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## THEY SAID IT

**Major T.J. “King” Kong:** Well, boys, I reckon this is it - nuclear combat toe to toe with the Roosskies. Now look, boys, I ain't much of a hand at makin' speeches, but I got a pretty fair idea that something doggone important is goin' on back there. And I got a fair idea the kinda personal emotions that some of you fellas may be thinkin'. Heck, I reckon you wouldn't even be human bein's if you didn't have some pretty strong personal feelin's about nuclear combat. I want you to remember one thing, the folks back home is a-countin' on you and by golly, we ain't about to let 'em down. I tell you something else, if this thing turns out to be half as important as I figure it just might be, I'd say that you're all in line for some important promotions and personal citations when this thing's over with. That goes for ever' last one of you regardless of your race, color or your creed. Now let's get this thing on the hump – we got some flyin' to do.

“Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb,”1964.

## MUTUALLY ASSURED ECONOMIC DESTRUCTION.

The world is a mess, you know. And it's likely to get worse, or at least no better. This statement is so widely believed that it is rare to hear anyone take the other side. Indeed, when it comes up, the conversation almost always centers not on whether the world is a mess but on who or what is to blame for it. Popular candidates for this honor include, but are not limited to, George Bush, Dick Cheney, the on-going Islamic reformation, conservatives, liberals, global warming, capitalism, socialism, American meddling in the affairs of other nations, and the reluctance of rich people to breed.

Each of these and many other factors are legitimate whipping boys, depending upon one's perspective. But the fact is that the immediate cause of the greater than usual intractability of the problems that infect the world today – the “mess,” if you will – is globalization. You see, globalization added myriad new ingredients to the international stew, and while this arguably made it more piquant and interesting to the palate of the connoisseur of such things, it complicated the task of understanding the exact nature of the resultant ragout.

Without question, globalization is a both economically advantageous and in accordance with human nature. As Spinoza put it over 400 years ago, men are “social animals,” for they “find by experience that by mutual aid and co-operation they can the more easily secure what they need.”

But men are also naturally quarrelsome. They form packs, in keeping with their social nature, and these packs inevitably become hot beds of rivalries between and among the members. This has to do with the fact that packs require leadership, which presupposes a hierarchy of sorts, which creates fractious inequalities.

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This explains, to some degree at least, why packs, like insects that breathe through their skins and have no skeletal system, cannot grow beyond a certain size without becoming unstable. For example, wolf packs rarely exceed seven or eight members and almost never more than 15. When a wolf pack becomes too large for the alpha male to control, it breaks into two or more packs. Humans can successfully sustain much larger packs, of course. But there does seem to be a point at which human packs get so large that they become unstable.

Trouble began in the first human pack with the addition of the fourth member, Abel. Some time later, Shem, Ham, and Japheth realized that everyone couldn't belong to a single pack, and they split up. In 286, Diocletian recognized the impracticality of a single ruler for the entire Roman Empire and began the process of dividing it into two parts. In 843, Europe was such a mess that Charlemagne's grandkids, Lothair, Ludwig the German, and Charles the Bald felt compelled to sign the Treaty of Verdun dividing it into three parts.

Now, it is not clear why all of humanity cannot coexist contentedly within one pack. Rousseau maintained that this discord in human communal existence was a direct result of private property. He argued that if all property were owned collectively, men would have nothing over which to fight. This was, of course, wrong, as was so much else that this little demented genius believed to be true. A more reasonable explanation is that competition is hard wired into the human species at birth. It is a Darwinian, or better yet Spencerian trait that promotes the survival of the species by separating the weak from the fittest.

In any case, for whatever reason, humans naturally and routinely divide into packs and compete against one another. That's what they do. Often this competition involves war and bloodshed. Sometimes it results in the total annihilation of one or more packs.

Among lesser animals, this struggle almost always involves something tangible, necessary for survival, such as food, living space, or breeding rights. The

much more imaginative and complex little human animal has discovered many more grounds for competition between packs including "le gloire," to borrow a word from the French, adventure, sport, or even as an antidote for boredom.

