

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION OTHER VIEWS

Obama Botches Iraq War, Peace

THE AUGUSTA (Georgia) CHRONICLE (May 19): Just last Friday, the Pentagon assured us that the terrorists of ISIS were on the run. Not to worry.
By Monday, ISIS had overrun the key city of Ramadi, leaving bloody, smoldering bodies in its wake.

Could the Obama administration possibly believe its own rhetoric? Or do we now officially have a Soviet-style government that lies through its teeth to its people with no sense of irony or guilt?

Whatever the case, Mr. Obama's empty promise last fall to "degrade and destroy" ISIS rings even more hollow today.

It has been a half-hearted effort at best, and the goals of the mightiest nation in the world have been routed yet again with the fall of Ramadi.

In short, Barack Obama, having already lost the peace in Iraq, is now losing the war.

It's been sadly amusing to sit back and watch the national media tie themselves into knots in the past week or so trying to get Republican candidates to admit (since the Democrat candidate won't speak) that going into Iraq some 12 years ago was a mistake.

Where are the questions about the current state of affairs? Why aren't the media obsessing over the Obama administration's abject failure to "degrade and destroy" the 7th-century savages of ISIS?

And why aren't the talking heads tying themselves in knots asking if it was a mistake for President Obama to withdraw precipitously from Iraq?

Where are the questions? Isn't today's situation, and what led directly to it, a little more relevant than asking "Knowing what we know today, would we have done what we did 12 years ago?"

Even the liberal Washington Post waxed quizzical after the fall of Ramadi. In noting Mr. Obama's rhetoric last fall of the ISIS threat to even America, the Post wrote in an editorial this week:

"Yet he refuses to commit the Special Forces and military assistance that could meet that threat, portraying any alternative to his minimalist policy as being 'dragged back into another prolonged ground war.' ...
"Every conflict will have ups and downs, as administration spokesmen said Monday. But it is Mr. Obama's unwillingness to match means to strategy that threatens to prolong this war."

Even Democrat Rep. Adam Schiff says administration claims that the war is going well should set off "alarm bells."

If this were a Republican president, would the rest of the media be so sanguine about the goings-on in Iraq and the policy failures on display there?

Instead, the major media are satiated and satisfied by fables from our generals about how well it's going in Iraq.

Has the administration managed to dismiss all truth-tellers and dissenters from our military?

Sorry, comrades, but we're just not buying what they're selling.

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.

P&D LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** invites its readers to write letters to the editor. We ask that a few simple guidelines be followed:

- Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.
- In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.
- Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.
- Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email us at kelly.hertz@yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press
Today is Thursday, May 21, the 141st day of 2015. There are 224 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On May 21, 1927, Charles A. Lindbergh landed his Spirit of St. Louis monoplane near Paris, completing the first solo airplane flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 33 1/2 hours.

On this date: In 1471, King Henry VI of England died in the Tower of London at age 49.

In 1542, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto died while searching for gold along the Mississippi River.

In 1881, Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross.

In 1892, the opera "Pagliacci," by Ruggero Leoncavallo, premiered in Milan, Italy.

In 1924, in a case that drew much notoriety, 14-year-old Bobby Franks was murdered in a "thrill killing" carried out by University of Chicago students Nathan Leopold Jr. and Richard Loeb (Bobby's cousin).

In 1932, Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean as she landed in Northern Ireland, about 15 hours after leaving Newfoundland.

In 1941, a German U-boat sank the American merchant steamship SS Robin Moor in the South Atlantic after the ship's passengers and crew were allowed to board lifeboats.

In 1945, actors Humphrey Bogart, 45, and Lauren Bacall, 20, were married at Malabar Farm in Lucas, Ohio (it was his fourth marriage, her first, and would last until Bogart's death in 1957).

In 1955, Chuck Berry recorded his first single, "Maybellene," for Chess Records in Chicago.

In 1972, Michelangelo's Pieta, on display at the Vatican, was damaged by a hammer-wielding man who shouted he was Jesus Christ.

In 1982, during the Falklands War, British amphibious forces landed on the beach at San Carlos Bay.

In 1990, CBS aired the final episode of the sitcom "Newhart" in which it was revealed in the closing scene that the entire series about a Vermont innkeeper played by Bob Newhart had been a dream

of Bob Hartley, the psychologist played by Newhart in his previous show, "The Bob Newhart Show."

