

# OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

JEFFREY W. OWEN  
PUBLISHER  
E-mail address:  
jowen@thejournalnet.com

SCARLETT SYSE  
EDITOR  
E-mail address:  
syse@thejournalnet.com

"The Daily Journal is dedicated to community service, to defense of individual rights and to providing those checks upon government which no constitution can ensure."

SCOTT ALEXANDER  
founding editor, 1963

## Opinion roundup

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — Today the Daily Journal presents a sampling of editorials from around the nation and world:

### Mine profits, safety can co-exist

Journal Star, Peoria, Ill.

Just three weeks after an explosion led to the deaths of 12 coal miners, two more men died in an underground mine fire. Both West Virginia tragedies have prompted a national outcry for better enforcement of federal mine safety regulations. But it's hard to enforce rules when they don't exist, or when they did but were deep-sixed. It's fair for workers to be questioning whose interests federal regulators serve.

The Sago Mine disaster, in which the men succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning, has miners clamoring for mandatory underground oxygen caches. The idea first came up six years ago, then was scrapped by the Bush administration. The Aracoma Mine accident, in which a conveyor belt caught fire, has legislators wondering why a Clinton-era rule requiring fire-resistant belts was erased by Bush. In all, this administration has junked 18 proposals for the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

But look who's running the show. Until 2004, it was Dave Lauriski, a former mine executive who's been accused of covering up a toxic coal slurry spill by Massey Energy, owner of the Aracoma Mine. His nominated replacement, Richard Stickler, is a longtime coal man whose Pennsylvania mine safety record has come under fire.

Worker protections and corporate interests don't have to be mutually exclusive. The Senate must vet Bush's new mining administrator to ensure his interests aren't tilted too heavily toward either. In the meantime, it would be wise to revisit those 18 junked mine proposals so that the safety of miners in West Virginia and elsewhere isn't compromised further.

### Media has responsibility to foster understanding

Egyptian Gazette, Cairo

In a desperate bid to assuage anger, which has erupted across the Muslim world over published cartoons lampooning the Prophet Muhammad, Western media and officials cite freedom of speech as an excuse. The argument is downright faulty. It adds insult to injury. Who said that free speech should be offensive to others?

The drawings, which first appeared in a Danish newspaper and were reprinted in European papers, mock a symbol that means a lot for Muslims. For sure, freedom of the press is not without limits or responsibility. The European media, which provoked Muslims' fury, have not shown enough consideration by running those images, deemed offensive by ordinary Muslims inside the West and far beyond.

The cartoons could not have been more ill-timed. They were published with the West and Muslims seen on a collision course.

In a multicultural world, media everywhere should play a role in bringing people of different faiths closer. By no means does this contradict freedom of expression.

### Respect key in freedom of expression

Asahi Shimbun, Tokyo

Freedom of expression is a basic right that shores up democracy. But how far are people allowed to assert that right when it comes into conflict with the dignity of religion? This vexing question is raised afresh by the row between European countries and the Islamic world over caricatures satirizing the Islamic Prophet Muhammad.

While we are concerned about the violence, we also fear that, as things stand, the ruckus could isolate Islamic countries and Muslims scattered in many parts of the world. Calm must be restored early so that the conflict will not become a "clash of civilizations."

In the Islamic world, only a handful of countries allow their people to freely express their views. And partly because they are left behind by Western countries in economic terms, many people in those countries have twisted sentiments.

Under such circumstances, what would happen if some in the West press Muslims with "the prophet's cartoons" by wielding the principle of freedom of expression? It is obvious that such action would be seized by agitators and used as an outlet for venting the pent-up frustration of the discontented masses.

Freedom of expression is something very precious. But consideration must also be given to the religion that is the very basis of people's thoughts. Moderation must be exercised to securely protect such freedoms.

### Dialogue, not protests, best diplomatic tool

Bergens Tidende, Bergen, Norway

At the moment, it can seem that caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad printed in Denmark's Jyllands-Posten and then Norway's magazines have ignited a fire that can be hard to put out.

Many are surprised by the violent reactions in some Muslim countries over what some see as relatively harmless cartoons. But the rage in Muslim countries must be seen as an expression of a deep and lasting frustration over humiliation by the West, life in poverty, and a future that seldom looks bright.

In that situation, the cartoons were seized by extremists and turned into a fighting cause. If these extremist groups were waiting for a symbolic cause, they got it from Jyllands-Posten and magazines.

It started as a case about free expression. The right to speak out, even provocatively, stands. We cannot and will not accept religious extremists answering the printed word, no matter how offensive, by burning embassies.

But even we defenders of free speech must understand that political authorities also have other considerations when trying to control a situation that can seem out of control.

In that case, dialogue can be more beneficial than protests based on strong and inflexible principles.

