

The Answer

by

Mark A. Goldman

COMMENTARIES

HOW TO GET
FROM HERE TO THERE

The Answer

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*How To Get
From Here To There*

Most of the commentaries in this book originally appeared on Mark A. Goldman's website and some also appeared as Op-Ed pieces or letters to the editor in his local newspaper.

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When You Stand To Fight The Good Fight

A friend is one who'll stand with you
When you stand to fight the good fight
When you stand to fight the good fight
And you're standing there alone.

A friend is one to shield the blows
When you're down and bent and on your knees
When you're down and bent and on your knees
And kneeling there alone.

A friend is one to risk his own
When your money's spent and you're stripped to bone
When your money's spent and you're down to bone
A friend will come and risk his own.

A friend is one to bring the light
In your darkest hour when you still must fight
When it's dark and you hurt and you still must fight
A friend will come and bring the light.

If you need a friend and you're bloody red
In the dark of night in a bloody bed
And you hurt and you ache, feeling almost dead
A friend will come, a friend will come,
a friend will come to shield your head.

A friend will come,
When you stand to fight the good fight.



Dedication

Remembering the children...

One reader's comment regarding some of this material...

“Mark, you nut case, remove me from your email list. I'm just an accountant...I don't give a damn about what you think. Stop wasting my time.”



THE ARTICLES THAT BEGAN APPEARING AT MY PERSONAL WEB SITE beginning in December of 2000 and continuing through March of 2003 represent my response to initiatives, statements, or behaviors promulgated by the Bush administration. They are presented here in reverse order — i.e., from most recent to oldest.

I have a good deal of sympathy and respect for people who hold views that are different from mine — primarily because I believe that the views you or I might hold, are likely to depend more on the quality and quantity of the information we consume, than on anything else. So I can see how, at first glance, you might want to conclude that I'm a “nut case” for holding the views I hold, (or for the manner in which I express those views) — that is, given the information that *you've* considered and think is relevant. But I didn't come to my conclusions using your information. And it's *my* information that *I* think is relevant.

In this book, I lay my cards on the table very intimately, and I do so with some confidence, that by the time you've read the entire book, you won't find my conclusions all that “crazy” after all. But for that to happen, you need to have the courage and the patience to read this material with an open mind. Not everyone is willing to do that. It won't take any less courage for some people to read what I've written than it did for me to write it. That's why I'm very appreciative and respectful of anyone who is willing to try. All you have to do is read this material all the way through once. That is... all the way through from beginning to end. If when you're done, you still feel the way you do now, then at least you can say with some satisfaction that you've considered the evidence with an open mind and you arrived at your conclusions honestly.

So to summarize — this book offers my particular slant on things. All of this material was available to the public at one time or another for free. Now it will cost something. Not much... just enough to qualify as a token of

good faith, lest some folks jump to the conclusion that... if it's free, it must be worth nothing... which is exactly the value that most accountants would erroneously enter on the books for the amount of air, water, biodiversity, or migrant workers' rights that his or her corporation might have consumed, polluted, destroyed, or extinguished in the course of doing business — that is, if any accountant would think to recognize such things on the books at all.

I might mention, that in addition to my own website, where most of this material first appeared, I have been managing the information on two other sites as well. Here are the links to all three:

1. <http://www.gpln.com>
2. <http://www.citizensforimpeachingbush.com>
3. <http://www.vashongreen.org>

To give you some background: before posting links or information to these sites, I read a great deal of material. Some of it I sought out; some of it came to me unsolicited — and a portion of both included persuasive arguments for war. However, none of the arguments were sufficiently compelling to change my opposition to *this* administration's pursuit of war. Furthermore, I only considered posting two kinds of articles: those that supported my own point of view, and those that made relevant information available that was not readily available through the broadcast media. I only offered my own point of view when I didn't see that point of view being adequately represented in the material I was reading or hearing. In any event, I believe that my research represents a reasonable attempt at trying to stay informed; and my writings, a reasonable attempt at being a responsible citizen. While I have not exhausted all points of view, I am nevertheless hopeful that what I'm offering is still worth sharing, even though that remains to be seen.

I believe that most folks who either support or don't support this administration's policies — for whatever reason — have had the privilege of carrying on with their lives relatively undisturbed (i.e., they've continued to go to work, earn a living, relate to family and friends, etc., with only a modicum of inconvenience and discomfort)... at least as far as I can tell.

Regarding this, I admit to being somewhat annoyed — because in addition to the untold billions of dollars that this administration has squandered on trying to make war and/or by implementing blundering economic and social policies, it has wasted the time and energy of thousands of citizens who have been forced to stop what they are doing in order to defend the Constitution, the honor of America, and/or the lives of innocent bystanders. I am one of those people... although, I admit, only one of many. And I cannot say that I enjoy doing this any more than I imagine our soldiers enjoy the idea of having to leave their families at home to go to a far off place... in order to pick up a rifle and aim it at another human being, who probably will be aiming one back.

