

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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Yankton Media, Inc., 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078

**CONTACT US**

PHONE:  
(605) 665-7811  
(800) 743-2968  
NEWS FAX:  
(605) 665-1721  
ADVERTISING FAX:  
(605) 665-0288  
WEBSITE:  
www.yankton.net  
EMAIL ADDRESS:  
news@yankton.net

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**OPINION | OUR VIEW**

## Mandela, His Critics And Answers

The death last week of Nelson Mandela has unleashed a flood of tributes and adulation from around the planet. And it has also unearthed anti-Mandela sentiments that have long lurked in this nation as well as elsewhere. While this is difficult for many people to fathom now, these sentiments were once a major part of this country's relationship with the apartheid government of South Africa.

But, since that's the case, it would be fair to say that this matter is really more about America — or at least a certain mentality in America — than about Mandela.

As you've been made well aware by now, Mandela was a champion of freedom for his people, who suffered greatly under the exclusive white rule in South Africa. He was imprisoned for 27 years, during which time he became a global symbol of the apartheid oppression. When he was finally released (amid massive world pressure) in 1990, he preached a gospel of forgiveness. After apartheid's grip collapsed amid civil strife, Mandela was elected president in 1994 and formed a multiracial government made up of allies and old rivals. He became a symbol of courage and freedom to generations of people everywhere.

That, in broad brushstrokes, is the brief history of a man who has taken on a sort of saintly quality in some minds.

But not all. Mandela was an icon with flaws, and his critics do not hesitate to point them out. He was a man of peace fighting for freedom against an oppressive, racial system; but in his desperation, he eventually turned to violence, although it was more in the realm of sabotage, which led to him being arrested and convicted of treason. Mandela briefly aligned himself with the Communist Party in his quest for allies. That quest also brought him into the orbits of the likes of Fidel Castro and Moammar Gadhafi, whom Mandela refused to criticize for their abuses. In a 1996 interview, he said he could "never renounce our friends."

Mandela was also a friend of Yasser Arafat and a critic of Israel's occupation of the West Bank. He once declared that "our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."

As a result, the United States took a very awkward view of Mandela during the Cold War. (The *Washington Post* on Tuesday noted that Mandela often "irritated" and "disappointed" the U.S. with his Cuban and Libyan ties.) South Africa, for all its apartheid evils, was vigorously anti-Communist, which put the government in good standing with Washington. This fell in line with the old adage: "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." So, when Congress passed sanctions on South Africa in the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan, who hated apartheid, nevertheless vetoed the plan, though the veto was overridden.

Mandela wasn't perfect, but by condemning him as a terrorist and a communist, the U.S. was effectively throwing its support to oppression of another sort, and given our nation's racial history, it was an inexcusable act of looking the other way for political purposes (not the first or last time this or any other nation has been guilty of such an action). This was a staple of life in the Cold War, where seeing one fact often drove you to overlook others, with the end justifying the means.

Nevertheless, where was the U.S. in the fight against apartheid? Where was this nation when those opposing the South African regime were in need of allies? Where were we when people like Mandela needed us? And how much did that play in driving Mandela to look elsewhere for help?

As Newt Gingrich wrote in honor of Mandela's life: "I would ask of his critics: where were some of these conservatives as allies against tyranny? Where were the masses of conservatives opposing apartheid? In a desperate struggle against an overpowering government, you accept the allies you have just as Washington was grateful for a French monarchy helping him defeat the British."

This issue can be debated forever. While Mandela's critics have some intriguing points to make, they must also account for this nation's role in aligning with and sustaining a South African government that once practiced heinous racial tyranny. And no one should be comfortable with that history.

kmh

**ON THIS DATE**

**By The Associated Press**

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 11, the 345th day of 2013. There are 20 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Dec. 11, 1972, Apollo 17's lunar module landed on the moon with astronauts Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt aboard; during three extravehicular activities (EVAs), they became the last two men to date to step onto the lunar surface.

**On this date:** In 1792, France's King Louis XVI went before the Convention to face charges of treason. (Louis was convicted, and executed the following month.)

In 1816, Indiana became the 19th state.

In 1912, movie producer Carlo Ponti was born in Magenta, Italy.

In 1928, police in Buenos Aires announced they had thwarted an attempt on the life of President-elect Herbert Hoover.

In 1936, Britain's King Edward VIII abdicated the throne so he could marry American divorcee Wallis Warfield Simpson; his brother, Prince Albert, became King George VI.

In 1937, Italy announced it was withdrawing from the League of Nations.

In 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States; the U.S. responded in kind.

In 1946, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was established.

In 1961, a U.S. aircraft carrier carrying Army helicopters arrived in Saigon — the first direct American military support for South Vietnam's battle against Communist guerrillas.

In 1981, the El Mozote massacre in El Salvador claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians at the hands of army troops. The U.N. Security Council chose Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru to be the fifth secretary-general. Muhammad Ali, 39, fought his final fight, losing by unanimous decision to Trevor Berbick in Nassau, Bahamas.

In 1997, more than 150 countries agreed at a global warming conference in Kyoto, Japan, to control the Earth's greenhouse gases.

