

DAMN THE TORPEDOES

In his latest column, Pat Buchanan appears opposed to the battle in Iraq (July 18). He refers to possible political ramifications, but this war is beyond politics. The future of Western civilization is at stake.

The combat in Iraq is not a war but a battle in a war that was started 1,400 years ago. The cult of a self-proclaimed prophet has expanded to more than 1.2 billion people, and the disciples of this devil intend to bring the entire earth under the rule of Allah. Currently, Western nations are the soft targets.

The meek enjoy liberties after the strong have fought, sacrificed, and died. If we don't resist Islam, our culture has no future. There are two approaches: let posterity fight its own wars when the time comes, or maintain a place in the world for Jesus, our posterity, and Western civilization.

Damn the torpedoes. Let's get down and dirty. Kill the bastards. Wars are dirty. It is wrong to elevate ourselves above their standards. They take no prisoners. Neither should we.

God bless America,
WARREN E. BOISSELLE
Virginia Beach, Va.

DOLLAR DUMP DOUBTER

I was a big fan of Paul Craig Roberts when he worked for President Reagan. In his article "Who Owns the Dollar?" (July 4), Mr. Roberts states, "In the meantime, even a small country could pop the U.S. housing bubble by dumping dollar reserves."

What, exactly, are these "dollar reserves" and what, exactly, would the "small country" do to "dump" them? I assume that he is not saying that he fears that (for example) Indonesia might toss a large number of \$100 bills into an active volcano.

Now, a "small country" owning U.S. Treasury bonds could sell them. Then they would have dollars and somebody else who used to have the dollars would

have the Treasury bonds. Is Roberts saying that by doing this, the "small country" would "pop the U.S. housing bubble"?

Today, long-term U.S. interest rates fell again, to 3.90 percent on the 10-year Treasury bond and to 1.66 percent on the 30-year Treasury Inflation-Protected Security. The world financial markets issue a long-term interest-rate forecast everyday, and they "put their money where their mouth is."

Roberts needs to explain what is driving the financial markets' view of the prospects for U.S. interest rates, which, presumably, are what underpin the U.S. housing bubble.

LOUIS R. WOODHILL
via e-mail

Paul Craig Roberts replies:

If South Korea, for example, were to dump its \$200 billion of U.S. Treasuries on the bond market, the large increase in supply would drive down bond prices and raise interest rates. The only way this could be avoided would be if a buyer stood ready to take the \$200 billion in bonds off the market at the current price. Theoretically, there might be two countries that could do this: Japan and China. Japan could use its own currency to purchase the bonds and might benefit from halting the rise of its currency by increasing its supply. As China is unwilling to let its currency be traded (as traders could then force China off its dollar peg), China would not purchase the bonds with its own currency. It could purchase the bonds only if it held \$200 billion in tradable currencies. China and Japan have an interest in protecting the dollar and U.S. interest rates because they benefit from their large trade surpluses with us. However, neither has to come to America's rescue, and if tensions were to be high, over Taiwan, for example, China might well dump its \$600 billion, in which case there would be no hope whatsoever for the dollar and U.S. interest rates.

If any one country, however small, were to dump U.S. Treasuries, the most likely effect would be to start other countries doing the same. According to the Bank for International Settlements, Asian countries—China included—have in recent months reduced their holdings of dollar assets by diversifying into other currencies.

The apparent demise of the European Union politically has raised questions about the euro's sustainability and given the dollar a longer period during which it can be over-issued, ultimately leading to a larger crisis. Once an alternative reserve currency comes on the scene, the dollar is toast.

NO ENCORE PEACE MARCHES

Scott McConnell explains and bemoans the absence of a peace movement—similar to the peace movement during the war in Vietnam—to protest against the war in Iraq (July 4).

I participated in that earlier movement and am glad that there is nothing like it today. Antiwar demonstrators, with their violence, obscenities, and their expression of anti-American and pro-Communist sentiments, angered the American people and provoked the electorate to vote for hawkish politicians who prolonged the war.

Without something like that now to distract the voters, public opinion is already turning against the war in Iraq. If Congress does not force a withdrawal from Iraq, its members will be replaced in 2006.

JOHN ENGELMAN
via e-mail

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[CULTURE]

WE AREN'T THE WORLD

It's nice to Feel Good while Doing Good, and the hundreds of thousands who gathered in London, Philadelphia, and other cities to hear music and alleviate African poverty seemed to have a great time. Whether Live 8 organizer Bob Geldof's demands had any measurable impact is another matter.