Some Americans do what they think needs to be done, and the sacrifices that those Americans make, in defense of what they believe in, is what I call patriotism. I honor those who are prepared to legitimately defend freedom with a gun when need be, and I am equally proud of those who are prepared to defend freedom by opposing illegitimate policies or illegitimate politicians... using their energy, their words, or whatever tools they find appropriate — which is what I think I've been doing. Now I'm not saying that you are not patriotic if you agree with Bush, or if you've been sitting on the sidelines. I'm only saying, for most Americans — the beleaguered economy notwithstanding — it's been a rather easy row to hoe; for others, it's not been so easy.

If after reading this book of commentaries, you still want to think of me as a “nut case,” that's ok. If you still think so when you're done, you might be right. In any event, whatever comes next, I hope we can still all live in the same country without too much acrimony, and maybe someday we can even be friends.

— *Mark A. Goldman*



*You can fool all the people some of the time,
and some of the people all the time,
but you cannot fool all the people all the time.*

— Abraham Lincoln

*Voice or no voice, the people can always be
brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is
easy. All you have to do is to tell them they
are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists
for lack of patriotism and exposing the country
to danger. It works the same in any country.*

— Hermann Goering, Nazi leader,
at the Nuremberg Trials, April 18, 1946

*First they came for the Jews...
and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the Communists...
and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the trade unionists...
and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for me...
and there was no one left to speak out for me.*

— Pastor Martin Niemöller

www.citizensforimpeachingbush.com

The Answer

Regarding War and Our Troops

February 21, 2003



ON FEBRUARY 17, 2003, IN MY TOWN, the Vashon-Maury Island Community Council, in the state of Washington, voted in favor of the following three resolutions:

1. To encourage and support the implementation of a national, government sponsored plan of Universal Health Care.
2. To protest the government's attack on our civil liberties.
3. To oppose the pending war on Iraq

What took place at the council meeting was the most encouraging sign I've seen in a very long time. Each resolution was entered into the record the month before by a different person, only one of whom I knew personally. There were objections in each case to the effect that it was not appropriate to handle national questions at a local forum such as this, but the objections didn't carry.

This was a demonstration that Democracy does not begin in Washington, DC nor with those who would call themselves leaders, but it begins in the hearts of our countrymen and in our own, and radiates outward. May the ripples be felt in every corner of this great land as it washes over the landscape carrying a message of hope to all who would have the courage and the audacity to express their humanity in a public place, and say to themselves... "I will do it now and I will do it here."

As for me, I offer the following comments regarding the war and our troops:

I was gratified by the large turnout at the VMICC meeting and also by what was accomplished. Of course, at this stage, whether there is war with Iraq now or not, there will likely be no peace in America or in the world for many years. George Bush reminds me of a lawyer who sends off a nasty letter to opposing counsel knowing full well that rather than lead to a

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resolution of his client's problem it will inflame the opposing side and result in bitter litigation that will go on for a long, long time. To an unwary client, it might look like the attorney is aggressively pursuing his client's interests, when in fact the lawyer is simply lining his own pockets as far into the future as he can see with little regard for anyone's well being but his own.

Follow the money and you will see what the Bush administration is doing and who will win if he succeeds. The likely outcome will be that our country will be divided, and the world will be divided for a long time. The oil and defense industries will prosper, arms will proliferate around the globe, children and the poor in every culture will suffer... the light of democracy will dim, and whenever the downtrodden lash out against those in power... in bitterness, frustration, and violence... because they are at a loss as to what else they might do to be heard... Bush and his ilk will say, "See, I told you so. Terrorists are everywhere. You must now give me even more money to defend our homeland."

But every dollar you would throw in his direction, will be a dollar not spent on education, not spent on health care, not spent on something else that might have nourished or supported our children, our grandchildren, our parents, or a suffering child in some far away place. I am not aware of any proposed legislation or the promulgation of any executive order initiated by this President that is likely to bring the people of this nation together, or bring the nations of the world together in support of peace. His behavior, as I see it, reflects a cynical worldview that is inconsistent with a sustainable democracy. His presidency was financed by a small but very powerful and sophisticated segment of our society. But his presidency does not reflect well on our nation or its people, and the strategies he is pursuing, in my view, are neither moral nor legal.

I might also point out, that among those who were present at the community council meeting, I would venture to say that there were none there who ever took an oath to protect and support the President of the United States and his policies, although there were many who took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all its enemies foreign or domestic.¹ The President of the United States is commander-in-chief, and our troops have pledged to follow out his orders,

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but I don't believe they are obligated to follow orders that are either illegal under our Constitution, or that under international law would constitute crimes against humanity.

With approximately 50% of the Iraqi population being children under the age of 15, war with Iraq, as described by this administration and reported in the news media as “Shock and Awe,” would be immoral, and in the absence of both a declaration of war by Congress and a similar resolution by the United Nations, it would be illegal.