History is full of examples of human packs that raised this competition to an art form. The ancient Norsemen, for example, were so dedicated to conflict that they believed that heaven, or as they called it Valhalla, was a wonderful place where men fought and killed each other all day, then when night came, arose from the field of battle, went to Odin's Hall and whooped it up, only to do it all over again the next day. Matthew Arnold described it thusly in his great epic poem, "Balder Dead."

And from their beds the Heroes rose, and  
dunn'd  
Their arms, and led their horses from the stall,  
And mounted them, and in Valhalla's court  
Were rang'd; and then the daily fray began.  
And all day long they there are hack'd and  
hewn  
'Mid dust, and groans, and limbs lopp'd off,  
and blood;  
But all at night return to Odin's hall  
Woundless and fresh: such lot is theirs in  
Heaven.

For many centuries, the deadliest form of competition between and among human packs, i.e., war, operated under a very simple calculus. War against a rival pack was deemed worthwhile if the gain, either in the form of land, booty, or in the coin of ego gratification, exceeded the cost. And the cost was not all that difficult to estimate in that it consisted almost entirely of the direct expense of fielding an army. When the industrial revolution came along, and human capital and foreign trade began to play an increasingly important role in a nation's wealth production, the cost calculation became somewhat more difficult.

During World War II, when aerial warfare came into widespread use and it became common practice to destroy industrial targets and to bomb civilian

population centers, the cost/benefit calculation became much more complex. And finally, in the aftermath of that war and the opening of the Cold War, two new factors were added to the cost side of the equation. The first was the possibility that even the smallest war could conceivably turn into a very large and exceedingly costly one between the newly established “Super Powers.” The second, due to invention of “the bomb,” involved the concept of nuclear retaliation, or what became known as “mutually assured destruction.”

In one sense, this made the world much messier. After all, uncertainties of his magnitude are messy. How much easier it was before the arrival of the B52 and the growing economic importance of international trade for, say, Bismarck in 1870 or even Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1914 to initiate a war with France. From another perspective, however, these new additions to the cost-of-war calculations introduced an element of stability to geopolitical affairs that had never before existed. After all, what benefit could possibly offset the risk of total nuclear destruction?

Now, as we indicated earlier, the rapid globalization of commerce that followed the end of the Cold War, has added an entirely new and unique set of variables to the cost side of the “to war or not to war” equation, which has had the effect of making the entire geopolitical scene exceedingly more complicated than it has ever before been, or “messy,” if you will.

These variables relate to the fact that virtually every nation in the world today, big or small, is either a present or a potential important trading partner, business partner, consumer market, or source of raw materials for some other nation that is an important present or potential trading partner, business partner, market, or a source of raw materials for another nation that is . . . etc., etc., etc.

Indeed, one can’t swing a dead cat anywhere in the world today without hitting an investment banker, businessman, developer, marketing expert, industrial site locator, or politically connected billionaire from one major nation or another, each of which is in

some way connected to each of the others like a giant toothpick model of the World Trade Center. Pick one, two, or even three toothpicks out of the stack and it may not affect the stability of the model. But pick four or five and the whole thing might, just might, come tumbling down, causing a global economic disaster of extraordinary magnitude, which in turn could spark a hot war involving even more devastating costs.

When Roosevelt declared war on the Axis powers in 1941, he had to deal with a great many important considerations regarding the future security and well being of the United States. But one of them was not the economic consequence to the United States of completely destroying all three of these countries.

Today, with everyone in the world playing in everyone else’s sandbox, or hoping to play there, the world is a very different place. William Hawkins, a senior fellow for international security studies at the U.S. Business & Industry Council in Washington, D.C., made the following comment on this situation in an op-ed piece entitled “Sanctions and Rogues” in yesterday’s *Washington Times*.

Major corporations may still be headquartered in the United States but they have become transnational in outlook. They care nothing for international geopolitics and only hope concerns over national security do not get in their way. The National Foreign Trade Council, the Business Roundtable, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the Chamber of Commerce had lobbied all summer against imposing sanctions on Iran. These groups are not bothered by Iran’s nuclear ambitions, its support for terrorism, or its role in attacking Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan. They think only of the money they can make in Tehran.

