

# OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

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"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:

### Cooperation brought about disarmament deal

The Los Angeles Times

In an increasingly scary world, score one small point for pragmatism and global sanity: North Korea has agreed in principle to a nuclear disarmament deal.

The very tentative one-page agreement struck in Beijing is only a shaky first step after years of paralysis. And yes, North Korea will receive a bit of fuel oil to sweeten the deal, something the Bush administration had long viewed as anathema.

Conservatives, predictably, are hollering betrayal. The Bush administration's once pre-eminent hawk, former U.N. Ambassador John R. Bolton, said the deal "contradicts fundamental premises of the president's policy he's been following for the past six years."

Bolton is right. President Bush has changed course, abandoning a failed policy in favor of one that might have a prayer of succeeding.

Only when Bush acceded to the other countries' desire to include the fuel component in the deal did the talks get unblocked. This is what multilateralism looks like.

### Diplomacy, not animosity, needed with Iran

The Denver Post

The Bush administration has intensified its rhetoric against Iran in recent weeks, but to what end is uncertain. Officials are straining to make the case that Iran is training Shiite militants inside Iraq and supplying them with sophisticated explosive weapons that imperil American soldiers and Iraqi civilians.

The president has backed up the rhetoric by sending a second aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf and positioning more Patriot anti-missile batteries in the region. He's ordered the capture or killing of Iranian agents in Iraq, while the Treasury Department has quietly persuaded some investors and banks to stop doing business with a nation Bush has called part of an "axis of evil."

We don't doubt for a minute that Iran poses a significant threat in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East. But we haven't heard a word about diplomacy from the Bush administration, and it's high time. Given Iran's ailing economy, and the current regime's loss of popularity due to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's defiance of the U.N. Security Council's request to halt its uranium enrichment program, now would seem a good opportunity for negotiations.

### President should sign human rights treaty

The Watertown (N.Y.) Daily Times

President Bush has refused to join nearly 60 other countries in rejecting secret detentions and abductions. That is disappointing.

Although the United States helped draft the treaty, the final version did not meet the administration's expectations, and so the United States is not among the 57 signers of the agreement. Additional European nations could sign the treaty after meeting constitutional or other procedural requirements necessary for approval.

The agreement bans "forced disappearance," defined as the arrest, detention, kidnapping or "any other form of deprivation of freedom" of an individual by state agents or affiliates. The treaty forbids subsequent denials or cover-ups about the detention or location of the missing person.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour said the treaty would help prevent future injustices and abuses. She called it a "message to all modern-day authorities" that some tactics are now "not acceptable, in a very explicit way."

The United States should express that sentiment by signing the treaty.

### U.S. still not ready for dollars that jingle

The Manhattan (Kan.) Mercury

Susan B. Anthony couldn't get so much as a jingle. Nor could Sacagawea get America to change its pocket change. Now the U.S. Mint is calling out the heavy hitters — our presidents — in an attempt to succeed where two women important in our history failed.

New \$1 coins came out last week, and, starting with three months of George Washington, they'll bear the images of U.S. presidents.

Like the Sacagawea dollar, the new coins will be golden. Folks who prefer Washington on paper money needn't worry, at least not anytime soon. The new dollar coins will complement, not replace, their paper brethren.

With the approval of Congress, the U.S. Mint is proceeding with its succession of president dollars in the hope that Americans get accustomed to dollar coins. Maybe we'll take to the president dollars with the same enthusiasm we have pursued the state quarters. The difference, of course, is that we were already used to quarters.

### People's voice missing in Iraq debate

The Poughkeepsie (N.Y.) Journal

Congress is on the verge of doing something it should have been doing all along: giving voice to the people by weighing in on the Iraqi war.

The House is poised to go first, expected to vote on a simple resolution this week in opposition to President Bush's decision to escalate the troop force in Iraq. True, the resolution doesn't bind Bush to change his approach in Iraq. But it does, at least, force our federal representatives to go on record. And it should be the first in a number of steps that embolden Congress to take a more active role in what the United States is doing in Iraq.

Procedural maneuverings have blocked attempts to bring even a symbolic war resolution up for debate in the Senate. They must be ironed out soon.

## Patriotism not defined by blindly backing government

The other night in my constitutional law class, we discussed the philosophical basis of the Constitution.

I mentioned to my students that due to the creativity and wisdom of our founding fathers, a large percentage of Americans in the past and present, and hopefully the future, overwhelmingly support this legal document.

During our discussion, one student raised some questions.

He wondered why we continue to be critical of our government and its policies, in light of our support of the Constitution. He also wanted to know if it was unpatriotic to disagree with our government and decision-makers.

