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# EDITORIAL

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## BOUQUETS FOR THE ISRAELITES

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Why all the rending of garments over last month's Israeli air strike? The Iranians tried to bomb this very same Iraqi nuclear plant last September, and I noted no uproar. Why the anguished chorus over the Israeli attack? Is it because the Israelis were successful and the Iranians missed? Had Allah smiled on the Iranian bombers, would the UN have convened another of its hot-air confabulations? Imagine, Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein, in possession of atomic bombs. Would the Saudis sleep as comfortably then as they do now? Would Jordan's King Hussein? Would the Syrian Machiavel, Hafez al-Assad, or anyone else in this enormously volatile area?

The nations of the Middle East and for that matter all the peace-loving nations of the world ought to be sending the Israelis bouquets. And let us be spared any more of the Arabs' emotional sonorities about International Law. The Iraqis are at war with Israel. They want to be at war with Israel. They like to be at war with Israel. In fact the Hon. Saddam Hussein seems to relish war as fondly as the late Benito Mussolini, though Hussein butchered a lot more of his countrymen in pursuing high office than did Mr. Mussolini.

Many of those now ardently criticizing Israel apparently are ignorant of the vicious and mercurial nature of Israel's enemies. They seem to doubt that any foreign peoples would ever be ruthless or unreasonable. Thus they favor ceaseless dialogue and public relations as instruments of diplomacy. Such people are simply ignoring the nature of international politics.

The goal of all serious political activity is control, generally control of one's enemies. If one is insufficiently

powerful to subjugate one's enemies, one scales down one's ambitions. The difference is between choosing an offensive or a defensive policy. The third option is taking no action at all.

The Israelis will never be powerful enough to subjugate their enemies, and they cannot opt out of their political situation. Hence they are condemned to a defensive strategy, and their air strike last month was a masterful show of defense. Their critics wish they had exercised the third option and done nothing.

This is the option that the West has

been most comfortable with over the past 35 years. Those who prescribe it essentially see foreign affairs as apolitical. They refuse to accept that there are struggles for influence going on in the world. They deny that there are malevolent forces. They believe all disagreements are reasonable disagreements. Always they counsel restraint.

By practicing restraint the West has prospered. Every year more and more fashionably dressed people parade along the Champs Elysees, the Via Veneto, and Central

Park South. Life is sweet; all is well.

But the grim truth is that in an increasing number of countries around the world life has become hellish. And as the Western powers withdraw their influence, allowing the liberal order in international relations to be extinguished, the future of world peace itself is increasingly left in the nervous hands of men like President Saddam Hussein. I for one do not like the drift of things. As the citizenry of the West continues to cut deals abroad and live the high life at home more and more weebegone immigrants from foreign barbarism drag themselves to Western shores. It is an ominous sign.

The countries of the West abound with Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans who have lost the struggle for political control in their countries. The Israelis understand the meaning of these signs. The outcome of the war in Southeast Asia should constitute the great political lesson of the late twentieth century. The Israelis appreciate this. They do not want to become the next wave of boat people.

For over three decades the Israelis have steadfastly accepted the imperatives of their political condition. A nation of under four million, they have endured in an ocean of 134 million hostile faces. During this time dozens of peoples have had their culture snuffed out. Yet the irony is that by accepting the imperatives of their political condition the Israelis have actually gained a degree of acceptance in that hostile ocean that their present critics would never have prophesied. More Arabs today view the Israelis as tolerable than ever before. In this turbulent and bloody-minded area the Israelis have been the only truly effective peace-keeping force. The Lebanese understand this. The Egyptians understand it. Do the diplomats of the West understand? □



*Adapted from RET's weekly column syndicated by King Features.*

## ANIMAL RIGHTS

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

As the baseball strike lengthens and our national despair grows, let us never forget that what brings most of us out to the great baseball pastures of the major leagues is something more than ancient ritual or star-spangled existentialism, as the learned and profound Dr. George F. Will would have it. What brings Ameri-

cans out to the ballpark is the spectacle of animals. The noblest of the animals are, of course, on the field; the most amusing are rioting in the grandstands, pouring beer on each other's tee shirts, braying at the undertaker behind home plate, and otherwise comporting themselves in ways that are marginally criminal.

