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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

Iraq And The Tide Of Angry History

Like a very bad dream, Iraq is a nervous, gnawing specter that America simply cannot shake. And now — three years after we left the combat phase of that episode behind us — Iraq is haunting our headlines yet again as the extremist Muslim group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) has taken control of broad swaths of Iraq, as well as Syria. This brings to bear the ancient sectarian divides that have existed in and torn apart this region for centuries. America's excursion into Iraq, which began in 2003, did not change this. It was never going to change this. To have believed otherwise was to conveniently overlook that angry past. And yet, as Iraq boils anew, we're hearing a chorus criticizing President Obama for fumbling away the gains that were made with American blood and sacrifices. We are again hearing from familiar voices who want us to march back to Iraq and bolster the current regime in Baghdad.

But the overriding question is: To what end? What we're seeing is not a collapse caused by our withdrawal of combat troops from Iraq, but rather a return to form that was briefly and nominally interrupted by America's entrance into that nation.

Consider the ideological quagmire that encompasses this region by imagining what would happen if the U.S. did return to Iraq in force.

In so doing, we would be bolstering the regime of Nouri al-Maliki, described by Middle East analyst Marc Lynch of George Washington University as "an Iranian-backed sectarian despot." According to the Christian Science Monitor, Lynch says the current Iraq crisis is equated by some in the Arab world to the Syrian revolt, in Iraq's case being a "Sunni revolution against a Shiite tyrant."

If the U.S. were to re-enter Iraq, it would find itself allied to a great extent with our constant nemesis, Iran, which is also backing the al-Maliki government. In addition, it would place Washington somewhat in league with Syria's Bashar al-Assad, who is also dealing with ISIS among many other rebel groups. And it would put the U.S. at odds with otherwise allied nations like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which are backing ISIS.

In other words, this is a convoluted mess that defies black-and-white political or military answers. That has always been the case, and the results of eight years of U.S. combat in Iraq could not alter that gravity.

In announcing his decision to send in military advisors — but not combat troops — to assist Baghdad, Obama pointed out, "Ultimately, this is something that is going to have to be solved by Iraqis."

But still the critics — the champions of the 2003 unleashing of the Iraq War — persist. They bellow with a lording "I told you so" attitude that serves more their distorted world view than the actual facts of the region's history.

Some liberal media, such as MSNBC and the Huffington Post, bitterly decry giving those critics any forum to pontificate, questioning why the architects who led us into war under dubious pretenses years ago should be given a soapbox now.

But in fact, these people SHOULD be allowed to make their declarations and rattle their sabers yet again. With each syllable uttered, they remind us of the logic that swept us into war in Iraq, to pursue results that were largely unrealistic and contrary to the tide of the region.

What have we learned from this? As the crisis unfolds in the days to come, we shall surely find out.

kmh

ON THIS DATE

By The Associated Press
Today is Tuesday, June 24, the 175th day of 2014. There are 190 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On June 24, 1964, AT&T inaugurated commercial "Picturephone" service between New York, Chicago and Washington, D.C., as Lady Bird Johnson, wife of the president, called Dr. Elizabeth A. Wood of Bell Laboratories in New York. (Requiring the use of video booths, with a 3-minute call from Washington to New York costing \$16, and a \$27 charge for a 3-minute call between New York and Chicago, Picturephone never caught on.)

On this date: In 1314, the forces of Scotland's Robert the Bruce defeated the English in the Battle of Bannockburn.

In 1509, Henry VIII was crowned king of England; his wife, Catherine of Aragon, was crowned queen consort.

In 1793, the first republican constitution in France was adopted.

In 1880, "O Canada," the future Canadian national anthem, was first performed in Quebec City.

In 1908, the 22nd and 24th presidents of the United States, Grover Cleveland, died in Princeton, New Jersey, at age 71.

In 1939, the Southeast Asian country Siam changed its name to Thailand. (It went back to being Siam in 1945, then became Thailand once again in 1949.)

In 1940, France signed an armistice with Italy during World War II.

In 1948, Communist forces cut off all land and water routes between West Germany and West Berlin, prompting the western allies to organize the Berlin Airlift.

In 1968, "Resurrection City," a shantytown constructed as part of the Poor People's March on Washington D.C., was closed down by authorities.