As we said earlier, these globalization-related circumstances have made the problems facing the United States seem exceedingly, even impossibly intractable, or messy. What can be done about North

Korea, Iran, Pakistan, and other trouble spots under such circumstances? How can any U.S. President of either party confront an enemy that is a key factor in a “friend’s” economy, or in a friend’s future economic plans? What a mess. Right?

Well, yes. But, on the other hand, mutually assured destruction was a mess too. Indeed, it complicated things immensely. Ironically, however, it had a stabilizing effect too. Time will tell if the messy threat of mutually assured economic destruction will work the same way. We can only hope so. If it doesn’t, it will likely be because the public doesn’t understand it as well as it did “the bomb.”

## WHITHER PAKISTAN?

By now, the story is well known, to say the least: This is an erstwhile non-existent people artificially fashioned from the remnants of the British Empire in the wake of World War II. It is a nation founded on the idea of religion and, more specifically, on the idea of religious intolerance and hatred of “the other.” It was born in blood; the blood of the refugees uprooted and forcibly expelled from their homes by the tens of thousands; the blood of the countless warriors who died in pursuit of land, power, and religious purity. These are a people who have fought war after war after war against their neighbors, against those who differ from them in the god to whom they pray, and little else. They are a people who resent those neighbors and demand the “return” of “disputed” territories; a people who hate their neighbors for their success and for their democracy. Today they are a people at the center of one of the world’s most serious and dangerous religious/political flashpoints. Their “plight” constitutes one of the most sensitive, intractable, and potentially destructive problems facing the global community.

The Palestinians, you say?

Close. But no. The Pakistanis.

For the better part of two weeks now, the Pakistanis have been front-and center in any and all discussions among world leaders, all of whom appear desperate to solve Pakistan’s unsolvable problems, and most of whom appear to be waiting to see what George Bush and the Americans will do about Pervez Musharraf’s “unconstitutional” declaration of a state of emergency and his attendant assault on his nation’s “guardians of democracy.” There is near universal agreement that the United States must do something to quash the general’s coup. After all, the oppressed must be protected, the rule of law must be restored, and a return to democratic governance clearly must be compelled. What, exactly, Bush and the Americans must do no one can say. But plainly it has to be done.

We guess that when the dictator in question is a known mass murderer and avowed enemy of the United States who has both sought and used weapons of mass destruction, toppling his regime is verboten. But when he’s an ostensible American ally who has shared intelligence and provided logistical support in the war on terror, yet has somehow managed to maintain secular control in one of the world’s most radically religious and unstable countries, then there can be no debate about whether or not Bush and his dastardly neocons must intervene. Something *must* be done.

This is all well and good, we suppose. And, like the rest of the “global community,” we’d love to see order restored and consider ourselves at least nominal supporters of democracy and the extension of democratic rule. But unlike the guys at UN and the EU, we can’t really understand how, precisely, American action to remove Musharraf from power or, at the very least, to end his state of emergency, can be expected to promote democracy.

Late last week, Chris Patten, Gareth Evans, and Joschka Fischer, all big shots at the International Crisis Group and the former European Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, former Foreign Minister of Australia, and former Foreign Minister of Germany, respectively, penned a piece published by the *International Herald Tribune* (i.e. *The New York Times* international edition) in which they explained to the world how to deal with the likes of General Musharraf. To wit:

Western governments must now give up their Musharraf policy and adopt a Pakistan policy. The key steps to get the country back on track are for Musharraf to cancel his purported state of emergency; give up his position as army chief as promised by Nov. 15, when a special parliamentary dispensation for him to wear both civilian and military hats expires; restore dismissed judges to their posts to ensure the independence of the judiciary; appoint a neutral caretaker government to take power pending elections held on schedule by early next year; and for leaders of all political parties to be allowed to contest these elections, including the exiled former prime minister, Nawaz Sharif.

Free and fair elections would bring to power either Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party or Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League.

