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**OPINION OTHER VIEWS** 

## **US-China Are In Rough Waters**

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE (June 1): The United States is faced with a troublesome question: Is it willing to challenge Chinese ambitions in the South China Sea to maintain a posture of exceptional military dominance in that part of the world?

Any willingness to do so must be measured not only in terms of national pride, but also in opportunity costs at home, taxpayer money that could be spent instead on U.S. infrastructure, education, health care, housing and other domestic needs.

The reality is that China, as it grows in economic importance, including in its favorable trade balance and the holding of more than \$1 trillion in U.S. debt, will seek to expand its influence in its region of the world. In particular, especially given the importance to it of both exports and imports, it will be interested in expanding its sea presence. For all of its ambition, though, China spends only about 10 percent of what the United States does on its military.

Against that backdrop, the Chinese are seeking to reinforce their claims to the Spratly Islands, rocky outcrops in the South China Sea, by dredging and building installations there such as lighthouses and a runway. Chinese neighbors Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam also claim parts of the Spratlys and are looking to the United States to defend their interests.

The U.S. military is carrying out air missions over the Spratlys, to the annoyance of the Chinese, to defend their neighbors' and American interests there, although the latter are difficult to define.

There is always the risk of an accident or a military confrontation occasioned by U.S. flights over the Chinese sites. But are the gains worth, first, the financial cost of carrying them out and, second, the risk of conflict with the Chinese in their own region?

It's becoming harder for the Pentagon to make that case.

#### ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the PRESS & DAKOTAN. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net/.

#### in history

**By The Associated Press** Today is Thursday, June 4, the 155th day of 2015. There are 210 days left in the

Today's Highlight in History: On June 4, 1940, during World War II, the Allied military evacuation of some 338,000 troops from Dunkirk, France, ended. Addressing the British House of Commons, Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never

On this date: In 1783, the Montgolfier brothers first publicly demonstrated their hot-air balloon, which did not carry any

ssengers, over Annonay, France.
In 1784, opera singer Elisabeth Thible became the first woman to make a non-tethered flight aboard a Montgolfier hot-air

balloon, over Lyon, France.
In 1892, the Sierra Club was incorpo-

rated in San Francisco.
In 1919, Congress approved the 19th
Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, itizens the right to vote reardless of their gender, and sent it to the states for ratification.

In 1939, the German ocean liner MS St. Louis, carrying more than 900 Jewish refugees from Germany, was turned away from the Florida coast by U.S. officials.

In 1942, the World War II Battle of Midway began, resulting in a decisive American victory against Japan and marking the turning point of the war in the In 1944, U-505, a German submarine,

was captured by a U.S. Navy task group in the south Atlantic; it was the first such capture of an enemy vessel at sea by the U.S. Navy since the War of 1812. The U.S. Fifth Army began liberating Rome.
In 1954, French Premier Joseph La-

niel and Vietnamese Premier Buu Loc signed treaties in Paris according "complete independence" to Vietnam.
In 1972, a jury in San Jose, Califor-

nia, acquitted radical activist Angela Davis of murder and kidnapping for her alleged connection to a deadly courthouse shootout in Marin County in 1970. In 1986, Jonathan Jay Pollard, a for-

mer Navy intelligence analyst, pleaded guilty in Washington to conspiring to deliver information related to the national defense to Israel. (He is serving a life In 1990, Dr. Jack Kevorkian carried

out his first publicly assisted suicide, helping Janet Adkins, a 54-year-old Alzhei-mer's patient from Portland, Oregon, end her life in Oakland County, Michigan.

In 1998, a federal judge sentenced Terry Nichols to life in prison for his role in the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

Ten years ago: The White House

downplayed a Pentagon report detailing incidents in which U.S. guards at Guantanamo Bay prison had desecrated the Quran, saying in a statement, "It is unfortunate that some have chosen to take out of context a few isolated incidents by a

few individuals." Justine Henin-Hardenne beat Mary Pierce 6-1, 6-1 to win the

French Open women's singles title.