A soldier in the armed forces is in a much more precarious position than you or I might be where moral conviction is concerned. If a soldier objects to following an order, he may find himself subject to a court martial at great personal cost, whereas we would not ordinarily find ourselves in such peril. That means if we, as ordinary citizens, believe that our military service personnel are being asked to carry out illegal or immoral acts, it is incumbent upon us to protest vociferously in support of those troops, because in this instance we are in a better position to defend them, then they are they are in defending themselves; and they are very much dependent on us and our courage in this regard lest they one day find themselves accused of war crimes with little more to say as a defense, than, “I was only following orders.”

Normally, it is our troops who have to put their lives on the line to defend us. But there is no free lunch for any citizen in a free country. It is incumbent on each of us to have the courage to defend our country, and one another, when those of us who are vulnerable are under attack, whether it be from within or from without.

Sometimes we must defend our troops and sometimes they must defend us. If you want to support our troops, then do not allow them to be put in the untenable position of having to follow orders that no civilized human being ought to be asked to carry out. And let no one tell you that this is not the time or the place.

¹ <http://www.omjp.org//ArtLarryDisobey.html>

The Answer

An Open Letter to the President of the United States

February 16, 2003



Dear Mr. President:

A MERICANS ARE STILL IN THE PROCESS OF MOURNING the deaths of our 7 brave astronauts, which is an appropriate thing to do. But sometimes without thinking... particularly after so many thousands have already died... we forget that 7 Iraqi children in the eyes of God might be just as precious as the lives of our American heroes. If our astronauts were still here, I don't think they would argue with me about that. Now consider: approximately 50% of the population of Iraq is under the age of 15.

I don't think we would bomb an American city to take out some horrific Godfather if we knew that American children might be in the way. And since I don't believe Americans are ready to offer up their children as "collateral damage," I don't think we have the right to expect that any nation should have to do so with their children either...

Therefore, I am not averse to supporting an effort by your administration to hold Congressional hearings in order to determine if Saddam Hussein is so much of a threat to the United States that he personally needs to be eliminated or driven from power, if in fact, such a determination would be legal under our Constitution and international treaties which we have signed and to which we are honor bound to support.

Presuming that it is legal and that Congress would so find, I would not object to his removal, provided that you can accomplish this without injury to any Iraqi children. In the absence of your being able to accomplish this, I would support an effort on the part of the United States to render his war making capabilities of no consequence, again with the proviso that you must do so without injury to Iraqi children.

It seems to me that in the absence of your ability to fulfill this prerequisite, any death sentence directed at Saddam Hussein is also a sentence of death to innocent children and this I cannot support.

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It would be an act of cowardice and it would be dishonorable, in my view, to attack Saddam Hussein or his capabilities using a strategy that is designed with more care to keep American soldiers safe than it is to keep innocent children or other non-combatants safe. There is no honor in advancing such a strategy, whether this is the tradition or recommendation of our military leaders or not, and if this is what you intend to do, then I object to it, and I call on every American citizen to stand with me in protest against you... and to stop you from carrying out such a mission or from supporting anyone else in doing so.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Goldman
Vashon, WA
Citizen of The United States

The Answer

February 12, 2003



In Wharton Harbor

I saw an armada and called for all captains
To summon their crew and head out to sea
A battle is brewing, the children are waiting
For our ships, our courage, for you and for me

I had come to the dock not far from the square
To lift my lamp brightly for many to see
Some called the light spam, some said an insult
But one left the crowd and stood proudly with me

With the wind picking up and the foam and the spray
And we with no time to rest or delay
We clamored aboard, tightened the halyard
Leaned into the wind and went off on our way

I'd rather sail in a skiff... with just one kindred spirit aboard
With our sails trimmed smartly, and no longer moored
Than sail with a navy that has no compass or chart,
Or be tethered to shore with no mission or heart

We looked back at the place where I once held the light
At the dock, near the square, at the ships in the night
Before us the ocean, lonely and deep, and we prayed
For the children who we hoped were asleep
The moon and the stars were as constant and true,
As the last time I looked; so I wept cause I knew
That in our sturdy boat there was more than just two.

The Answer

On Shock and Awe

February 4, 2003



Dear Wharton Associate:

I graduated from Wharton with an MBA in 1971. I want to speak with you knowing that you may not want to hear what I have to say. But I hope you will allow me the time and the space. I have written similar letters to others, but this one is for you. If you want to share it with others, you have my permission.

I am lately of the opinion that the war on Iraq is a bluff and that there will be no war. I don't think George Bush is totally stupid and I cannot find any other rationale for what I've been hearing in the news. Surely no person born in this country could contemplate the possibility of unleashing such terror as I have heard described, on a country that has not declared war on the United States; has not declared war on anyone.

The administration has been advertising that it intends, within a 48-hour period, to send 3,000 missiles into Baghdad to open the war, thereby unleashing the most profound spectacle of terror on one city since Atomic bombs were dropped on Japan. Presumably the rationale for such a strategy is that it will have such a profound psychological effect on the population so as to make them lose the will to offer resistance. In other words, it is designed to wreak such havoc and terror that American troops will be safe when they enter the city. To hope that anyone would believe that such destruction could be wrought on a city without great death and misery to large numbers of innocent civilians makes me finally understand why Bush speaks of himself as a man of faith. This is not going to happen.