Now, maybe we're just nitpicking here, but what could possibly make Patten, Evans, and Fischer think that Pakistan could hold "free and fair elections?" Doesn't the simple fact that they – and others – can already tell us who will win these elections (which have not even been scheduled) suggest that maybe they will be something less than free, fair, and supremely democratic?

The fact of the matter is that Pakistan is now and always has been a dysfunctional state. For the first ten years of its existence, Pakistan was a dominion of the British Commonwealth. But for the 50 years since, it has been an "Islamic Republic." And in addition to being Islamic, it has been wracked by corruption, incompetence, and nepotism. Indeed, as Mark Steyn noted this weekend, "the charming and glamorous Benazir Bhutto," whom most Westerners have already declared the winner of the not-yet-scheduled elections, "plays note-perfect in the salons of the West, but degenerates into just another third-rate hack from one of the world's most corrupt political classes once she's back greasing the wheel in Pakistan itself."

In the Pakistani "democracy's" off years, i.e., those years in which the government was "unelected" and therefore not run by either the Bhuttos or Sharifs, the country has been ruled by its generals. The constitution of 1956 was suspended two years later by General Ayub Khan. The constitution of 1973 was suspended four years later by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, who accelerated his country's Islamic radicalization and encouraged its adoption of sha'ria law. The 1973 constitution was reinstated upon Zia-ul-Haq's death in 1991 but was suspended again eight years later by General Musharraf, who continues to cling to power.

And then, of course, there is the matter of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), which is largely ungovernable, or, at the very least, is not under the control of the central government in Islamabad. If it is controlled at all, the NWFP is controlled by the Taliban, which has reconstituted and continues to train and to launch military operations against American and NATO soldiers in Afghanistan from this uncontrollable and undomesticated section of Pakistan. Thus far, even Musharraf, who also leads the nation's army, has been unable to do anything whatsoever to rein in the Islamists and their supporters in the NWFP. The idea that a secular, civilian government led by a woman from a kleptocratic family would have any better luck at managing her own territory and containing the Islamists and their sympathizers is a stretch, to put it mildly.

Patten, Evans, Fischer and the rest of the global community think it important to "restore" Pakistan's democracy. But there is, quite simply, nothing to restore. There has never been any Pakistani democracy of any note or consistency.

Bhutto herself makes a desperate plea and insists on the establishment of democratic governance under her rule (natch) with American help. To emphasize her point, she cites President Bush on the matter, quoting from his second inaugural address: "All who

live in tyranny and hopelessness can know: the United States will not ignore your oppression or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for liberty, we will stand with you.” But there is absolutely no reason whatsoever to believe that a Bhutto government will be any more supportive of “liberty” than has been the Musharraf government. Certainly, it wasn’t the first time around.

We hinted at all of this in our piece on Iraq and democracy last week, as follows:

Not every former British colony is able to transition to democracy. As we have seen over the last week, Pakistan, which like India was once part of the British Raj, is about as far from democracy as one could imagine. Indeed, it is a barely functional state, much less a democratic one, and either a jihadist coup or a protracted civil war are both entirely realistic outcomes of the current “state of emergency.” What Pakistan’s resistance to democracy demonstrates is that the establishment of British institutions can only lead to democratic governance if those institutions are not overshadowed by other, less democratic institutions, in this case Salafi Islam.

And that brings us to the biggest problem with the proposed plan to “reverse Musharraf’s coup,” namely that there is no guarantee that the winner of any elections will actually be able to take power. The Islamists in Pakistan represent a significant and growing power. If the United States were to push Musharraf too hard, there is a very real chance that it would be repeating the mistakes made three decades ago with Reza Shah Pahlavi, when the Carter administration forced the Shah’s resignation and thus precipitated the Iranian Revolution.