Ten years ago: A fleet Alex regained his footing and his drive after being cut off by Scrapy T in a frightening collision and breezed home to win the Preakness Stakes; Kentucky Derby winner Giacomo finished third. The Belgian film "The Child" won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. Comedic actor Howard Morris died in Hollywood at age 85.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama directed the government to set the first-ever mileage and pollution limits for big trucks and to tighten rules for future cars and SUVs. Citing overwhelming evidence that North Korea had sunk a South Korean warship, the Cheonan, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton warned the reclusive communist state of consequences.

One year ago: With outrage mounting over veterans' health care, President Barack Obama declared that misconduct alleged at VA hospitals would not be tolerated. China signed a \$400 billion gas deal with Russia, binding Moscow more closely to Beijing amid international sanctions for Russian actions in Ukraine. Wendell Scott became the first African-American driver to be elected to the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

Today's Birthdays: Rhythm-and-blues singer Ron Isley (The Isley Brothers) is 74. Rock musician Hilton Valentine (The Animals) is 72. Actor Richard Hatch is 70. Musician Bill Champlin is 68. Singer Leo Sayer is 67. Actress Carol Potter is 67. Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., is 64. Actor Mr. T is 63. Music producer Stan Lynch is 60. Actor Judge Reinhold is 58. Actor-director Nick Cassavetes is 56. Actor Brent Briscoe is 54. Actress Lisa Edelstein is 49. Actress Fairuza Balk is 41. Rock singer-musician Mikel Jollett (Airborne Toxic Event) is 41. Rapper Havoc (Mobb Deep) is 41. Actor David Ajala (TV: "Black Box") is 29. Actress Ashlie Brillault is 28. Actor Scott Leavenworth is 25. Actress Sarah Ramos is 24.

Thought for Today: "Originality does not consist in saying what no one has ever said before, but in saying exactly what you think yourself." — James Stephens, Irish poet and novelist (1882-1950).

FROM THE BIBLE

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. 2 Corinthians 1:3. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



Thomas E. Simmons

Some 'No-Fault' History

BY THOMAS E. SIMMONS
University of South Dakota

This past legislative session, House Bill 1221, which would have allowed "no fault" divorces, was unsuccessful in Pierre. Currently only one state besides South Dakota requires "fault" as an element of divorce when one spouse refuses to stipulate that the couple has encountered irreconcilable differences.

Scherer v. Scherer illustrates the workings of South Dakota's requirement of fault as a precondition to a judicial dissolution of marriage.

Betty Scherer sought a divorce from her husband on grounds of extreme cruelty after 12 years of marriage. Extreme cruelty means "the infliction of grievous bodily injury or grievous mental suffering upon the other, by one party to the marriage."

The circuit court conducted a one and a half day trial and found that on account of the husband's work schedule, he had not been available to his wife as a companion or as a housemate. Betty felt betrayed. He admitted to her of having sexual intercourse with her while she was sleeping. She was 60 years old and in poor health. The trial court granted Betty a divorce and divided the marital property.

The South Dakota Supreme Court reversed. "[T]he conclusions of law are devoid of any determination that extreme cruelty was proven from those facts," the Court stated in its unanimous decision.

House Bill 1221 would have allowed Betty to obtain a divorce without having the court question her asserted grounds of extreme cruelty. In debating the bill, the legislators reviewed statistics that purported to show that rates of domestic violence fell dramatically in states that changed their divorce laws to allow for



Thomas E. SIMMONS

non-fault dissolution of marriage.

Some of the quoted statistics, like one from 2006 that claimed severe domestic violence rates fell by one-third, do seem overstated. Just because a person eats carrots and dies later the same day does not mean that carrots are poisonous. Just because violent crime rates rise or fall does not mean that all domestic violence is directly linked to legislative amendments of divorce statutes.

Yankton Representative Mike Stevens pointed this out on the house floor with a well-known quotation from Mark Twain, that there are "lies, damned lies, and statistics." (Actually it's not a quotation that is originally attributable to Mark Twain; he claimed to be quoting Benjamin Disraeli.)