In 2008, Bernie Madoff was arrested, accused of running a multibillion-dollar Ponzi scheme. (Madoff is serving a 150-year federal prison sentence.)

**Ten years ago:** U.S. health officials reported an early flu outbreak had hit all 50 states and was widespread in 24. A German court freed a Moroccan accused of supporting the Sept. 11 al-Qaida cell in Hamburg, saying there was new evidence he did not know about the plot. A new second home for the National Air and Space Museum opened in Chantilly, Va., some 28 miles west of the original's home in Washington, D.C.

**Five years ago:** Former Nasdaq chairman Bernie Madoff was arrested, accused of running a multibillion-dollar Ponzi scheme that destroyed thousands of people's life savings and wrecked charities. (Madoff is serving a 150-year federal prison sentence.) The remains of missing Florida toddler Caylee Anthony were found six months after she disappeared. (Her mother, Casey Anthony, was acquitted of murder in her daughter's death.) A suicide bomber killed at least 55 people near Kirkuk, Iraq. Former Teamsters Union president Ron Carey died in New York at age 72. Former pinup model Bettie Page died in Los Angeles at age 85.

**One year ago:** In an act the White House called "highly provocative," North Korea used a long-range rocket to launch a satellite into orbit. The Michigan Legislature gave final approval to a contentious bill making it illegal to require non-union workers to pay unions for negotiating contracts and other services; the bill was quickly signed by Republican Gov. Rick Snyder amid angry protests by union members and their supporters. A Florida judge denied defense requests to end 24-hour GPS monitoring of George Zimmerman while he was out on bond in the fatal shooting of teenager Trayvon Martin. Former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue overturned the suspensions of four New Orleans Saints players in the league's bounty investigation but said their involvement in a scheme to reward hard tackles was detrimental to the league.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor Jean-Louis Trintignant is 83. Actress Rita Moreno is 82. Former California state lawmaker Tom Hayden is 74. Pop singer David Gates (Bread) is 73. Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., is 72. Actress Donna Mills is 71. Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., is 70. Singer Brenda Lee is 69. Actress Lynda Day George is 69. Music producer Tony Brown is 67. Actress Teri Garr is 66. Movie director Susan Seidelman is 61. Actress Bess Armstrong is 60. Singer Jermaine Jackson is 59. Rock musician Mike Mesaros (The Smithereens) is 56. Rock musician Nikki Sixx (Mötley Crüe) is 55. Rock musician Darryl Jones (The Rolling Stones) is 52. Actor Ben Browder is 51. Singer-musician Justin Currie (Del Amitri) is 49. Rock musician David Schools (Gov't Mule, Widespread Panic) is 49. Actor Gary Dourdan is 47. Actress-comedian Mo'Nique (The Parkers) is 46. Actor Max Martini is 44. Rapper-actor Mos Def is 40. Actor Rider Strong is 34. Actress Hailee Steinfeld ("True Grit") is 17.

**Thought for Today:** "A technical objection is the first refuge of a scoundrel." — Heywood Brown, American journalist (1888-1939).

**FROM THE BIBLE**

*A bruised reed He will not break, and a faintly burning wick He will not quench. Isaiah 42:3. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis*



'LOOK WHO KNEW WHAT HE REALLY WANTED...'

## Seeds Of Corruption

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Tribune Content Agency

The Justice Department has just obtained documents showing that JPMorgan Chase, Wall Street's biggest bank, has been hiring the children of China's ruling elite in order to secure "existing and potential business opportunities" from Chinese government-run companies. "You all know I have always been a big believer of the Sons and Daughters program," says one JPMorgan executive in an e-mail, because "it almost has a linear relationship" to winning assignments to advise Chinese companies. The documents even include spreadsheets that list the bank's "track record" for converting hires into business deals.



Robert REICH

It's a serious offense. But let's get real. How different is bribing China's "princelings," as they're called there, from Wall Street's ongoing program of hiring departing U.S. Treasury officials, presumably in order to grease the wheels of official Washington? Timothy Geithner, Obama's first Treasury secretary, is now president of the private-equity firm Warburg Pincus; Obama's budget director Peter Orszag is now a top executive at Citigroup.

Or, for that matter, how different is what JPMorgan did in China from Wall Street's habit of hiring the children of powerful American politicians? (I don't mean to suggest Chelsea Clinton got her hedge-fund job at Avenue Capital Group, where she worked from 2006 to 2009, on the basis of anything other than her financial talents.)

And how much worse is JPMorgan's putative offense in China than the torrent of money JPMorgan and every other major Wall Street bank is pouring into the campaign coffers of American politicians — making the Street one of the major backers of Democrats as well as Republicans?

The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, under which JPMorgan could be indicted for the favors it has bestowed in China, is quite strict. It prohibits American companies from paying money or offering anything of value to foreign officials for the purpose of "securing any improper advantage." Hiring one of their children can certainly qualify as a gift, even without any direct benefit to the official.

JPMorgan couldn't even defend itself by arguing it didn't make any particular deal or get any specific advantage as a result of the hires. Under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, the gift doesn't have to be linked to any particular benefit to the American firm as long as it's intended to generate an advantage its competitors don't enjoy.