Five years ago: On his third personal trek to the Gulf disaster, President Barack Obama said that he saw some progress in fighting the enormous oil spill but that it was "way too early to be optimistic." The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announced a voluntary recall of 12 million U.S.-made "Shrek" drinking glasses sold by McDonald's which were found to be tainted with cadmium. Fourteen-year-old Anamika Veeramani of North Royalton, Ohio, won the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., correctly spelling the medical term "stromuhr." Death claimed postmodern author David Markson, 82; legendary basketball coach John Wooden, 99; and Jack Harrison, 97, survivor of the Great Escape plot by Allied prisoners in World War II.

One year ago: On the second day of a visit to Poland, President Barack Obama held up the nation as a guidepost for neighboring Ukraine as it sought to fend off a pro-Russian insurgency; later that same day, in Brussels, Obama attended a meeting of the Group of Seven major industrial nations, with the pointed exclusion of Russia from the gathering. A gun-man fatally wounded three Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers and wounded two others in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada. (Justin Bourque was convicted of the shootings and sentenced to life in prison.) Baseball player, manager and coach Don Zimmer, 83, died in Dunedin, Florida. Carrie Underwood won her third straight video of the year at the CMT Mu-

Today's Birthdays: Sex therapist and media personality Dr. Ruth Westheimer is 87. Actor Bruce Dern is 79. Musician Roger Ball is 71. Actress-singer Michelle Phillips is 71. Jazz musician Anthony Braxton is 70. Rock musician Dan-ny Brown (The Fixx) is 64. Actor Parker evenson is 63. Actor Keith David is 59. Blues singer-musician Tinsley Ellis is 58. Actress Julie Gholson is 57. Actor Eddie Velez is 57. Singer-musician El DeBarge is 54. Actress Julie White is 54. Actress Lindsay Frost is 53. Actor Sean Pertwee (TV: "Gotham") is 51. Tennis player Andrea Jaeger is 50. Opera singer Cecilia Bartoli is 49. Rhythm-and-blues singer Al B. Sure! is 47. Actor Scott Wolf is 47. Actor-comedian Rob Huebel is 46. Comedian Horatio Sanz is 46. Actor Noah Wyle is 44. Rock musician Stefan Lessard (The Dave Matthews Band) is 41. Actorcomedian Russell Brand is 40. Actress Angelina Jolie is 40. Actor Theo Rossi is 40. Alt-country singer Kasey Chambers is 39. Rock musician JoJo Garza (Los Lonely Boys) is 35. Country musician Dean Berner (Edens Edge) is 34. Model Bar Refaeli is 30. Olympic gold medal figure skater Evan Lysacek is 30. Rock musician Zac Farro is 25.

Thought for Today: "When you betray somebody else, you also betray yourself." — Isaac Bashevis Singer, Polish-born American Nobel Prize-winning author (1904-1991).

## FROM THE BIBLE

Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 12:6. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## With Honors!

Verne Hull, Yankton

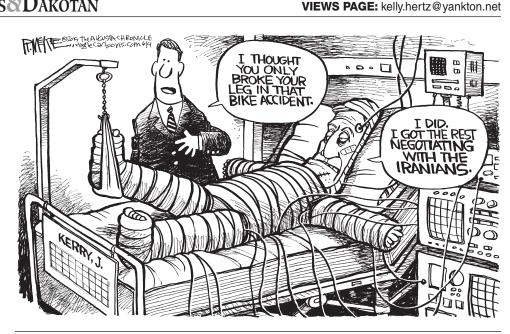
Sometime ago I submitted to Kelly Hertz a summary of my World War II experiences with the hope it would be published in the P&D. But Kelly soon informed me that it was too long for inclusion and said, "Sorry, Verne." I recognized that Kelly was correct.

Thus aware of my tendency to overstate things, I still wish to join the chorus of World War II veterans in the Yankton area who sing the praises Dave Hosmer and Doug Haar and their associates for all they do to bring recognition to us World War II veterans. The time and

money they spend on us must be considerable.