These questions led to a nice discussion during class about patriotism and how it applies to current events.

The first example I used was the early stages of the war on terrorism, right after Sept. 11. My point was simply that in the beginning, if you did not support the war, you were seen as unpatriotic because our country was attacked and people were being killed.

But when the war progressed in Iraq, more information was revealed through our party politics and free media. The issue then became more complicated and more controversial. Many Americans continue to support the troops but are opposed to the war itself.

They do not support the war because they do not support the policy of our government; they support the troops because the soldiers are Americans who willingly sacrifice their lives in order to defend our country.

Thus, in many people's minds, there is a difference between the country and the government.

Of course, the Constitution signifies the spirit of the country.



Yu-long Ling

When we defend the Constitution, we defend the country. The government is only the agent of the country.

It seems that the common perception today is that if you are a Republican, you are for the war, and if you are Democrat, you are against it.

In reality, these stereotypes should have nothing to do with the war in Iraq. Though divided on certain issues, our democratic society allows us to maintain our support of the Constitution itself and the ideas behind it. In a dictatorship like North Korea, the dictator is the embodiment of the country.

But under our constitutional democracy, we the people embody the country, not the three branches of government or their leaders.

When I speak of being divided, I in no way mean divided against or for the Constitution. Rather, people are divided over actions of the three branches of government and the decisions officials make.

This division is very healthy in a democracy.

If it weren't for division on topics such as health care, education and other public policies, the best possible solution would never surface. We must have disagreement in order for voices to be truly heard.

It is our representative government's duty to make sure our voice is heard. Obviously, some people's voices are going to be different from others, and that is

the beauty of our political system. This is what a pluralistic society is all about.

As a political scientist, I feel that political activists are more patriotic than individuals who are apathetic toward government policies. Patriotism is not based on agreement, just general feelings toward your country.

You can love your country but dislike your government (including its leaders and policies), and that is what a democratic system provides.

As I mentioned earlier, in a totalitarian system, criticizing the leaders and policies means criticism of the government and the country. The individual critic is targeted as being unpatriotic and is punished severely.

Under our constitutional democracy, however, we are guaranteed the basic freedoms of speech, religion and press as outlined in the Bill of Rights.

In order to provide further clarification, I gave another example during our class discussion: just like my relationship with the college. I have served the college for 30 plus years — this demonstrates my long-standing commitment.

During my tenure here, on occasion, I may disagree with the administration's policies or the actions of the president or dean, but this does not mean I do not support the college. In other words, the administration and its leadership do not embody the college as a whole.

After this example, the student got it.

So, the next time you use the word unpatriotic, think twice.

*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.*

## YOUR VIEWS

### Rushing into toll road could harm landowners

To the editor:

As the governor and his allies in the Indiana General Assembly continue to move forward with their plan of creating a toll road around Indianapolis, Hoosiers are left wondering how it will affect them.

Many Hoosiers understand the need for eminent domain when it comes to projects that truly benefit the entire community.

However, it is a tool that should be used sparingly and only as a last resort. And Hoosiers should question whether it should be used to benefit a private corporation.

Why should the government take away private land and hand it over to a private entity, especially when all the company plans to do is turn around and charge citizens to use the road, a road that runs through the very land they used to own.

Last session, in response to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, Indiana toughened the requirements for the use of eminent domain for private interests.

How quickly the legislature forgets that Hoosiers have worked hard to obtain their property, and they deserve the right to live without fear of it being taken away from them for the benefit of a private company.

We need to take a hard look at this plan and its impact on the people of central Indiana, as well as the rest of the state. When it comes to a subject as sensitive as eminent domain, we should not rush.

We should study, discuss and collaborate to make sure that harm caused by taking private property is worth the benefit that comes from a new highway for which we will pay tolls to use.

**Richard Young**  
Senate Democrat leader,  
Senate District 47

### Trail board members dedicated to community

To the editor:

When I first joined the Greenwood Trails Advisory board in mid-2005, I was very much impressed by the expertise and dedication of Don Cummings, Thane Morgan and others on the board in volunteering so much of their time and talents to ensure that Greenwood became a walker/biker/hiker-friendly community.

I was saddened by the decision by the Greenwood Park Board to dissolve the Trails Advisory Board and wanted to continue to be involved in furthering its objectives by being a member of the independent Trails Advocacy Board.

I do not want to get into arguing with Allan Watts (Daily Journal, Feb. 13). I only wish to say that Watts is a newcomer to the Trails Advocacy Board and has not been around long enough to have the big picture of what has been accomplished and the reasons behind decisions that have been made.

I have never witnessed the type of behavior by Cummings or Morgan that Watts describes in his letter.