To imagine that I might one day have to look into my own grandchild's face and see unbridled terror there, to confront the possibility that my sweetheart might be beyond my reach, inconsolable, tortured by nighttime visions of disembodied limbs, of collapsing buildings, afraid to sleep, afraid to wet the bed, afraid of hearing screams... is something I cannot contemplate without tears coming fast upon me. And then to think that I might stand idly by and allow my government to do such a thing to some

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other grandfather's child, when war is neither declared, nor necessary... without a word from me... I cannot abide this. And God help me, neither can you.

I can only allow myself to think that America's finest hour is at hand. Because I believe when the American people truly begin to contemplate that the clock is about to strike midnight, our voices... yours and mine... will make such thunder that the earth will tremble and it will be this administration that will know the meaning of "Shock and Awe," and not the children of Iraq... that a President of the United States would dare to contemplate carrying out such an act in my name... I say, No he will not.

I am asking you, do you stand with him or will you stand with me?

Mark A. Goldman, WG '71

Note:

I sent a letter very similar to this to many Wharton Alumni and a few Wharton Administrators and Professors, to the website of the Local Rotary Club and Rotary International, to various synagogues, churches and clergy, to various congressional representatives, and a few national figures. Many responded. Most did not. Of those that did, one Wharton graduate wrote back to say, "I stand with you..." And then I wrote a poem, after many years of not writing any... And finally, I sent this letter addressed to God, by way of every email address in my list, because it seemed to me like it was close to midnight and it was the only thing left I could think of to do... and I was ready for the answer.

The Answer

I Don't Expect War with Iraq

December 24, 2002



LAST FRIDAY, BILL MOYERS REPORTED on his TV program, *NOW*, that a recent poll showed that only a small percentage of Americans believe that Bush has made a case for invading Iraq. I think this is significant news. In fact, I think despite all the talk about war, there's not going to be a war. I forget the exact statistic but I think it was something like 75% of the American public does not believe we should invade Iraq. All the talk you hear in the news media is simply the US media propaganda machine at work. News media in America no longer operates as a legitimate fact gathering, hard hitting investigative profession that it once was or tried to be... now it's more an arm of the government. But I think some of the people in the media are getting tired of the hypocrisy, and so are the American people. The reason you don't see more objection to the war on the part of most Americans these days is that a lot of folks don't really believe they have the power to make much of a difference. So they don't speak up. And when they do talk about the war in public they often try to be acceptable to what they believe is the overall consciousness of the majority. And that is based on what they see in the news. But in their hearts, they know this isn't right. The truth is, that just having the moral consciousness to think and come to legitimate opinions on our own, even if not expressed outwardly, makes all the difference in the world and that's what's showed up in this poll.

Americans know, and so does the rest of the world, that this is more about oil than it is about terrorism. And they know that the oil under Iraqi soil does not belong to the American people, no matter how important it is to us, anymore than American resources belong to a poor and hungry world, no matter how much that world needs or could use what we have... moral obligations notwithstanding. Saddam is a tyrant, but he's not the only one, and human rights is not what's motivating American policy, which is clear when you take a look at what's happening to civil liberties in this country.

I don't believe when it comes down to the wire that Bush is going to start a war if he believes that 75% of the public thinks he's wrong. That's why we haven't gone to war yet and that's why there's talk about not going to

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war until the end of January. It's not because we don't have enough troops in position. It's because the Bush team is waiting for their propaganda machine to change that 75% number. But guess what? I don't think it will change. They thought they might be able to bully the UN, but even that's not going so well. Slowly but surely you will see things turn around.

If we do go to war under these circumstances, Bush will not get reelected. I have no doubt about that. This war would cost too much... in economic prosperity, in human lives, in spirit. I consider this insight to be a wonderful holiday gift to all of us. Enjoy your holiday, be happy, and have a festive new year. Keep up the good work. It might not look like it if you read the papers or watch TV, but we're winning.

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My Holiday Letter

December 13, 2002



IN THIS TIME OF THE YEAR when we're supposed to contemplate peace on earth, I'm finding that hard to do although I'm trying. I am chagrined to find myself at war rather than at peace... at war with my own government. This is not a war of guns and fire, but rather a war of sentences. My weapon of choice — a dictionary with its arsenal of words from which I sometimes frantically and sometimes miraculously unload onto a page, firing, firing, reorganizing, regrouping, reloading, firing again, then weary and worn. I am a casualty, my joy is hurt, my mind distracted from what I came here for. I do not fire so much to gain ground but to try to hold it... become a wall of resistance, hold the line. I do this for peace that my children do not have to do this, I do this so that my grandchildren do not have to do this... so that they can trod off to school and play in the yard and read out of a book. I forgot Hanukkah. Oh my God. But I am not unmindful of the hungry children in Iraq, in Africa, in South America... shrinking away, dying quietly... waiting for what? Some for death, some for bombs, some for me... I'm not coming this year. I don't come. I can't come. I choose something new. Not war... peace. I am not against... I am for... What?