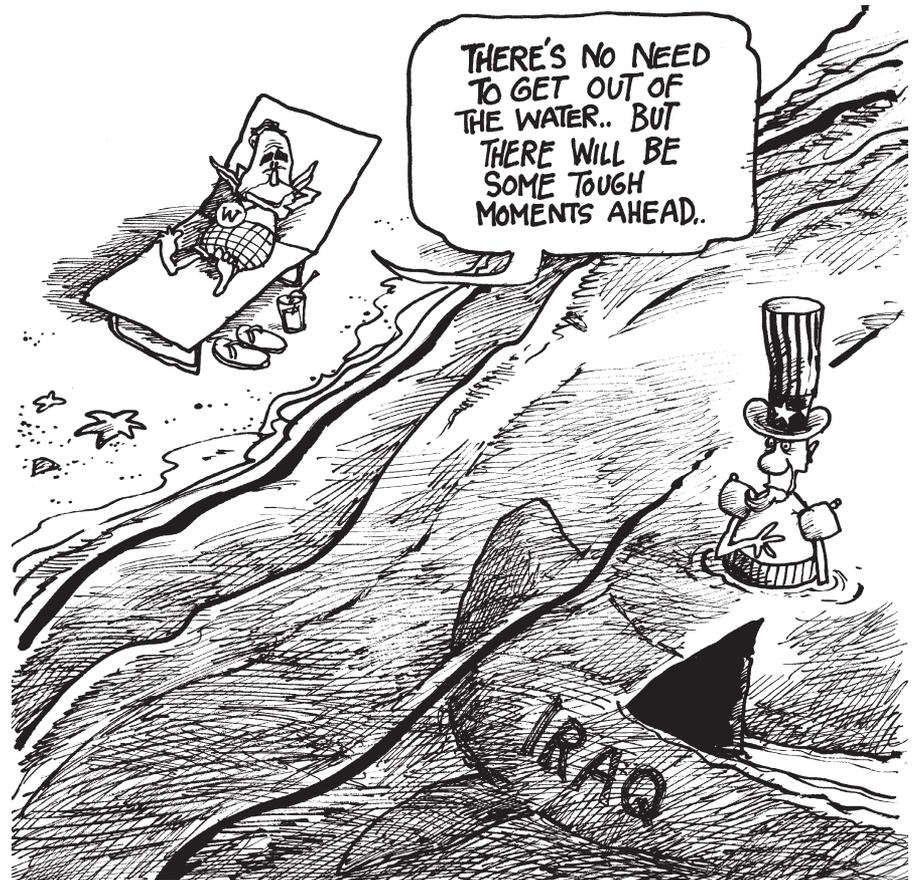
It's a kind of Western narcissism to imagine that financial decisions made by eight industrial countries are the key to the matter. An African child dies of hunger every few seconds—this is the sort of statistic that inflamed Dickens's Mrs. Jellyby a century and a half ago. Yet not a word was uttered from the Live 8 stages calling for Robert Mugabe to step down though he has transformed Zimbabwe, once one of the continent's richer economies, into rank poverty in the course of two decades. Nor a mention of civil war in the Congo. As Niall Ferguson pointed out, it's so much more satisfying for our modern-day Jellybys to believe that Africa's woes are the responsibility of those uncool rich men who lead the G8 countries. But, hey, there was some really good music.

[IMMIGRATION]

DON'T ASK, DONT TELL

One way to fix answers you don't like is to stop asking questions. Just ask the Bush administration.

Though the White House took pains to package last year's guest-worker program as anything but amnesty, Mexican migrants—and the vast majority of the American public—saw it as exactly that. After the announcement, the Department of Homeland Security began distributing a questionnaire to apprehended border-jumpers. Now Judicial Watch has obtained those documents, and, to no one's surprise, 45 percent of the intercepted illegals stated that they



thought the president's plan made provision for them to stay.

According to Judicial Watch's president, Tom Fitton, when 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. got wind of the surveys, Border Patrol agents were given "White House approved talking points" instead. They were told, "do not talk about amnesty, increase in apprehensions or give comparisons of past immigration reform proposals" and "do not provide statistics on apprehension spikes or past amnesty data."

But denying the result of a bad policy doesn't redeem it: if it quacks like an amnesty, it probably is.

[CONSERVATISM]

FREE-MARKET ZOOS

Late last month the American Enterprise Institute hosted a panel discussion on the Future of Conservatism—and who better to serve on such a panel than Newt Gingrich? Joining the former Speaker of the House was current Indiana Congressman Mike Pence, chairman of the Republican Study Committee. Since this was AEI, David Frum served as monitor.

What Pence had to say was admirable enough: he criticized the president's pre-

scription-drug plan for Medicare, cited Russell Kirk a few times, and made no secret of his pro-life commitments. And Gingrich? After telling the audience that he believed in "regulation without bureaucracy" and the "Travelocity model of health care," he unbossed a fresh idea sure to set the world atwitter—privatizing the National Zoo. Make it more like the San Diego Zoo, he demanded; the Smithsonian just can't handle it.

As for Iraq, the event brought to mind an old bit of advice from Basil Fawlty about Germans: "Don't mention the war." Newt did mention it, in passing, only to pin the blame for "mismanagement" squarely on Paul Bremer. If only there had been an Iraqi leader installed from day one—no need to name names, and Newt did not—all would have been well.

If this is conservatism's future, we'll look to the past.

[POSTWAR]

DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HISTORY

Americans may need to be bathed continuously in the historical lessons of appeasement and the Holocaust, but some history gets old pretty fast. At least that's the view of Paul Wolfowitz,