Yankton's own Tom Brokaw called us "The Greatest Generation." In the twilight of our lives the attention is flattering. It warms my heart. Maybe we were in the wrong place at the right time. But, truthfully, I don't think we are any better or worse than any other American generation so far.

Recently, Dave and Doug hosted a luncheon for us at the VFW in recognition of V-E Day (Victory in Europe) 70 years ago. Bill Kerr stood and proposed a champagne toast to Dave and Doug and their associates. We all joined in. Afterward. Bill and I saluted them as well.



**Writer's Block** 

# The Caretakers **Of Our Democracy**

William

BY WILLIAM KERR

For the Press & Dakotan

You'd think there was another election coming up soon, instead of November 2016, by the amount of pre-election activity going on already. So, then maybe it's a good time to put in a

word or two about our system of government. It is the toughest ever invented to keep on track to benefit all of its citizens. All of the others (monarchy, dictatorship, communism, theocracy) are easier to manage because fewer people are involved in making

make them and their friends. You might have noticed that our government seems to have drifted almost dramatically in that direction recently. (Well, not totally recently, but slowly since President Reagan's time.)

the decisions, probably because those

decisions usually end up being made to

render the most benefit to the few who

For a democracy to continue on **KERR** track benefiting all of its citizens, all of its citizens must be participating and doing their share. We had that situation when President Franklin Roosevelt was elected, along with a Democratic Congress, which together subsequently pulled the country together to overcome the depression, prepare for World War II, win it and build a new prosperity for all. More recently, our government seems to have drifted back in the direction of those making the decisions having little concern for the working people who do the actual labor of keeping this country going. Benefits for children, veterans and

the elderly especially have been reduced in order to give more income tax discounts to the rich. The worst part is that the majority of our citizens have contributed directly to that trend by not having their say about how things are to be done. That is, they have not voted. When a president can be elected by less than 25 percent of eligible voters, the stage is set for a minority to elect their candidate and subsequently control the country.

When our forefathers put together this form of government, they were responding to the rule of the few which they had experienced in various "old countries." Their intention was to have every eligible voter help run the country.

Do we have to get all the way back to rule by the few before the majority will wake up and begin participating? Do we have it so good that we don't care what the politicians do? Or, which ones get elected? Why do we continue to allow our government to skirt our laws and rob our Social Security Trust Fund (\$2.8 trillion and counting) and expect we will all get a fair deal? That's what you who do not vote imply by not voting. And you who do

not vote for individuals but just "X" the party box imply that the party knows best! The more people who do not check the issues and the candidates, the more our democracy is vulnerable to being totally undermined.

If we are to have an economy that benefits all of our citizens, we all have to do our share. Yes, I said "our share." To keep our country running on an even keel that benefits us all, we have to pay attention to what our elected officials do and

what they stand for, and elect those who will do the best job for all of us; we must un-elect those who disappoint us. It's also our job to keep our elected officials aware of what we want, especially when they seem to be out of touch with the majority of our citizens (which many past polls have indicated). We have to pay attention to what is happening and how they respond and let them know how we feel about their work, and suggest what we think are better ways to do things. That is our job and our responsibility in a democracy.

We are not now doing our job, our share of the work, to keep things going on an even keel benefiting all citizens

and assisting those in distress. Those of you who are not voting are poor citizens indeed. And, when you don't vote, you are not entitled to complain about anything our legislators do — or don't do.

If you aren't aware of these things or don't think they matter, read up on history. Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it. Some person of note said that and it is still true. If you like the freedoms we still have, thank a veteran. If you want to keep them and have not been voting, get your fanny in gear, find out what the different candidates stand for and how well they put their words into action, and vote. Remember, when you vote, you are only responsible if those you vote for perform badly. When you don't vote, you are responsible for every candidate who performs badly. And, when you don't vote, you dishonor every veteran who fought to keep our freedoms. Freedom isn't free. Remember ..

It is the soldier, not the reporter, who gives you freedom of the press,

It is the soldier, not the poet, who gives you

freedom of speech. It is the soldier not the local organizer who

gives you the freedom to demonstrate, It is the soldier, not the lawyer, who gives you

the right to a fair trial, It is the soldier who salutes the flag, serves under the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who gives you the freedom to burn the flag.