I'm not resisting anymore. I just want to change things just a little. Go ahead and drop the bombs. I just want to change just a few little things. Let's drop them not on homes but in nearby fields. Let them not explode but fall down gently. And when they hit the ground let them not burst into flame. Ok explode. Like a piñata... And out comes fruits and vegetables and medicine and toys and music... OK. I am for bombs, these bombs. Go ahead I will not fight you. Just change them a little.

I learned this year that the children of Iraq have the highest cancer rate in the world. Why? Because our bombs were made of depleted uranium. Oh shit. Who did this? This is not ok. Wait a minute... I am for peace. Wait a minute. I will think of something. Didn't somebody think of this ahead of time? War. Dirty mean business, hidden dangers, secrets, mean secrets. OK. OK. Wait a minute. I can do better than this.

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It's the holiday. Don't read this to your children. Tell them something else. I send my love. "I love you," say. Say, Grampa sends his love. A book is coming. Poems maybe. I'm not cracking up. Just in a mood. It can happen when I have to rush to try to get something done and there's not enough time. At the end of the year Charon always says... how's the letter coming this year. And I say, "OK, OK." I always say, "I don't think you're going to like it," and she always says, "I bet I will." I wonder if she will let me send this. Wait a minute... Wait a minute... What I really mean to say is this...

May Peace be with you. Whoever, wherever you are. Not to fight, but to love. To find a way to send something else their way... To have all children go to a school that nurtures them, really. Free, better than good, public education for all. Equal opportunity to find peace and hope. Healed bodies and minds, loving freedom... freedom reaching out for more of the same. May your children black or white, red, brown or yellow, have this chance. Here, there, everywhere. North south up and down and all around. May peace be with you. Sweet gentle rain, or sunshine, softly beating waves against a peaceful shore, making sounds that blend with sounds, all around... and you, sleepy with a smile, in somebody's arms. Somebody who truly loves you. May peace be gently with you.

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Declaration of Legitimate Government



[With paraphrasing from *The Declaration of Independence* and *The Gettysburg Address*]

WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF EVIDENT, that all people are created equal, that they are endowed by virtue of their humanity with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments may be instituted by people, deriving their just powers from the consent of the Governed; That whenever *any* Form of Government becomes destructive to these ends it is the Right of the People — indeed it is the Duty of the People — to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, that to them shall seem most likely to insure their Safety, Liberty, and Happiness;

That fundamental to the establishment and protection of such Government are the guaranteed rights of free speech and public assembly — including the freedom from persecution or discrimination for holding or expressing political, social, or religious views when such views are expressed peacefully;

That the *only* legitimate government of *any* people or *any* nation is government *of the People, by the People, and for the People*, which honorably strives to promote and observe the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948;

Further, that any legitimate government when called upon to do so shall be willing to publicly state and stand by these principles in order to identify itself as a legitimate government of People.

The Answer

The Answer
November 15, 2002



■ ■ ■ **A**ND THEN ONE DAY SOMEONE ASKS, “Well you know, you have some good ideas about what's wrong and even some good ideas about how things should be, but can you tell us... how do we get from here to there?”

Yes:

One Answer:

Well perhaps it's time to take stock. If I can't answer this question what does all the rest mean anyway. Do I have an answer? Who would have this answer? I think to myself... What do I know? What do I see? Where am I? Where am I going? Looking out into the world, I say to myself, I was once there where they are and now I'm here. How did I get here? And I review in my mind all of my experiences and where I've been and what I've done and also what I've said and written... mistakes I've made, doors I've opened and doors I've closed. And here I am. I wasn't born this way. Or maybe I was and didn't know it. Maybe they were born this way too and don't know it. I've had many teachers. Who is not my teacher? I learned but I can't go back and wouldn't go back and wouldn't send you to them. Am I what I am because of them... in spite of them...? Yes. And anyway, a true prophet does not want to be followed, except perhaps for a little while. And a true prophet does not have a religion, nor does he or she want, I don't think, to be the object of one. A true prophet says to himself, I have always changed and here I am. How do I know what I will be tomorrow? My truth — it changes every day. If someone believes my truth, will they live free and change like me, or live in the prison of what I once was? And should I lead them into a fight and have there be a war... or not fight and have them be consumed by the tyranny of an unseen, unexamined culture of fear, greed and mediocrity. It is not war or peace, but war or... degradation. What am I to do, to say? If you were where I am, you would not be where I was, and you would be standing here with me, same as I... Not asking the question. Trying to answer it. ...Or asking it,

The Answer

but not asking me. What is valuable to a prophet, I think, is not what he has to say but what he is. He would like to give it away, but what is there to give? He wants you only to be you, being what you are, having what he has, for yourself. Not to be a follower or a believer, but to have what is yours when it is yours to have. Same question we started with.... How do you get from here to there? I am not a prophet. If I were a prophet wouldn't I be more than this? But everybody has something to give, and this is what I'm offering. You already know what to do. Didn't someone you've heard of already point the way? Why? I can tell you this...not to be worshipped. Not to be followed... but to give you the opportunity to know and not have to believe. The answer: truth, honor, dignity, compassion, courage, love.