Compared to this, corruption of American of-

ficials is a breeze. Consider, for example, Countrywide Financial's generous "Friends of Angelo" lending program — named after its chief executive, Angelo Mozilo — that gave discounted mortgages to influential members of Congress and their staffs before the housing bubble burst. No criminal or civil charges have ever been filed related to these loans.

Even before the Supreme Court's shameful 2010 "Citizens United" decision — equating corporations with human beings under the First Amendment, and thereby shielding much corporate political spending — Republican appointees to the court had done everything they could to blunt anti-bribery laws in the United States. In 1999, in "United States v. Sun-Diamond Growers," Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the court, interpreted an anti-bribery law so loosely as to allow corporations to give gifts to public officials unless the gifts are linked to specific policies.

We don't even require that American corporations disclose to their own shareholders the largesse they bestow on our politicians. Last year around this time, when the Securities and Exchange Commission released its 2013 to-do list, it signaled that it might formally propose a rule to require corporations to disclose their political spending. The idea had attracted more than 600,000 mostly favorable comments from the public, a record response for the agency.

But the idea mysteriously slipped off the 2014 agenda released last week, without explanation. Could it have anything to do with the fact that, soon after becoming SEC chair in April, Mary Jo White was pressed by Republican lawmakers to abandon the idea, which was fiercely opposed by business groups?

The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act is important, and JPMorgan should be nailed for bribing Chinese officials. But, if you'll pardon me for asking, why isn't there a Domestic Corrupt Practices Act?

Never before has so much U.S. corporate and Wall Street money poured into our nation's capital, as well as into our state capitals. Never before have so many Washington officials taken jobs in corporations, lobbying firms, trade associations and on the Street immediately after leaving office. Our democracy is drowning in big money.

Corruption is corruption, and bribery is bribery, in whatever country or language it's transacted in.

*Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of "Beyond Outrage," now available in paperback. His new film, "Inequality for All," was released last month. He blogs at www.robertreich.org.*

## Why We're Fleeing TV

BY BILL O'REILLY

Creators Syndicate

Marketing surveys now show that when Americans come home from work, more folks turn on their computers than their television sets. That is a first.

The reason is twofold: First, you can create your own world on your PC, and second, TV is awful. Flat-out awful. For years, television has been losing viewers because the product, generally speaking, has collapsed.

Reality TV has destroyed the tube. Cheap, mindless shows featuring people who should be deported rule the airwaves. Don't believe me? Well, TV Guide recently listed reality TV's most startling moments. The choices are indeed startling.

Among them is Marie Osmond fainting on "Dancing with the Stars." That was unforgettable, was it not? All 10 of her siblings attempted to resuscitate her.

Laurie has a breast-baring meltdown on a program called "She's Got the Look." I don't know who Laurie is, but I believe she may be overexposed. Or something.

Rebecca gets dentures on "Breaking Amish." I am not fabricating this. I didn't even know that the Amish broke anything. Hopefully, Rebecca can clean the dentures without electricity. At least she's in better shape than Laurie.

An Elvis impersonator is overwhelmed by memorabilia on the show "Hoarders." I missed that. I'm sorry.

Tom DeLay dances to "Wild Thing" on "Dancing with the Stars." That was why Marie Osmond fainted.

"The Osbournes" examining the aftermath of

Ozzy's ATV accident. Does it get any better than that? Does it?

Kim Kardashian weds Kris Humphries on "Kim's Fairytale Wedding." This was the nadir. An untalented but ambitious woman marrying a young basketball player and then divorcing him about 20 minutes later. And the guy got hurt. So why are people watching that? Disturbing question.

Monica Lewinsky hosts "Mr. Personality." This was an actual TV show. Insert your joke here.

On a show called "The Surreal Life," the guy who played Mini Me in an Austin Powers movie rides a scooter naked. Why didn't Kim Kardashian think of that?

The "Queer Eye" guys go nude. Did they have scooters, as well? I honestly don't know.

Michelle Obama appears on "The Biggest Loser." This is a weight loss program, not the Republican Convention.

And finally, chef Gordon Ramsay "fat-shames" a "Hell's Kitchen" contestant. All I can say is that Jackie Gleason would have taken Ramsay out.

So it is beyond dispute that television is in deep trouble. These reality shows make "Gilligan's Island" look like "Macbeth." They are like unspeakable zombies destroying the entire structure of the television industry.

Thank God PBS is still on the air. But even here there is some worry. Elmo has been seen hanging with the Kardashians. It's just a matter of time until someone gets engaged.

*Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of many books, including the newly released "Killing Jesus."*



Bill O'REILLY

**YOUR LETTERS**

**Helping Angels**

Deb Byrne, Madison

I want to sincerely thank the two local firemen who helped me the evening of Tuesday, Dec. 3.

I came upon them at an accident late that evening and these two gentlemen took the time to explain my options to me. I had been

traveling from Oklahoma that afternoon after leaving my Dad in the heart hospital. The firefighters were very calming, assuring and great help with direction.

My husband is a volunteer fireman and I can only hope that he will do the same some day.

These two were truly my angels that night.