Mark Steyn notes that Pakistan “is not Persia” and he is right. Pakistan is what Persia aspires to be. Pakistan is a nuclear power. It has spread its nuclear knowledge throughout the anti-American world, offering to share its know-how with every terrorist and terror

sponsor it could find. Pakistan is also most likely the current home of the terrorists who masterminded the 9/11 attacks on the United States (Osama bin Laden – or his corpse – and Ayman al-Zawahiri) and their erstwhile political patron (Mullah Muhammad Omar). And it is unquestionably the font from which most, if not all of Europe’s present terrorist problems have sprung, including the London Tube bombers. The risk that Pakistan could fall to radical Islamist forces is very real and very serious. And though the EU-niks and one-worlders seem never to contemplate this possibility, the grown-ups of the world must.

Given all of this, we are left with two questions: What should President Bush do? And what will he do?

Our answer to the first question is largely irrelevant. In all these years, President Bush has never come to us to ask our advice. Not once. And we don’t expect him to start now. So we don’t think it necessary to bore you with our sermonizing.

As for the latter, it appears to us that the President will nudge General Musharraf, but not push him anywhere near as hard as most other Westerners would like to see. Since 9/11, Musharraf has been dishonest, disloyal, and, at times, downright obstinate. But he has also been extremely helpful. As John Negroponte, the current U.S. deputy secretary of state and former ambassador to both the United Nations and Iraq, has noted, “no country,” other than the United States, “has done more in terms of inflicting damage and punishment on the Taliban and al-Qaida since 9/11.”

Moreover, as the head of the Pakistani military, Musharraf is also the only man in Pakistan with the wherewithal to head off an Islamic uprising. President Bush undoubtedly feels some compulsion to live up to his own rhetoric and to support democracy, but he also likely understands the old axiom about “the devil you know.”

Bush can, and presumably will make the case to the rest of the global community that they need to be delicate in dealing with Pakistan, given the possibility of Islamist violence. Though it’s possible that

Pakistan may, if pushed too hard, repeat the course taken by Iran thirty years ago, it is important for us and for the world to remember that George Bush is not Jimmy Carter, and he is therefore unlikely simply to wallow in his despair at the any unexpected turn of events.

It is also important to remember that Pakistan's most notable neighbor is unlike any of Iran's neighbors and is also unlikely to turn a blind eye to Islamist aggression. The Indian Army is the second-largest standing army in the world. In sixty years, it has fought and largely won three wars with Pakistan. And like Pakistan, India possesses nuclear weapons. What all of this means then is that any attempt to dislodge Musharraf that resulted in increased aggression by Islamists in Pakistan would likely also result in the occupation of or at least incursion into portions of that country by both American and Indian troops.

The bottom line here is that where Pakistan is concerned, Americans should be grateful that they have a president who is usually unswayed by global opinion. But they should be wary of the fact that they have a president who is all too often swayed by his Secretary of State. The return of Benazir Bhutto to Pakistan, the event that precipitated Musharraf's declaration of a state of emergency, was by and large Condoleezza Rice's doing. One suspects that she will want the President to support Ms. Bhutto aggressively now. And we can only hope that he will resist doing so.

We have no real beef with Ms. Bhutto, just as we have no real affinity for General Musharraf. But whether the advocates of aggressive American action will admit it or not, when it comes to Pakistani "democracy" the choice is *always* among the lesser of two evils. We suspect that President Bush knows this, and we hope that he will act accordingly.

We also suspect that over the next couple of weeks, the global do-gooders will lose interest in Musharraf's "coup," just as they lost interest in nearly all other such crackdowns (Burma, for example). This will allow Musharraf to do exactly what the likes of Patten, Evans, and Fischer want him to do – to suspend the state of emergency and move toward parliamentary elections – without appearing to capitulate to the meddling foreigners. And though we don't think that such a course of action will improve the Pakistanis' lot, we can't see how it will hurt them much either.

Certainly Pakistan has problems these days. But that is hardly anything new. Pakistan has had problems for sixty years. And those problems are not going to go away. Not today. Not tomorrow. Not the day after. And they are not going to go away if Benazir Bhutto and her clan of corrupt kleptocrats take power back from Musharraf and the military. Spreading democracy is nice in theory, but not always so in practice. And "reversing" Musharraf's coup will do nothing whatsoever except to make a few washed-up diplomats at a handful of think-tanks feel better about themselves.

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