper meth producers.

“The fight against meth has been on the Kansas radar for years,” said Kansas Rep. Jerry Moran, “But the meth epidemic knows no state boundaries. It is time for a comprehensive federal approach.”

Are the feds too late?

Some major pharmaceutical companies have already helped the fight. The makers of Tylenol, which has many products with pseudoephedrin, have reconfigured some of products eliminating the chemical.

How the feds approach meth will be key. Congress is starting to hear the response of how it approved prescription drug coverage for Medicare. Critics claim the addition is too complex for people to understand and did nothing but fill the pockets of the pharmaceutical companies.

Will yet another Congressional act related to pharmaceuticals be a pain to figure out while, at the same time, benefiting the industry? Will a federal meth law be written in such away to avoid upsetting the pharmaceutical companies that contribute to election campaigns?

But more importantly, how will the states that have already done their part to fight meth respond? Will a federal law supercede any and all state laws making the work of the local people worthless?

Will a federal law be as strong and effective as the state laws? Both Oklahoma and Iowa, which have taken the lead in the meth war, reported significant reductions in meth lab discoveries after their laws were enacted.

Rural states should be especially concerned since meth and rural areas go hand-in-hand. So far this year, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation reported 337 meth labs have been seized. It’s easy to make meth in rural states because of the supply of needed ingredients and the seclusion. Meth can be made in the backseat of a car on a country road miles away from anybody.

Give the states the benefit of the doubt. They know their meth problems and how to appropriately handle them.

The states shouldn’t take a back seat to the federal government on this one.

— John Van Nostrand, Colby Free Press

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## Disabled vets face a new war

I was in Washington recently and while there, I visited Walter Reed Army Medical Center and spoke with a number of amputees disabled while defending us in Iraq.

I was fascinated by the attitude of these brave men and women who have sacrificed so much in our behalf. Their outlook on life is uplifting. You see nobody with tears in their eyes. Every single one of them has a positive attitude that is absolutely inspiring.

One young man to whom I spoke had just been accepted for admission to a university in Washington, where he plans to study international business. The fact that he lost an arm in Iraq has not deterred him one little bit. He has his eyes on then future.

I saw so many men and women missing arms and legs, and every one of them had positive outlooks, largely thanks to the way they are being cared for and nurtured at Walter Reed. I was also deeply impressed by how the Department of Veterans Affairs is working with them and contributing to the positive attitude the vets display.

I was deeply impressed by those who despite their disability expressed a desire to go back and serve with their comrades still fighting in Iraq. And I spoke to one young man who is struggling to get well enough so he’ll be able to be there to greet his unit when it comes home from Iraq. These are men and women who make you proud to be part of a nation that produces such magnificent people.



michael  
reagan

- making sense

I couldn’t help thinking about all the things being done at Walter Reed for these heroes who deserve all that a grateful nation can do for them - things that are just phenomenal and have never before been done for disabled veterans of past wars.

Thanks to incredible advances in technology, many seriously disabled veterans are being brought back into the mainstream of life where they can do just about everything they could do before losing limbs. Many are overcoming disabilities that would depress most of us were we to suffer from, yet they refuse to give up the struggle to live as near-normal lives as possible.

A couple of weeks ago my wife Colleen ran in the New York Marathon. Participating in that marathon in wheelchair events where a lot of amputees. I watched all of them cross the finish line while I waited for Colleen to finish, and I met two of those I had seen in the marathon during my visit to Walter Reed.

I can’t help recalling the post-World War II movie “The Best Years of Our Lives,” where the question was posed as to how those disabled on the battlefield would be treated on

their return to civilian life and how they would cope with their disabilities. In those days, prosthesis — the creation of artificial arms and legs — was only in its infancy and although the artificial limbs were useful, they left a lot to be desired when it came to performing the most rudimentary tasks.

As a result, in those days, the transition to civilian life for the disabled was difficult and I hope and pray that this won’t be the case with Iraq war veterans. I hope that we will be able to be as positive in our outlook concerning them as they are about themselves. After all, with the marvels of technology, most of these heroic men and women will be able to do just about everything the rest of us can do.

It is incumbent upon every one of us to look upon these veterans with the respect they have earned by their service to the nation and the losses they suffered to safeguard our freedoms. We must treat them as fellow human beings who made great sacrifices for us — and not simply as amputees, not as people with a disability — and consider what they can contribute to society, in the workplace, or in homes as husbands or wives, or wherever it might be. They need and want our respect, not our pity. Winning that respect might be the biggest war they face, and it is up to us to see they win it.

Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on radio stations nationally. E-mail comments to [mereagan@hotmail.com](mailto:mereagan@hotmail.com).

## Questions about ‘Plan for Victory’

Frequently Asked Questions About President Bush’s Plan For Victory:

Q. President Bush recently announced his “Plan for Victory.” What does this plan entail?

A. Its two-pronged. There is a short-term plan and a long-term plan.

Q. And what are they?

A. The short-term plan is to keep the Democrats from regaining control of Congress in ’06.

Q. And the long term plan?

A. Keeps the Democrats from regaining control of the White House in ’08. Or acquire photographs of Hillary Clinton in bed with a goat and/or a woman.

Q. So, nothing about Iraq then?

A. Well, now that you mention it... there was something about the brave freedom-loving Iraqis and how, together, we are winning the tough struggle against violent extremism, but it was just more of the same in an attempt to rescue his poll numbers from falling through the floor like an anvil made of dark matter.

Q. What is the Plan for Victory going to replace?

A. The Plan for Quagmire we’ve been following the last three years.

Q. Didn’t he reveal a strategy for winning?

A. Yeah, but, you know what, so do the Chicago Cubs. Every spring. Don’t imagine election-bound Republicans are looking forward to changing their slogan to: “We’ll get ’em next year.”

Q. What is their slogan now?

A. Lately, it seems to be “Incompetent, Cor-



will  
durst

- raging moderate

rupt Cronies ’R Us.”

Q. Didn’t he also refuse to set a timetable for withdrawal, saying it would send a message to the world that America was weak?

A. Yes, he did. So apparently he’s OK with continuing to send a message to the world that America is a big, bad bully who will beat the crap out of you if we don’t like the way you look at us.

Q. Don’t we run the danger of alienating our allies if we just cut and run?

A. Cut and run? There’s no running. This isn’t running. This is walking. Backwards. Really fast backward walking. Who knows, we might even walk backwards really fast right into Iran or Syria.

Q. How does the president define victory?

A. According to a separate 35-page document accompanying the speech titled “National Strategy for Victory in Iraq,” victory means creating the conditions that allow us to leave.

Q. Is he saying that getting out of Iraq is our only path to victory?

A. No. No. No. A lot of victories await us. Tiny victories and little victories and medium-

sized victories. Not to say we haven’t experienced victories already. A couple of tiny victories, a moral victory and an election victory. And if we string a bunch of these little victories together, it could add up to a nice medium-sized victory. Or a gaggle of little victories and a medium victory, or a series of medium victories coupled with one or two moral victories could add up to a big victory. And two or three big victories could result in a humongous victory.

Q. What is that?

A. A Republican victory. In November ’06 and ’08.

Q. What is the best-case scenario?

A. We try to incubate democracy in the Middle East and whenever the political costs at home get too high, we declare victory and leave, leaving our secret prison camps intact.

Political comic Will Durst is declaring victory over his comedy club career. E-mail Will at [willdurst@sbcglobal.net](mailto:willdurst@sbcglobal.net)

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