Another Answer:

The people we usually call leaders in our political culture are really followers. They lead by expressing the consciousness of the majority and when the majority identifies with that consciousness, they recognize the “leader” as one of their own, a limited bond of trust occurs, and then they follow. The problem is, the consciousness of the majority doesn't have the vision to know what is needed, and so neither does the “leader.” That is different from the kind leadership that inspires people to become more than what they thought they could be... leadership that has a vision and the ability to awaken in others the desire to learn something new, to take a chance on their highest aspirations. That kind of leadership is quite rare.

Unfortunately, we don't make it easy or pleasant for people with those kinds of skills to get far enough along in the political process to even be heard. Why? Because we don't want to see what it is they have to offer. The system is rigged in a number of ways and our culture worships the status quo; it feeds on itself. Because what they have to offer is the simple truth that to have what we say we want will require responsibility on our part. You can begin at any point and say it starts there, but it's beyond the starting point now.

But just for argument's sake, we could say it starts in how we run our schools. We are very good at teaching our children not to love others. Just take a look at our priorities as it relates to schools. In many communities,

The Answer

children are able to attend well-designed, well-equipped, well-staffed, well-managed schools. In other neighborhoods the schools are not well funded and the children are not given what they require to succeed. Some children are failing before they even begin. These children often learn not to respect education, not to find it inspiring. This creates a subculture that discourages its members from valuing or excelling in those very activities that could change their lives and allow them to become vital participants in society, thereby transforming their relationship with the future... and transforming society, too.

And so, we have a divided nation now and as far into the future as we can see. And this division insures its own perpetuation. This makes no sense in an enlightened society. It is antithetical to our stated values of Democracy — equal rights, and equal protection under the law. Public education ought to be uniformly good and where children are disadvantaged, an even greater effort on the part of government should be made, to bring them up to speed. But that's not how it works. If it did work that way, life as we know it could be transformed in just a few generations. And there's no good reason why it can't happen... except for the human and political forces at work that won't let it happen.

Who could advance such an idea? Who would run these schools, who would teach these children? We'd have to shift our resources from weaponry to livingry and who wants to do that? This would take the extraordinary commitment of individual citizens willing to take personal responsibility for themselves, their families, their neighborhood, their country, and their planet... but most folks don't want to do that or simply won't do that and so everyone goes about scratching their heads and wringing their hands or just tuning out. Same answer: truth, honor, dignity, compassion, courage, love.

Another Answer:

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind...

Same answer: truth, honor, dignity, compassion, courage, love.

The Answer

Another Answer:

Same answer: truth, honor, dignity, compassion, courage, love.

Six words that all mean the same thing... which is to say, none is wholly itself without the other five. Be any one — that's how to get from here to there.

Final answer: love

Start by learning to love everyone else's children at least almost as much as you love your own. Everything else will follow.

The Answer

Crisis

November 12, 2002



WHEN AL GORE GAVE UP THE FIGHT for the Presidency in the last election, some commentators gave him credit for saving the country from a Constitutional crisis. God help us... He didn't save us from anything.

We have now before us the extraordinary investigative reporting of Greg Palast, the American journalist who most often writes for a British audience, but now has written something for us. In his just released book, *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*, Palast lays out in documented detail how Jeb Bush, Katherine Harris and others successfully entered into an illegal conspiracy to deprive tens of thousands of Democrats, mostly blacks, of their right to vote in the 2000 Presidential election, mostly under the false pretext that these voters were convicted felons, but their methods were varied. Some votes never got counted; some voters didn't count. By obtaining copies of secret emails, letters, and even scrub lists produced by the actual program used to perpetrate this fraud, Palast finds a smoking gun... it was in Pandora's box and now the lid is open. George W. Bush's claim to the White House, (the Supreme Court and hanging chads notwithstanding), appears to be what we thought it was... a fraud.

According to the US Commission on Civil Rights, “...*widespread voter disenfranchisement — not the dead-heat contest — was the extraordinary feature of the Florida election.*” As it turned out, “*14.4 percent of Florida's black voters cast ballots that were rejected. This compares with approximately 1.6 percent of non-black Florida voters who did not have their presidential votes counted.*”¹

Bush didn't win the election, folks. What does the Constitution say we're supposed to do when we find out that a Presidential election was rigged, particularly when the so-called President has been using his “mandate” to unravel various Constitutional protections and civil liberties once considered sacred by loyal, decent, patriotic Americans?

The crime Palast lays out before us appears to have been a carefully constructed conspiracy, a story of deceit, fraud, and as I see it, treason. Of

The Answer

course, in this country, no one (except now for some of those suspected of terrorism) is guilty until proven so in a court of law. A book is not a court of law, but the US Commission on Civil Rights heard the case and found the allegations to be true. Didn't change the result... yet. So here we are at the crossroads: will we defend our desecrated Constitution and address this treason, or quietly accept this insult as *a fait accompli* which could easily mark the beginning of a long-suffering, steady descent into economic upheaval and despotism?