## BUSH REPEATEDLY CRITICIZED AT CORETTA SCOTT KING'S LENGTHY FUNERAL



YOUR

## VIEWS AND COMMENTARY

### Honorable lobbyists protect personal freedom

To the editor:

With the antics of Jack Abramoff, Tom DeLay and others getting attention in the mainstream media, there's been a call to reform Washington to remove the influence of special interests. Most of the proposed fixes have focused on preventing members of Congress from receiving any money from special interests.

Such fixes are basically Band-Aids to patch up the loopholes in widespread use. Any proposed Band-Aid will fail to correct this problem permanently by not addressing the underlying causes.

Three reasons come to mind why someone would want to pay off a government official. The reasons are that they seek to preserve or increase our freedoms, to restrict our freedoms or to get at a piece of someone else's pie.

People who are in Washington for the first reason are the only honorable lobbyists. These are groups that are trying to actually preserve our freedoms. Two prime examples from this group are the tobacco and gun lobbies. They may not be the most glittering examples, both are in Washington trying to counteract the push to make their respective products illegal or so restricted they might as well be illegal.

The gun and tobacco lobbies are a direct result of the people who are in Washington for the second reason: people who want to restrict our freedoms.

Just as there are people trying to preserve our freedoms, there are people in Washington trying to do the opposite by making it illegal or extremely inconvenient to do or own something.

People in this group are either anti-something or another, assuming they're not double-speakers, or in a business in which they want to shut down or prevent competition.

The final reason could be the biggest: people seeking a piece of someone else's pie. These are the envious pull-peddlers that live according to Robin Hood ideals. Lobbyists for this group seek the right to take money from one group and possibly give it out to another.

It's not just the poor seeking unearned money. This group extends the entire spectrum of Americans: rich, poor, elderly, middle class, farmers, employed,

WRITE A

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Daily Journal invites readers to submit letters, opinion columns and e-mail comments for the opinion page.

#### WHERE TO SEND THE LETTER

**Mail**  
Letters to the editor  
The Daily Journal  
P. O. Box 699  
Franklin, IN 46131

**E-mail**  
letters@thejournalnet.com  
**Drop-off**  
2575 N. Morton St. (U.S. 31)  
Franklin

**Fax**  
736-2766

unemployed, incorporated, unionized, non-union, white, black, Latino etc. Any person who thinks they deserve a payout or break from the government that their neighbor or competitor does not.

The above reasons may not be exhaustive, but they explain why lobbyists have spilled out of the lobby and into entire blocks of Washington.

If we want to remove them from Washington, we'll have to do more than plugging up leaks as they appear.

We have to fix the problem at the base by removing the reasons why they're in Washington in the first place. To do that our representatives must be prevented from passing laws that do not protect our God-given rights or that cater to any one group. Only then will Washington become a smaller town.

Nolan Eakins  
Greenwood

### If tollway 'cow' leased, public will be milked

To the editor:

After listening to Gov. Mitch Daniels characterize the bid on a lease of the Northern Indiana Tollway as a winning ticket in a huge lottery, and after reading Rep. Woody Burton's condescending offer to explain to us plain folk what a great deal Mitch's Major Moves program is, I have a couple of comments.

The proposal to turn the tollway, which is nearly paid for, into a kind of cash cow seems ill-advised. For a "gift" of a barrel of milk (or \$3.85 billion) the state would lease the cow to others who would milk it for several barrels (several times the "gift") during the next 75 years.

Those several barrels could come to the state during that time if the government had the courage to raise the tolls, as they will allow the private company to do.

This seems to be a philosophy

of "live high today and devil take the hindmost." It reminds me that the governor, when he was budget director in the George W. Bush White House, helped to engineer a huge tax cut

primarily for the more wealthy: Don't worry about the ensuing increase to the national debt, future generations can pay for it.

All this from the party which has apparently convinced so many that it occupies the moral high ground.

On the other hand, I have not heard or read a discussion of the equity involved. Traditionally a toll road is a highway at which a toll is collected from those using it, for maintenance and to pay off bonds which financed its construction.

The governor now proposes a "privatization" that provides excess revenues that will underwrite a financial windfall that pays for other transportation projects in the state. Why should people who use the tollway across northern Indiana pay tolls high enough to help finance roads all over the state and bridges across the Ohio river?

Making the Interstate 69 extension a toll road to help pay for its construction bonding would be more decent and appropriate than using money from tolls paid to the northern tollway.

The way the governor appeals to our darker, selfish side, which wants something for nothing or for other people to pay for our projects (again the lottery mentality) by sprinkling promises of some of the upfront lease payment to cities and counties across the length and breadth of the state to buy their support for his plan, is clever and disgusting.

If funds for roads and bridges used by Hoosiers throughout the state are needed, Gov. Mitch and the legislature should be forthright and have the courage to raise those funds throughout the state from those who will benefit.