Now we have discovered that there are also animals amongst the management. I speak of the owners, many of whom are apparently quite piggish. Certainly their behavior this summer has been piggish. After years of lavishly bidding up the value of their players they now rebel. They have built up a formidable strike fund

and provoked a strike by trying to renege on their player compensation agreement. As recompense they offer the players nothing. Would management in any other labor dispute expect such a gift? How about offering the players chauffeur-driven limousines to the ballpark? How  
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## C A P I T O L I D E A S

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## PHRASE MATING

by Tom Bethell

As I write, there is still a certain amount of distant rumbling, as of a receding thunderstorm, in the wake of the Israeli raid on the French-built nuclear reactor near Baghdad. Writing about international affairs has always struck me as being more than normally fraudulent; John Lukacs made this point very well in his recent excellent article, "Easter in Warsaw," in *National Review*. But the cries of alarm now that we have one less atom-bomb manufactory to worry about strike me as being quite exceptionally absurd.

The main problem with people like George Ball, an eminent purveyor of this kind of thing, and a number of newspapermen, of whom Philip Geyelin of the *Washington Post* is characteristic, is that they live in a wholly paper world, the dimensions of which do not exceed a standardized briefcase. Ball, Geyelin, and a small army of like-minded professors, have found that it is possible to make a decent living by trotting out a rather limited repertoire of wise-sounding phrases with overtones of a laboriously acquired expertise—"peace process," "initiative," "accord," and so on—and it is not long before they start believing that this

semantic world has a tangible, external reality.

The truth, of course, is that it is a world inhabited by abstract nouns, passive verbs, participial phrases, and gents in pinstriped suits. George Ball is not without his skills. He can parley with a preposition, argue with an adverb, joust with a gerund. But I don't think he knows a great deal about what goes on beyond the confines of his briefcase.

The phrase-mating internationalists naturally spend a good deal of time meeting other people, and thus sustain in themselves the illusion that they live in the real world. The problem is that they meet mostly with other people exactly like themselves, more often than not at the United Nations or some other such carefully constructed theater of delusion, the function of which is to benefit its occupants.

The characteristic feature of those who toil away with abstract nouns at places like the United Nations is that they believe there is no problem in the world that cannot be solved by rewording a communiqué or rewriting a resolution. They imagine that the real emotions of love, fear, hatred, hope, and envy that animate people can somehow be transformed by syntax, or brought into more

harmonious relationship by a mere show of hands.

George Ball, I notice, writes in all seriousness about "international rules," as though they really existed outside the imagination of deluded diplomats. The Israelis, with their brief and yet ancient history, are realistic enough to understand that all the diplomatic initiatives, peace accords, treaties, dialogues, negotiations, and quiet diplomacies in the world cannot parse away the hatreds and enmities that boil inside the human heart.

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A few months ago I wrote in a



*Harper's* magazine article about budget cuts:

If your wife were to come home with assorted packages under her arm, claiming that she had just saved you money by foregoing even more expensive purchases, you would probably think this was an odd way of getting richer. Similarly, it is an odd budget cut that is billions higher . . .

Before this was published, the copy editor suggested to me that "wife" be changed to "spouse"—not, I hasten to add, in any spirit of dogmatic allegiance or ideological solidarity with the feminist cause, but simply, as she wearily explained to me on the telephone, to prevent the hail of angry feminist missives that inevitably would come flying airmail into *Harper's* offices.

I thought about this and eventually decided that I had already seen too much truckling, and too many white flags of surrender run submissively up various editorial flagpoles—"he or she," "congressperson," etc. By way of example, turn back to almost any issue of the *New Republic* edited by Michael Kinsley. Not that he is truckling to anyone, of course. I think he actually believes that if "he or she" appears in print frequently enough then the glorious day will arrive when babes emerge from the womb with genitalia

Tom Bethell is *The American Spectator's* Washington editor.