The fact that you don't notice much change in your daily routine... your job hasn't changed much... your daily discourse, your attitude, your perceptions... seem about the same... doesn't mean that your world hasn't shifted on its axis. I think it has... and little by little, like little cat feet, I think the fog is coming in, and when it arrives, you will notice and you will care.

If you consider yourself a responsible citizen, you'll read this book, which will now likely be swept up in the undertow of mainstream political currents. If you don't read it, you will be forced to rely on what others tell you about it, which in my opinion will be a poor substitute. By the way, don't stop reading after chapter one... finish the book even if it makes you sick to learn what kind of sewer our "leaders" have made of our government... and not a few other governments as well. Makes you want to flush them all down the toilet. But then again... them is us.

There's another, dark side to this story: Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed published a book this year entitled, *The War on Freedom* — a very well documented treatise, looking into the facts and circumstances surrounding the events of 9-11. It's a road map for anyone wanting to understand the contextual framework in which it all happened. Be careful, it might shake your faith.

Just the fact that two hi-jacked passenger jets were able to alter the New York skyline unimpeded... one after being in the air a full hour and twenty minutes, tracked by radar, suggests to some military experts that maybe there is something more to this story than just a typical case of administrative incompetence. That's not how our air defense system was designed to work or would have worked on just about any other day in the months and years preceding 9-11.

The Answer

As you may know, Congress held several days of hearings regarding these events before deciding to stop. George W. asked, and Congress agreed, not to look into this matter further. In my view, the reason Congress acquiesced, is not because they discovered little evidence pointing to the likelihood of criminal negligence or intentional wrong doing on the part of this administration, but rather they found so much evidence that they froze with fear... they didn't want to know any more... except... well, maybe Paul Wellstone did. I understand the day the Senator's plane went down, he met with Bush. I wonder what they talked about.

But we're not supposed to speak about such things when there's a "war" going on? Of course, you might think I'm talking about a war on terrorism. But I'm referring to the title of Ahmed's book. Maybe I'm talking about murder and treason, which is hard to imagine when you consider how nicely written Bush's speeches have been of late, how photogenic, congenial, and upbeat he is, and how well the mid-term elections turned out for him. I heard one newly elected Republican Congressman declare how proud he was to now be working for such an inspiring President. And here I thought he was supposed to be working for the people who elected him to office. Shows how quickly things can change. Curiously, the source of Bush's popularity is 9-11 itself. Turned out to have been good luck for him. Too bad Americans didn't get to read the same stuff they got to read in England before the midterm election.

Regarding Iraq, it appears to me that this administration believes the oil in the region should be under US control... that our very survival depends on it. The 9-11 attack was our pretext for moving our forces onto the premises, and was a necessary precursor to getting the American people on board for what comes next — our taking what we came for. This administration believes that getting control of this oil is more important to our national security than is preserving the integrity of our Constitution or our Democracy. This administration is after world dominance and clearly expects to have to defend itself against the terrorism that will ensue when the impoverished people of the world, who will hate us for our crimes, eventually conclude that there's only one thing left for them to do — fight back with all the life that's left in them.

The Answer

Bush's right wing agenda has the potential of making the whole world into what Israel has become — a place where folks are routinely blown to bits just waiting for a bus. Maybe you think it can't happen here, but then again who ever heard of snipers picking off Home Club customers in the parking lot. What kind of deranged act will it now take before all civil liberties are suspended, for the entire country to descend into the sewer pit that Bush, Clinton, their cronies, and so many of America's corporate trash have graciously prepared for us?

Could Congress be right... maybe this nation could not weather the storm that would precipitate if these issues were ever fully considered in the light of day? How do we roll back an election, restore our civil liberties, recreate a free press, or reestablish a foreign policy based on some semblance of wisdom, decency, or sanity? Maybe you've already concluded that our best hope is to let this all slide until GW is retired and long gone from public view. Perhaps you feel that this will blow over... that it is best left for historians to sort out, several generations down the road. Maybe we should let our great grandchildren read about it in some history book... the same way some of us have rediscovered our own history in Howard Zinn's book, *A Peoples History of the United States*, for example. One can only hope such reading will still be legal then... as if hope, in and of itself, were enough to either win freedom or preserve it.

Somehow the collapse of the Soviet Union didn't make the world a safer place. A great opportunity squandered. Humanity betrayed. Show me where US leadership, or the work of the WTO or the World Bank has meant more democracy or prosperity for its clients. Show me where the deregulation or privatization of US institutions have matured for the benefit of human beings instead of run amuck, whether it be in utilities, manufacturing, farming, transportation, accounting, law, or government. You need to wake up now.

Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure." The clock is ticking. Has patriot's blood already been spilled? Is the Office of Homeland Security being erected to protect us from so called terrorists or is it actually being put in place to quell the coming dissent that

The Answer

the powers that be know is on the way? Does this administration have the consciousness, the ability, or the intention to recognize or even to differentiate between terrorism and dissent? Is it possible that by waiting so long to come awake, we might one day have to bear witness, as the American landscape runs crimson, like it did twice before, while our progeny fight to win back freedoms most of us believe we still have, but in fact have already lost? Who will win this time?

