

[TERROR]

## THEY DON'T HATE US FOR OUR FREEDOMS

The Scottish poet Robert Burns wrote, "O would some power the gift give us to see ourselves as others see us." From her sense of possibility to her pioneer ethic, America can claim many fine gifts. But the ability to borrow others' eyes is not one.

Last year, the UN General Assembly took two votes on Israeli policy toward the Palestinians. The first required that Yasser Arafat not be deported or harmed. It passed by a 133 to 4 vote. The other called for the implementation of the roadmap to Mideast peace and condemned Israel's "security fence" on the West Bank. It won approval by a 141 to 4 vote. In both dissents, the U.S. discarded traditional allies to join with Israel, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands, and while Americans likely paid little attention, the rest of the world was watching.

The Wednesday afternoon before Thanksgiving—prime time to bury news—the Pentagon posted online a report by the Defense Science Board. It concluded, contra the administration's talking points, "Muslims do not hate our freedom, but rather they hate our policies." The sore points come as no surprise: "objections to what they see as one-sided support in favor of Israel and against Palestinian rights and the longstanding, even increasing, support for what Muslims collectively see as tyrannies..."

While Americans had been primed by neocon propaganda to expect grateful locals to shower flowers, "There is no yearning-to-be-liberated-by-the-U.S. groundswell among Muslim societies," the panel found. Further, "The critical problem in American public diplomacy toward the Muslim world .... is a fundamental problem of credibility. Simply, there is none..."



It is power's prerogative to ignore the counsel of lesser voices. "Because we can" carries a sort of rationale—but it comes with a price to be paid in hate or fear. We cannot disregard allies and topple nations then accuse those who fail to love us of despising our goodness. Such is the self-concentration of a spoiled child, not the thoughtful posture of a superpower aiming to preserve her place in the sun.

[MEDIA]

## SLAPP HAPPY

Many of us are new fans of Juan Cole, the University of Michigan history prof whose daily blogs on the Iraq War are troves of insight. Cole reads widely in the Arab press and has a Middle Eastern scholar's knowledge of the Muslim religion and political culture, so his commentary has a texture lacking in the Western media.

Cole recently posted pointed words about the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), the organization that provides translations of Arab news that are grist for the mill of neocon commentary: seldom does an off-the-wall Arab comment go uncirculated.

Cole criticized MEMRI for selectively translating the most extremist views in the Arab world and thus painting an unrepresentative and inaccurate picture of political debate. He further speculated on the ideological affinity between

MEMRI and Israel's Likud Party. This seemed like fair comment in the battle over Mideast policy, but what followed was highly unusual: a letter from MEMRI's president Col. Yigal Carmon, late of Israeli military intelligence, threatening a SLAPP lawsuit. (SLAPPs—strategic lawsuits against public participation—are a technique that businesses have used to discourage environmental activists.)

One has to marvel at the sheer gall of it: a foreign (former) intelligence officer attempting to silence by intimidation an American professor who comments in the blogosphere. There is not the slightest doubt that Cole would prevail in any battle of the lawyers, but it's the principle of the thing. Israelis may be accustomed to trying to shut down the expression of opinions they don't like in the occupied territories. But in America, the Bill of Rights still holds sway.

[ECONOMICS]

## ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS A JOB

Christmas is coming and the goose is getting fat—as are Chinese manufacturers. St. Nick has brought them an early gift, one that means American workers might get coal in their stockings this year. At the end of November, Wal-Mart announced that its stock of Chinese-produced goods was expected to reach \$18 billion this year, up \$3 billion from 2003.

Who needs elves, or American manufacturing, when you have Third World labor?

The Chinese are grateful for the present: *China Business Weekly* quotes Wang Yao, a spokesman for the China General Chamber of Commerce, "Buying more products in China means more job opportunities, which helps the firm win ... the government's heart..." In America, meanwhile, thanks to the world's largest retailer, those "job opportunities" are fast becoming a thing of Christmas past.

[IMMIGRATION]

### A VILLAGE WITH BORDERS

While neither Howard Dean nor John Kerry would take *TAC's* advice to get to the right of President Bush on immigration, one big name Democrat seems to have understood the political wisdom of our counsel. While Bush is pushing an amnesty for illegals, what Democrat is saying provocative things like "I am ... adamantly against illegal immigrants," is calling for stepped-up visa and ID systems, and is making pointed comments about the bizarre phenomenon of thousands of day laborers standing around street corners in suburban New York looking to get picked up for a day's wages? None other than that archliberal herself, Hillary Rodham Clinton. (And no, we're not claiming credit for influencing Hillary on the issue).

Political junkies will remember that Bill Clinton got to the right of the Republican Party on welfare reform (and actually passed a pretty good bill). As the Center for Immigration Studies ceaselessly points out, tightening our borders aids those immigrants who are legally here because it helps assimilation and protects the wages of those at the bottom of the job market.

Worth noting too is some of the attention Hillary's toe dipping is getting. One right-wing GOP fundraiser we know

writes, "This would be enough to get my vote and my money behind Hillary Clinton. For America to succeed, it first and foremost needs to be America, not Mexico." We're sure Hillary wouldn't put it quite that way. But any real move on her part towards common-sense, nation-preserving immigration reform will attract lots of attention and serve the national debate well.

