

The Political Forum

*A review of social and political trends and events
impacting the world's financial markets*

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THEY SAID IT

*“Not in our name
will you wage endless war
there can be no more deaths
no more transfusions of blood for oil”*

Not In Our Name, “Pledge of Resistance”

ET TU, HILLARY? Well, the big political news this week is the Congressional debate over a resolution in support of President Bush’s pledge to force a “regime change” in Iraq, *with military force if necessary*. Needless to say, I support the President on this one. But I think it is good for Bush and for the nation to hear the other side.

Even Henry VIII valued a well-reasoned argument against war prior to launching one. When the great religious scholar John Colet, founder and Dean of St. Paul’s School, insisted on preaching against the King’s proposed war with France, Henry sent for him and spent an hour and half in the garden in private conversation, during which Colet’s enemies, including the powerful Bishop of London, chortled among themselves that he was surely doomed.

When the King and Colet returned to the palace, Henry sent for a cup of wine, pledged Colet in their presence, and made the following famous statement, “Let every man choose his own Doctor, Dean Colet shall be mine.” And then, of course, he went ahead and invaded France. The great British historian, J.A. Froude, reports that Henry “only wanted to know whether in Colet’s opinion no war could be justified.”

Anyway, I think the debate has been both healthy and informative. It has been healthy because no nation should go to war without a considerable amount of soul searching by its politicians, its military, and the citizenry itself. It has been informative because discussions of such enormous importance put pressure on participants and sometimes this pressure provides the public with a rare glimpse into the flaws and strengths of an individual’s character, and into his or her hidden

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prejudices and deepest convictions, many of which are not always on exhibit under every day circumstances.

For example, while I disagreed with Ted Kennedy's speech in opposition, I was impressed by the poise and determination with which he delivered it. The guy is a real pro. He has been around for a long time and it shows when he decides to get serious about something.

Dick Gephardt has, I believe, also shown an unusual degree of political maturity and common sense. He figured out that he could gain nothing politically by opposing Bush, lose nothing by supporting him, and look like a statesman by taking a stand and sticking with it. Good for him, says I.

Tom Daschle, on the other hand, has come across as a real five-and-dimer, a jack-legged, pettifogging politician who can't vote his beliefs because he doesn't know what they are, being so wrapped up in trying to decide what course would be best for his party that he hasn't taken the time to determine what would be best for his country.

And Robert Byrd has been a sight to behold. He forever reminds me of the two old frauds, the "King" and the "Duke," in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, who perform ersatz Shakespeare before crowds of hicks in 19th century Arkansas. Get this from Twain's "King."

"To be, or not to be; that is the bare bodkin
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would fardels bear, till Birnam Wood do come to Dunsinane,
But that the fear of something after death
Murders the innocent sleep,
Great nature's second course,
And makes us rather sling the arrows of outrageous fortune
Than fly to others that we know not of . . ."

Now get this from the ever ridiculous, strutting old fraud from West Virginia,

"As I have witnessed the tides that ebb and flow on the world stage over these 50 years,
all the more have I come to believe that the Constitution is the principal mast to which
we should rope ourselves in order to put wax in our ears to the siren calls that will lead
us astray from what the Constitution says."

As Huck said about the "King," while the latter was practicing his fractured Shakespeare on the raft, "It seemed like he was just born for it; and when he had his hand in and was excited, it was perfectly lovely the way he would rip and tear and rair up behind when he was getting it off."

Anyway, in my opinion, the debate has been, for the most part, instructive and worthwhile, conducted with honor and decency by the vast majority of participants on all sides. And even better, when the dust settles it will have turned out fine. Bush will have the backing of Congress for his actions in Iraq, Republicans will have gained some political momentum leading up to the

election November 5, and Saddam will have the U.S. military to consider when he crawls into bed at night.

In my opinion, there was just one truly sickening element to the whole exercise. One important individual whose character flaws were ugly beyond belief when exposed by the pressure of the moment. One individual whose life-long disdain for her country oozed forth from the boils of her discontent under the pressure of the debate. And that individual is the Junior Senator from New York, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

What, you ask, has she done? Well, if you will look on the website www.nion.us, you will find that she signed a petition put out by a group called “Not In Our Name” that drips with putrid invective aimed at the honor of her country and its elected government.

The document is too long to reprint here, but the following will give a flavor of the kind of language she endorsed with her name and her title.

“Let it not be said that people in the United States did nothing when their government declared a war without limit and instituted stark new measures of repression.”

“Let us not allow the watching world today to despair of our silence and our failure to Act. Instead, let the world hear our pledge: we will resist the machinery of war and repression and rally others to do everything possible to stop it.”

Or how about this.

“Thus we call on all Americans to RESIST the war and repression that has been loosed on the world by the Bush administration. It is unjust, immoral, and illegitimate. We choose to make common cause with the people of the world.”