(Author Unknown)

## **Kathleen Parker**

## lenner's Coming-Out Party

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — It wasn't quite "Call me Ishmael," but "Call me Caitlyn" made a whale of

One could hardly find a news channel the past couple of days that wasn't touting the former Bruce Jenner for her courageous transgender metamorphosis or admiring her "gorgeous'

Within moments of the release of Vanity Fair's July cover featuring Caitlyn Jenner, Twitter was "trending" that she looks a little like, OMG, Jessica Lange!

In the brightest moment of the day, Lange, when asked over the phone for comment on her trending, said, "What does that mean?" Upon being tutored by the caller, the Internet-free Lange graciously said, "That's so wonderful."

Before proceeding, let's pause, shall we, to stipulate that we wish Jenner the best in her new life. It must be terribly difficult to find oneself not at home in one's own physical and societally recognized self. Obviously, no one would go through such a doubtless trying process to become entirely another — or rather to make the skin fit - if this weren't a real and devastating situation

What concerns me here is the cultural, primarily media, treatment of the Jenner case in particular — and the assumption that we all need to be a part of this. From the interview in April with Diane Saw-

that many feel requires remedy.

yer, to the *Vanity Fair* cover, to the breathless media coverage this week, one's overwhelming sense is that Caitlyn Jenner — and only incidentally, transgenderism — is the Next New Thing! Every movement needs a celebrity, we've

come to accept, and Jenner is the self-appointed transgender community's poster girl. But is Jenner really the best face for such a profound experience, no offense to her plastic surgeon? Though many of us remember Jenner as the

stunning 1976 Olympic decathlon gold medalist, the erstwhile Wheaties model is best-known to a younger generation as Dad in the reality television series "Keeping Up with the Kardashians." I can't speak to the appeal of the show, hav-

ing never watched it, but few could have escaped exposure to the Kardashian name and the family's most infamous daughter, Kim, who lurched to notoriety owing to a sex tape, her friendship with fellow exhibitionist Paris Hilton, and her rather robust derriere.

To put it bluntly, the former Bruce and the latter Caitlyn have been media personalities-forhire for most of their existence. Is it really appropriate to elevate Jenner to such heroic and adjectival heights as "bold" and "courageous," when many transgender people will conduct their own struggles privately, and, indeed, courageously?

Caitlyn, like Bruce, seems to need the applause of an audience as much as she needs the transformation itself, her protestations in the *Vanity Fair* profile to the contrary.

This is not to suggest that Jenner's transgender identity is anything but heartfelt and necessary. As we learn more about transgender issues and presumably education is the nobler intention driving media attention — it becomes less easy to ignore such people or deny them equal protections under the law.

But I've learned more about transgender individuals and their families from the tender poetry of Sue Ellen Thompson than from magazine displays and televised hype. In her latest collection, "They," Thompson writes lovingly of her own transgender daughter's journey and the challenges her evolution poses for three generations of family. I commend her book to those interested in insight over titillation.

In stark contrast, seeing Jenner all gussied up like some 1940s Vargas girl (part Madonna, part Kardashian?) — wearing long tresses and corsetinspired lingerie — seems a mockery of her new womanhood, as well as the human dignity her public outing purportedly is intended to inspire.

Photographer Annie Leibowitz, whose portraiture collections grace coffee tables, including my own, perhaps chose this representation for ironic reasons. Exaggerated femininity may be her own pointed commentary as someone who typically eschews such trappings. Or perhaps, given Jenner's preference in women when she was a married man (see Kardashians), the uberfemale model was selected as an arch representation rather than the caricature it seems to be.

All of the above suggests much psychological and emotional work left to do, for which Jenner surely deserves privacy rather than spectacle. She has averred that with the *Vanity Fair* cover, she is "finally free." One would hope the same for the rest of us, but, alas. A new E! reality show following Jenner's progress as a woman is in the

Cue the audience.

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