I would refer you to the Daily Journal archives for October 2006, which contains articles by Don Cummings detailing the accomplishments of the original group and the letters of citizens published then on this topic.

I hope the community will continue to support those who have dedicated so much time and effort in the past and strive to continue to play a role in making Greenwood a fitness-friendly community.

**Reba Boyd Wooden**

Member of the former Trails Advisory Board and present member of the Trails Advocacy Board

## WRITE A LETTER

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

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## Health-care systems in Europe not as perfect as people make them appear

By DR. KENNY STALL  
SPECIAL TO THE DAILY JOURNAL

The opinion column by lawyer Paul Campos, "Myths about U.S. health care mask truth about costs, quality," (Daily Journal, Feb. 1) was certainly an interesting read but in itself perpetuates significant myths about health care.

The myths Campos perpetuates include: Other countries have systems that provide complete care with all options to all patients; those systems are not financially strapped; you can compare the quality of health care by comparing life expectancy or infant mortality; we are wasting our money on health care; and programs run as a monopoly by the government are the most economical and efficient.

Campos applauds the French system, and indeed the French received in the past the No. 1 ranking by the World Health Organization for their system. However, the organization Doctors Without Borders estimates that more than 300,000 people in France are now totally without health care coverage.

Recent reforms there have emphasized cost containment, decentralization, reduced reimbursement with higher co-payments and a general practitioner gatekeeper.

The BBC published the French High Council for the Future of Health Insurance of 2004 in which it stated the system is "badly regulated and badly governed" and projected a health-care deficit of 10.9 billion euros (20 percent of total public deficit), which will increase to 29 billion euros (\$37.76 billion U.S.) by 2010. The lack of environmental controls within French hospitals left the elderly at risk during the heat wave in August 2003 and led to more than 14,000 French deaths. (The European total was 52,000, according to the Earth Policy Institute.)

Other countries have their own fiscal worries and approaches to solve them.

Japan, which holds the female life expectancy records, restricts

### GUEST COLUMN

the access to newer medications and made the front page of the Wall Street Journal on Jan. 11 with the description of their "cancer refugees." According to the article, the government will not approve newer cancer drugs that provide only a few additional months of life. It pointed out that even with universal coverage many people must pay 30 percent of their doctor bills in addition to the their regular health insurance fees.

The BBC news also highlighted the plight of George King (Jan. 14) who will be forced to sell his home in England and move to Scotland to receive the recommended treatment for his cancer because the English system will not approve Velcade due to its expense.

Most importantly is the frequent misuse of statistical analysis to judge health-care systems. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Observer provides many comparative statistics among nations. It pointed out there is not a connection between health spending and life expectancy (April 2006). The patient populations differ genetically and culturally, in diet, behavior and activity.

Campos' French, as example, have less than 10 percent of their people with a body mass index over 30 (obesity) while the United States is at 31 percent. (Japan and Korea are at 3 percent.) Campos complained that we spend twice as much as the French but does not acknowledge that we have three times as many at risk for weight-related heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancer.

Perhaps a better comparison could be gleaned by comparing the survival after a specific illness or disease is identified within an individual. Literature supports that if you are diagnosed with breast cancer, you have a greater chance of survival in the United States (survival according to BBC News

2002 — 97 percent U.S. vs. 78 percent U.K. vs. 93 percent E.U.).

The money spent in health-care services is not wasted. As the largest industry in 2004, health care provided 13.5 million jobs: 13.1 million jobs for wage and salary workers and about 411,000 jobs for the self-employed. More new wage and salary jobs, about 19 percent, or 3.6 million, created between 2004 and 2014 will be in health care than in any other industry, and most workers in health care have jobs that require fewer than four years of college education. These are good jobs with a noble purpose and the workers who see that health care is available at all times of the day and night earn their pay.

Indeed one of the major employers in Franklin is the hospital. Finally, many people believe that a government monopoly is the best and efficient method of delivery for a service. If this were true in the United States, we would not have UPS or FedEx, and the Katrina recovery would be over.

Everyone accepts the fact that the greatest expenses in health care come in the final years of one's life and that the number of elderly will increase. However, we fail to acknowledge that as we press into the future we will develop even more ways to extend our stay on this earth and that even if these new advances in themselves do not prove to be expensive the very measure of their success will doom our present entitlement of Social Security. Should we commit to another entitlement without any responsibility requirements?

While all options should be openly discussed, we should be careful not to be overeager to trust Washington lawyers to design our health care. After all, they are the ones who designed our single-payer system for the poor, Medicaid, and frankly no one believes it works well.

*Dr. Kenny Stall of Greenwood is obstetric/gynecology specialist. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.*