“We too watched with shock the horrific events of September 11, 2001. . . . But the mourning had barely begun, when the highest leaders of the land unleashed a spirit of revenge. They put out a simplistic script of ‘good vs. evil’ that was taken up by a pliant and intimidated media. They told us that asking why these terrible events had happened verged on treason. There was to be no debate. There were by definition no valid political or moral questions. The only possible answer was war abroad and repression at home.”

Or finally, this.

O “The government now openly prepares to wage all-out war on Iraq -- *a country which (sic) has no connection to the horror of September 11* (emphasis added). What kind of world will this become if the U.S. government has a blank check to drop commandos, assassins, and bombs wherever it wants?”

O “The brutal repercussions have been felt from the Philippines to Palestine, where Israeli tanks and bulldozers have left a terrible trail of death and destruction.”

Now, says I, *there* is a political platform for November 5, if ever there was one.

O Bush's actions since September 11 have been made up of "stark new measures of repression."

O Mrs. Clinton and her friends will "resist the machinery of war and repression and rally others to do everything possible to stop it."

O Bush's war on terror is "unjust, immoral, and illegitimate."

O The ancient concept of "good versus evil" is "simplistic," and "taken up by a pliant and intimidated media."

O Among the "brutal repercussions" of September 11 is that "Israeli tanks and bulldozers have left a terrible trail of death and destruction."

O Iraq has "no connection" to September 11.

O And the U.S. military is made up of "commandos and assassins."

One wonders if Mrs. Clinton could look at the parents of the individuals who died in Afghanistan and tell them their children were "commandos and assassins." One wonders if Mrs. Clinton could look at the relatives of the victims of September 11 and tell them that President Bush's actions since that time have been "unjust, immoral, and illegitimate."

Mrs. Clinton is not, of course, the only "celebrity" to have signed this petition. But she is, so far as I can tell, the only U.S. Senator. Other signers, with whom she has found common ground, include the likes of Jane Fonda and her former husband Tom Hayden, Robert Altman, Ed Asner, Ramsey Clark, Noam Chomsky, Angela Davis, Danny Glover, Hillary's old "spiritual adviser" Michael Lerner, Susan Sarandon, Marisa Tomei, Gore Vidal, Ben Cohen, Tony Kushner, Oliver Stone, and, significantly, Edward Said, one of America's most vocal advocates of the Palestinian "cause."

Oddly enough, her name has not been featured in the literature of "Not In Our Name." But if you will click on "Click here to read the whole list of signers," then click on "C," and then search that list through one whole alphabet and into the second, you will find "Clinton Hillary U.S. Senate."

Frankly, I hope it is a mistake. I hope NION appropriated Mrs. Clinton's name without her knowing it. But frankly, I doubt that that is the case. These are, after all, her kind of people, going way, way back.

PAUL JOHNSON WEIGHS IN. I have been a devoted fan of the great British historian Paul Johnson for some 18 years now, ever since reading *Modern Times*, which I still regard as one of the best popular history books ever written. In fact, I still remember buying my heavily

marked-up old paperback copy of the book, which bears the English title, *A History of the Modern World*, in London in 1984, and reading it on the plane back to the United States. So I was pleased last week to come upon the following quote from the ever-brilliant Johnson in the October 7 issue of *The Federalist Brief*, which describes itself as “The Conservative e-Journal of Record,” and can be found at www.Federalist.com.

So here, as an antidote to the disturbed views of the likes of Mrs. Clinton, are the thoughtful words of a wise man.

“Imagine a world in which the United States was stricken by a successful series of nuclear, biological, and chemical attacks. Putting aside the appalling loss of American lives this would involve, the global consequences would be horrifying. The world would be plunged into the deepest depression in its history. There would be no power-of-last-resort to uphold international order. Wolf and jackal states would quickly emerge to prey on their neighbors. It would be a world as described by Thomas Hobbes in his *Leviathan* (1651), in which, deprived of a giant authority figure 'to keep them all in awe,' civilization would break down, and life, for most of mankind, would be 'nasty, brutish and short.' Hence, we do well to look at the crisis not as solely or even primarily an American problem, but as a global one. We need a Leviathan figure now much more than in the 17th century, when the range of a cannon was a maximum of two miles and its throw-weight was measured in pounds. America is the only constitutional Leviathan we have, which is precisely why the terrorists are striving to do him mortal injury, and the opponents of order throughout the world -- in the media, on the campus, and among the flat-earthers -- are so noisily opposed to Leviathan's protecting himself.”

END NOTE: Time for a Laugh: “The Opinion Journal” of October 7 reports that Washington State University’s student newspaper, called the “Daily Evergreen,” had to print a correction and an apology recently. It seems the paper had written a story about Filipino-American history in which it noted that the galleon on which the first Filipinos landed at Morro Bay, California was named the “Nuestra Senora de Buena Esperanza,” which the paper said roughly translated as “The Big Ass Spanish Boat.” It seems the information had been plagiarized from an “inaccurate web-site,” and the kids were too dumb to recognize it.

And so it goes.

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