[CULTURE]

### THEN THERE WERE TWO ...

For all the modern permutations—two mommies, two daddies, step-some-things, and non-custodial whatever—the American family is shrinking. New census figures report that the number of households with five or more people has dropped by half since 1970. The old picket-fence paradigm has moved to a studio apartment.

One- and two-person households are the order of the day—up from 46 percent to 60 percent in three decades—with single women between 30 and 34 tripling over the same time period. The sexual revolution is bearing fruit—or not, as the case may be.

Last year, Gen Xer Ethan Watters coined the term "urban tribes" to describe young, city-dwelling singletons who replace traditional familial functions with sitcom-style ensembles. But these sacrifice the stabilizing, civilizing benefits of marriage and family and don't quite silence that Bridget Jones fear of dying alone and being eaten by Alsatians.

Whispered doubts aside, the trend continues—and, if anything, is accelerating as even recent arrivals conclude that small is beautiful. The *New York Times*, in a piece about declining Latino birthrates, quotes Rocio Yñiguez, who left behind six siblings in Mexico when she settled in California: "You need to work to get ahead, and with children it's too hard." ■

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## Do They Know It's Christmas?

“’Tis the season to be jolly.” But, as usual, not for all of us. It is the Christmas season, that time in December when all good Christians celebrate the birth of the

Savior of mankind, born in a stable in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago.

It is a time of family gatherings and gift-giving, of joyous music and fond memories. For some, it is one of the two days of the year, Easter being the other, when they return to the old church for the feast day that yet retains its hold upon them from childhood. Even many nonbelievers celebrate, for Christmas joy is contagious.

But not for all. For some, it is not too much to say they hate the idea of Christmas with a deep abiding hate, not just the “Bah, humbug!” dismissal of old Scrooge. They want Christmas dead.

As usual, they are busy at work, going to court to get Nativity scenes expunged from public squares, demanding that statues of Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus be removed from department stores and parades, checking vigilantly to see that any and all caroling at public schools is free of such outrages as “Silent Night.” For such as these, even Santa has become an intolerably divisive figure who must be purged from public life.

And this year again they are meeting with some success, especially with a business community for whom Christmas has always been about sales volume not salvation.

Target stores have told the Salvation Army it may no longer station volunteers with their red kettles at store entrances to solicit charitable contributions for the poor. The 30-year tradition that reaped the Army \$9 million a year has been terminated.

The reason, says Target, unconvincingly, is so the company can have a consistent policy of no solicitations outside its stores. But in recent years the gay lobby has pressured Target to ban the Army because it is Christian and rejects homosexuality as sinful.

Now Macy's has stopped using the phrase “Merry Christmas” in all store advertising, replacing it with what Macy's calls the more inclusive “Seasons Greetings” and “Happy Holidays.”

But how is it “inclusive” to exclude the Christians' greeting? Is that not anti-Christian? Why would the Macy's of the “Miracle on 34th Street” do such a thing? Why would Federated Department Stores, Macy's parent company, impose such a policy?

By Newton's laws of motion, an object moving in a given direction will continue to do so unless an outside force intervenes. What hidden force intervened to cause Macy's to reverse course and suddenly sever its ties to Christmas? Who insisted that Macy's cease to mention Christmas, the holiday around which its selling season is built?

It is hard to believe some Macy's executive took it upon himself to make so offensive a decision as to expunge “Merry Christmas” from the store when so many of Macy's most loyal shoppers were certain to be disheartened and hurt. Who is trying to kill Christmas?

It needs to be said: what we are witnessing here are hate crimes against Christianity, the manifestations, the symptoms of a sickness of the soul, a disease a Vatican diplomat correctly

calls “Christianophobia,” the fear and loathing of all things Christian, coupled with a fanatic will to expunge from the public life of the West all reminders that ours was once a Christian civilization and America once a Christian country.

Americans are among the most tolerant of peoples. No one demands that any dissenting adult or child be made to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, or join in Christmas caroling, or be forced to say a prayer before class, or go to church at Christmas. The Christian majority only asks that they be free to be themselves, to exercise their freedom to express their love of their Savior as the First Amendment has always guaranteed.

But what are we to make of Maplewood, New Jersey, where the Columbus High School brass ensemble was ordered not to play a single Christmas carol at their holiday concert, not even an instrumental version? Parents and students were outraged. “This is censorship at its most basic level,” said student Ryan Dahn. Correct, Ryan.

In Denver, officials of the annual Parade of Lights refused to permit in the parade a float carrying the banner “Merry Christmas” with members of the Faith Bible Chapel congregation who were to sing Christmas carols. Approved was a float sponsored by Two Souls, an American Indian group that considers homosexuality holy.

While Christmas often brings forth the best in some of us because of who and what is being celebrated, that is not true for all of us. For some it brings forth the purest malevolence. Why? Sadly, because they do not know Him. Nevertheless, Merry Christmas—to all. ■

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