## Rigid U.S. policies radicalize Middle East states

During the past couple of weeks, I traveled around South Africa with several colleagues and students from Franklin College.

One of my objectives was to survey the current conditions in that country in this post-apartheid era. So my subject matter was direct and focused.

During the trip, we had no access to television and limited access to newspapers. So we were not troubled by the issues confronting the rest of the world on the evening news.

As a professor of international politics, life seemed relatively simple and uneventful during the trip.

Upon our return, I had the chance to catch up on what I had missed. The president's State of the Union address was given right after I returned, and other major news stories dominated the headlines. Life returned to normal, complicated and often troublesome.

Among all the happenings, what struck me the most was the victory of Hamas in the democratic Palestinian elections. As Americans, we often have trouble understanding the mentality of radical fundamentalists who become suicide bombers in an attempt to make a point. The election of this radical group, which has been classified



Yu-Long  
Ling

as a terrorist organization by our government, is even more puzzling for us. The majority of the Palestinian people have chosen what seems to be a suicidal path to the future.

The election of Hamas has brought new challenges to an already troubled region of the world. The Hamas government cannot be dismissed as an illegitimate government because it was elected by the people in a free and fair election.

The Bush administration has indicated it is hesitant to deal with this new government, a stance that has strained the issue further.

But by ignoring the Palestinian government, the situation will not improve. Instead, it will become nearly unsolvable. A more creative and different approach is needed if we are to continue to work for peace in that region.

If we take a closer look, this election is not the only bizarre oc-

currence in the world. Syria, Iran and North Korea are led by people who have lined up against our country and our president. President Bush has made it clear that he will not tolerate a radical approach, and the United States will not be blackmailed by those other countries. Iraq is a case in point.

These countries are also aware that the United States is the only superpower in the world, and that we are more than capable of defeating them in any confrontation. So it is difficult to understand why these leaders have chosen an abnormal path. They appear to be headed for destruction.

There seems to be a pattern emerging. The more rigid the policies of the United States toward our potential enemies, the more radical our enemies become. International politics can be described as power politics.

In the international arena, power is supposed to provide a deterrent effect to those who wish us harm. This deterrent effect worked during the Cold War, but it does not seem to be working against our enemies today.

This has forced me to think about the situation more. When we deal with a serial killer, we must come to understand to a degree the nature of their abnormal mentality. If we assume they have a normal mentality, we will never

Good leadership would look Hoosiers in the eye and tell them that public thoroughfares are a shared responsibility.

Some combination of increased gas and income taxes would perhaps be the most fair and equitable way to shoulder that shared responsibility.

Richard E. Heiney  
Greenwood

### Spaying, neutering shows compassion for pets

To the editor:

Those of us who have opened our hearts and homes to a cat or dog know how much the relationship with a cherished animal companion can enrich our lives. The least we can do is ensure these loyal animals receive the health care they deserve.

One of the best things a responsible animal guardian can do for a cat or dog is to have her or him spayed or neutered. Spaying greatly reduces the chance of breast cancer and prevents various reproductive tract disorders, while neutering eliminates the risk of various testicular diseases.

In addition, pets that have been sterilized are less likely to roam, which means they are less likely to get in fights with other animals, get hit by cars or be abused by cruel people.

Finally, pets who are spayed or neutered do not add to the heart-breaking tragedy of overpopulation, which results in shelter workers having to humanely kill 3 million to 4 million homeless cats and dogs each year.

The Humane Society of Johnson County in conjunction with the Doris Day Animal Foundation wants everyone to "Do It For Love" by taking part in the 12th annual Spay Day USA on Feb. 28.

During February Humane Society of Johnson County will provide a limited number of free procedures available to low-income families in Johnson County.

Together, we can accomplish the crowning achievement of ensuring that every companion animal enjoys a long, happy and healthy reign in a loving home.

Call our office at 346-7001 for an application or to ask how you can help.

Marian Pohley  
Executive director,  
Humane Society of Johnson  
County

be able to solve those cases or prevent others from happening.

Now, let's look at the international situation. Radical groups who have sided against the United States and the West see no easy way out of their predicament.

They know they will be defeated regardless of what they do, so they turn to abnormal means to vent their frustration and spotlight their ideas. Even small issues, such as the recent outrage over cartoons of Islam's founder, can quickly become raging wildfires.

This incident displays the clash of civilizations we have encountered in other regions of the world.

In the short run, the approach of the United States and its allies has pushed these radical countries further away.

President Bush was right when he said that this war is different from past wars. It is a cultural, religious and psychological war. It cannot be won by military might alone.

Professor Yu-Long Ling holds the Williams Chair in Law and Public Service at Franklin College and is an internationally respected expert in foreign policy. He writes this weekly opinion column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.