In 1975, 113 people were killed when an Eastern Airlines Boeing 727 crashed while attempting to land during a thunderstorm at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

In 1983, the space shuttle Challenger — carrying America's first woman in space, Sally K. Ride — coasted to a safe landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1993, David Gelernter, a Yale University computer scientist, was seriously injured by a mail bomb sent from the Unabomber, Theodore Kaczynski.

Ten years ago: Federal investigators questioned President George W. Bush for more than an hour in connection with the news leak of CIA operative Valerie Plame's identity. In a bizarre conclusion to a huge upset,

the chair umpire called the wrong score in the second tiebreaker, and Venus Williams fell 7-6 (5), 7-6 (6) to Karolina Sprem in the second round at Wimbledon.

Five years ago: South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford admitted he had secretly flown to Argentina to visit a woman with whom he was having an affair, and said he would resign as head of the Republican Governors Association. Ed Thomas, the football coach of Aplington-Parkersburg High School in Iowa for 34 years, was gunned down by former player Mark Becker. (Becker was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.)

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced plans to double the number of best picture nominees to 10 for the 2010 Oscar ceremony. (The winner under this revised system was "The Hurt Locker.")

One year ago: Opening statements took place in the Sanford, Florida, trial of George Zimmerman, accused of murdering 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. (Zimmerman was acquitted.)

Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's flamboyant former premier, was sentenced to seven years in prison and banned from politics for life for paying an underage prostitute for sex during parties and forcing public officials to cover it up. (Berlusconi is appealing his conviction.)

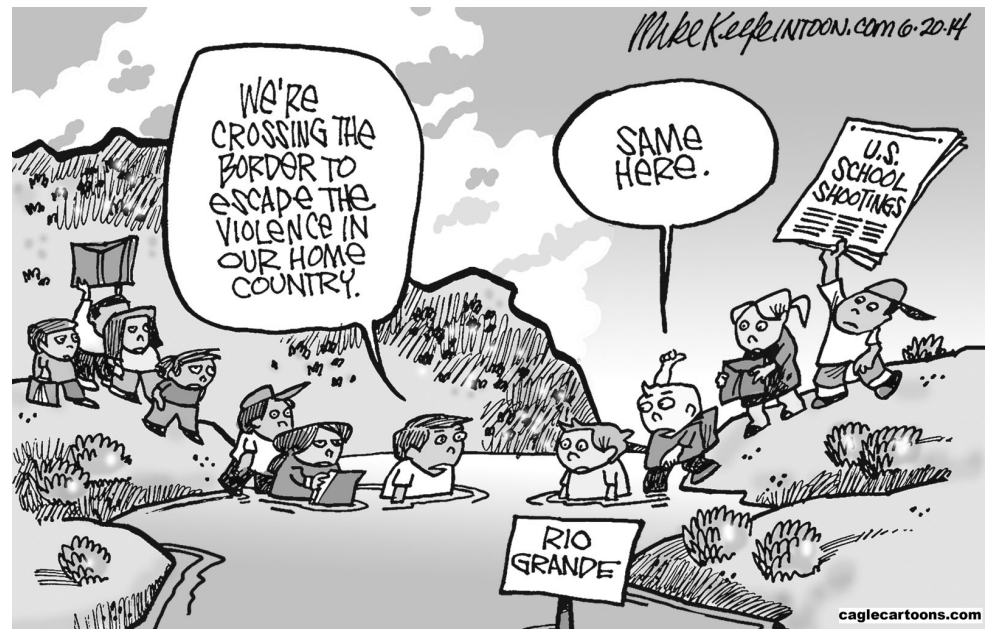
The Chicago Blackhawks won the Stanley Cup with a stunning 3-2 comeback victory in Game 6 over the Boston Bruins. In one of Wimbledon's greatest upsets, an ailing Rafael Nadal was knocked out in straight sets by 135th-ranked Steve Darcis of Belgium, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (8), 6-4.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Al Molinaro is 95. Comedian Jack Carter is 92. Rock singer Arthur Brown is 72. Actress Michele Lee is 72. Actor-director George Stanford Brown is 71. Rock musician Jeff Beck is 70. Rock singer Colin Blunstone (The Zombies) is 69. Musician Mick Fleetwood is 67. Actor Peter Weller is 67. Rock musician John Illsley (Dire Straits) is 65. Actress Nancy Allen is 64. Reggae singer Derrick Simpson (Black Uhuru) is 64. Actor Joe Penny is 58. Reggae singer Astro (UB40) is 57. Singer-musician Andy McCluskey (Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark) is 55. Actor Iain Glen (TV: "Game of Thrones"; "Downton Abbey") is 53. Rock singer Curt Smith is 53. Actress Danielle Spencer is 49. Actress Sherry Stringfield is 47. Singer Glenn Medeiros is 44. Actress-producer Mindy Kaling is 35. Actress Minka Kelly is 34. Actress Kaitlin Cullum is 28. Singer Solange Knowles is 28.