Representative Stevens was right to question statistics that may show a correlation — but not causation. Representative (and Pastor) Scott Craig also argued against the bill on the house floor: "Most people who pursue this no fault divorce, they do so simply because they were bored. That's a fact. They were bored. It's not that there was abuse. There was boredom in their marriage."

But whether or not no fault divorce leads to measurable reductions in domestic violence, the Scherer decision illustrates South Dakota's outmoded fault scheme.

If statistics deserve skepticism, so does Representative Craig's assertion that most divorcing couples in a no fault jurisdiction end their marriage out of boredom.

Thomas E. Simmons is an assistant professor at the University of South Dakota School of Law in Vermillion. Simmons' views are his own and not those of USD.

Point Of View

Memorial Day Reflections

BY MICHAEL (MOOSE) WELCH, MTCS/SS USN RET.
Yankton

Memorial Day has been part of our lives longer than it has been officially recognized by federal legislation. It's beginnings are tied to the remembrance of Civil War Veterans in the first few years after the Civil War was admonished to history with the war ending in 1865 and then remembrances becoming the standard in local cemeteries beginning in 1866.

The remembrances of all war dead was not included in the recognition of Memorial Day until after World War I, until then Memorial Day or Decoration Day as it was known then was intended to remember and recognize those of the Civil War. In 1971 it was finally recognized by federal legislation establishing a National Holiday in 1971 when the last Monday in May was given to be Memorial Day.

In my lifetime, I have come to see that it matters not if the veteran is of wars many years past such as the Civil War or World War I and World War II or of recent conflicts as the Vietnam War or the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We seem to have lost the reverence for those who gave their lives so that we may be free.

To those who are living and have served, I honor your service on Veterans Day. On Memorial Day, I offer my solemn recognition and honor and pride for those who died for the United States and the values shared by those who have worn the uniform next to them. There were 4491 Americans who died in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) with 20 from South Dakota and 2357 Americans died in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) (Afghanistan) with six from South Dakota.

We lost four great Americans locally; Specialist Dennis Jensen in OEF and Sergeant Allen Kokesh Jr., Staff Sergeant Daniel Cuka and



Welch

Sergeant First Class Richard Schild in OIF. Their families have moved on with their lives and the children are growing up with remembrances of their father's as small children saying good bye. Moms and Dads must have in their heart what great men they raised. For the Wife's the challenges you have faced can never be tallied but

you must be honored next to your husbands as giving more than can be imagined. I personally think of these men and what they have done on a frequent basis.

I ask that we as a community remember them and vow to never be too busy to allow them to be forgotten. I do not intend to slight those who were local and served and died in other wars but to maintain currency in the status of the warrior who defends us and our way of life in distant lands or on far away oceans.

In this past week, we will have looked at many advertising flyers announcing Memorial Day sales and special events. It is readily apparent that you can save 25 percent to 50 percent and that the stores will be open from dawn to dusk so that you can start your summer celebrations. More than not, those flyers will not even mention the intent of Memorial Day.

If you can attend one of the local Memorial Day services, it would be great — but at least take a moment to remember those who have given all that they could.

Remember those who have held the flag for you overseas and at home and stop for a moment and tell those around you what that flag means to you and your family. We are very lucky to be Americans and often take that for granted.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks For Support

Michael F. McDonald, Yankton
Yankton County Veterans Service Officer/DAV van ride coordinator

Just a quick thank you to all the Press and Dakotan area readers who just happen to be donors to the local Services Federal Credit Union's April Choice Charity, the DAV van fund. The DAV van serves veterans who need transportation to medical appointments at the Sioux Falls VA. Our local DAV van serves veterans from Bon Homme, Turner, Clay, and Yankton counties in South Dakota, as well as Cedar and Knox counties in Nebraska.

The DAV van is scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday trips to the Sioux Falls VA. Leave times for such trips are dependent upon the appointment schedules of the veterans using the van service that particular day. Our local van can comfortably take four passengers. We are always in search of more volunteer drivers. Veterans needing to utilize the van service can contact the Yankton County Veterans Service Office at 260-4420 (Mondays from 1-5 p.m. and on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.).

Once again, a heartfelt THANK YOU to all the folks from the Services Federal Credit Union who contributed to the DAV van fund.

DESTINY: "Our republic and its press will rise or fall together."

— Joseph Pulitzer

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: It's Your Right To Know!