Thought for Today: "Move, and the way will open." — Zen saying.

FROM THE BIBLE

Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation. James 1:9-10. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



The Rez of the Story

Sundance Traditions

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), Here is part four of a series describing Fred Zepher Junior's recollection of how the Sundance was returned to the Ihanctowan Dakotah people (Yankton Sioux Tribe). Last week Fred tells us that: "My brother Al was on the Tribal Council and brother Greg was involved in the struggle for Indian rights."

To continue: "Al and Dad along with other members of the newly formed Heritage Committee, which was made up of traditional Yankton people, approached the Tribal Council [meaning the Business and Claims Committee] to request money for the Sundance. The Tribal Council gave \$4,000.00 to the committee. The money was used to hire a crew to cut wood, gather rocks, to build an arbor and shade."

"It was a time when the consciousness of Indian people seemed to have reached a point of no return. Indians finally got off their knees—they were standing up for the injustices they were confronted with and they sought redress for numerous treaty violations by the United States Government."

"The Lakota people at Pine Ridge were the first to do the Sundance in the 1960's at the Lakota Nation Fair. Although it was a Sundance the participants did not pierce their flesh. That wasn't done until the early 1970's. Russell Means, a member of the American Indian Movement, Matthew King, a spokesman and interpreter for the Lakota people, and Frank Fools Crow, a Lakota Holy Man, were instrumental in conducting the Sundance the way it was meant to be done. The Sundance in Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation was the first Sundance where the men dancers pierced their chests. Prior to that time it was a kind of mock Sundance."

"While my family and I were at the Sundance in Green Grass, I went with Dad to Fools Crow's tipi. When we got to Fools Crow's tipi, we announced ourselves and he invited us in. After we went in we sat for awhile and that is when Dad said, "Kola, I am not a medicine man, but I want to ask you if I could have a Sundance on my land on the Yankton

reservation?" Fools Crow listened and shook his head and acknowledged Dad. Then he said, "Kola, you don't even have to ask me, go ahead and have a Sundance." Dad shook hands with Fools Crow and thanked him and we went back to our tipi. Those month that followed were spent in preparation and planning for the Sundance.

"My brothers Al, Greg, and my sister Margaret, Dad, and others from the Tribe planned that first Sundance. Together they took care of logistics that would lead to the first Sundance on the Yankton Reservation in more than 80 years. The first Sundance was held from June 22 through June 25, 1976. That date was significant in that it was exactly one hundred years earlier on June 25, 1876 that the Ojibwa Shokwin or the Seven Council Fires (the Great Sioux Nation) along with our allies defeated the U.S. Seventh Cavalry at the Little Big Horn (also known as Custer's Last Stand).

"The first two Yankton Sundance's were conducted by Lakota elder Frank Fools Crow and the storyteller and Lakota translator, Matt King, accompanied him to the Yankton Sundance. During the Sundance, Matthew King took it upon himself to be the Master of Ceremonies, so to speak. As part of the Sundance ceremony the Sun dancers get a rest period after offering their Pipe to the singers and to the people. It was during this time that Matthew would tell stories about Crazy Horse. He shared what he knew about the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890 and then again in the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee by the American Indian Movement. Along with his stories he provided insight about the Indian struggle and the importance of being recognized within the United States as Independent and Sovereign Nations. Those of us who heard Matt tell his stories were honored and I, along with many others miss him and his stories."

"When Dad passed away in February of 1989, we talked about having a Naming ceremony for him which Arvol Looking Horse conducted. He was given the name "Walks a Hard Road." Dad was buried in February of 1989 along Seven Mile Creek." And now you know the rez of the story. Doksha (later) ...

Beware The Unimaginable

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

Tribune Content Agency

The signs were all there. This is what jumps out at you in perusing post-mortems of the two greatest surprise attacks in American history. In the days and weeks leading up to Dec. 7, 1941 and Sept. 11, 2001, there were numerous clues that seem neon in hindsight, but which no one perceived.

Or, as then-CIA Director George Tenet famously said of 9/11: "The system was blinking red."

In response to each attack, exhaustive probes were launched to determine whose incompetence allowed the disaster to happen. While there's obvious value in sifting through tragedies past in hopes of preventing tragedies future, it has always seemed to me the ultimate failure in those calamities was not of competence but, rather, imagination. Those in charge did not guard against what happened because what happened was literally beyond their ability to conceive.

That lesson of security and military unreadiness has chilling application to our unreadiness on another front:

Writing in this space a few days back, I scored the GOP for pretending there is some debate over whether human activity is raising the temperature of the planet when "that finding is accepted by 97 percent of climate scientists" — a figure I got from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest general science group. After 20 years writing this column, I am not often surprised by reader reaction. I know a certain segment of my audience will go ballistic if I argue some controversial point — like that racism exists or Muslims are human.

But I admit, I was very surprised at the amount of emails — and anger — that sentence engendered. There is not nearly enough space here to get into the weeds of every objection, but they boiled down to this: The statistic comes from a flawed or skewed study.

I checked this with the AAAS's Dr. Marshall Shepherd, who is the director of the Atmospheric

Sciences Program at the University of Georgia and in 2013 served as president of the American Meteorological Society. His response: The 97 percent figure is consistent across "numerous studies, not just one or two, so there is concision" — a convergence of different streams of knowledge into a consensus.

Even so, my critics have a point when they say the 97 percent figure quoted here and numerous other places is misleading in one sense. Turns out it is not 97 percent of climate scientists who believe human activity is causing global warming, but 97 percent of those who have expressed an opinion. Sixty-six percent of studies by climate scientists actually express no opinion, according to one source. It's an important distinction.

On the other hand, 97 percent is 97 percent, even if it's just 97 percent of those who have an opinion. Virtually no scientist (0.7 percent) rejects the idea of human-caused global warming outright.

Moreover, the price we pay if the 97 percent are right and we do nothing is infinitely greater than the one we pay if they are wrong and we take action.

All that said, I tend to believe the resistance here — at least among politicians and lay persons — has less to do with a failure of science than with an all-too-familiar failure of imagination. If it was impossible to conceive of terrorists using airplanes as missiles or the Japanese striking a Pacific fortress, how difficult is it to conceive the apocalyptic future climate change science is predicting — rising oceans, routine super storms, hellish droughts?

On those two awful mornings, Americans slept in the blithe assurance of what could never happen only to awaken to the awful reality of what already had. We had seen the signs. We simply convinced ourselves they did not mean what they did.

Well, the stakes now are vastly higher. And once again, the system is blinking red.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for The Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

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YOUR LETTERS

A Big Stink

Ashley Sorensen, Vermillion
It doesn't take much digging into the Powertech Uranium Mine to see that it stinks to high heaven. Hiring two relatives of Gov. Rounds to lobby him to weaken water protections. High paid lobbyists literally writing the law that bars the state from monitoring the mine. Throw on top the fact that Powertech is a foreign company with virtually no South Dakota investors who has never conducted a uranium mine before and we have a recipe for a disaster.

I say if Gov. Rounds or Powertech think this proposed uranium mine is such a good idea, then why don't they move out here where the drinking water would be contaminated. Why don't they buy some land out here that will be absolutely worthless when, not if, the mine contaminates our water supply.

There have been some truly impressive backroom deals in Pierre, but this one takes the cake.

Online Opinion

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you use an online music streaming service such as Spotify, Pandora or Rdio?
No52%
Yes38%
Do I use what?10%
TOTAL VOTES CAST293

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Who do support in the South Dakota U.S. House race?

To vote in the Press & Dakotan's Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.