I think we are teetering on the edge... and it won't take much to kick us off the mountain. If you find one day that you are living under the yoke of tyranny, there won't be any place to go. And if you pray to God to come save you, I think I know what the answer will be: "You don't want to be saved." This would be a good place to stop and think about what we're doing, folks... Last Chance Saloon, as they sometimes say in Texas.

¹ <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/vote2000/report/exesum.htm>

The Answer

Children of Iraq

October 1, 2002



JOHAN PILGER, THE BRITISH JOURNALIST, HAS VISITED IRAQ and reported extensively on what he has seen. Reading his commentary, one begins to understand how brutal lies can be.

Before the Gulf War, Iraq had one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world. Today it is the highest. The economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council denied Iraq the equipment it needed to clean up the battlefields from the Gulf War. The battlefields needed to be cleaned up because the depleted uranium that was discharged by American and British bombs carried with them a silent death that was far more devastating than the initial blasts would have suggested. There are regions in Iraq where as many as 40% of the children living nearby now have cancer. It is not unusual for several children in one family to have cancer. Those who don't have cancer today are expected to get it later in life.

The death rate for children under 5 was running 4,000 per month in the year 2000 when one of the articles I am referring to was written.¹ The sanctions, which Pilger calls, “the most ruthless embargo in modern history,” is killing mostly children. The children of Iraq are dying of hunger and malnutrition, dysentery and other diseases associated with the lack of sanitation. The children are dying for lack of medicines and medical supplies. The only painkiller doctors can offer their cancer-ridden patients is aspirin, because the sanctions preclude the purchase of morphine. It was American bombs that took out public sanitation and the general infrastructure of the country. Apparently anything that might have been of value to someone in uniform was a target even if it was also vital to the general population. The sanctions have been unnecessarily vindictive and cruel.

As far as I can tell, the American strategy as it applies to Iraq has been... “If we destroy life, as these people know it, perhaps they will blame Saddam Hussein and run him out of office.” But that is only part of the strategy. It appears to me that the other part is... “If we destroy life as these people know

The Answer

it, we can then come in, control the oil, and no one will be able to do anything about it.” I think this is all about oil, not about terrorism. There is no greater terrorism, than when it rains US bombs. And after each rainstorm, we call the dead — “collateral damage.” They call the dead — family and friends. This is not about Saddam's evil intentions. When Saddam poisoned the Kurds, the US Government said nothing. Saddam Hussein is a product of the CIA and American policy, but that is another story.

In 1996, when then Secretary of State Madeline Albright was asked during a 60 Minutes interview about the hundreds of thousands of children in Iraq who have died because of the sanctions, and whether she thought the price was worth it... she replied:

**“I think this is a very hard choice, but the price...
we think the price is worth it.”**

WE think the price is worth it? Who is this WE and who has a right to think such a thing or to make such decisions about other people's children... in my name, in your name?

So you could argue, “Don't blame us for the death of these children, Saddam Hussein could have stopped the sanctions at any time. Blame him.” Well I do blame him. But that doesn't absolve us from the part we played. We knew or should have known that Saddam Hussein would rather let his people suffer than give in to outside pressure. So we knowingly chose to pursue a strategy that guaranteed his people WOULD suffer. And we didn't stop when we saw the results. We used the pain and deaths of these children to try to pressure Saddam Hussein to do what... leave town? It was, and still is, an ignorant, indefensible, cruel policy.

A year after Albright's appearance on 60 Minutes: “...in an interview with CNN reporter Peter Arnett, Osama Bin Laden directly stated that,

**“A REACTION MIGHT TAKE PLACE as a result of U.S.
Government's execution of over 600,000 Iraqi children by
preventing food and medicine from reaching them.”²**

The Answer

Did George Bush know all this when he said the reason terrorists hate us is because they hate freedom and democracy? Of course he did. I'm not saying all terrorists are rational or that they all know what they are fighting for. But Bush was lying and he knew it. And so did the press and every other government official who works within a 50-mile radius of the White House, and this hypocrisy is also known in the halls of every foreign government.

When a plaintiff comes into a United States court, he is expected to come to the court with "clean hands" or the court will not grant relief. To have "clean hands" means that the party bringing the action is not engaged in immoral or illegal acts. The United States does not have "clean hands." Can you guess why the Bush team does not want to prosecute terrorists in a public court of law? Can you imagine that if these criminals were prosecuted in public view, they might have an opportunity to argue that the plaintiff does not come to this court with "clean hands?" Is it any wonder that Bush refuses to acknowledge the authority of the World Court to potentially charge a US citizen with crimes against humanity?

If George Bush ends up removing Saddam Hussein from power, maybe the children of Iraq will be better off than they are now. But that's not a certainty. How many innocent civilian lives will be lost in the war? Would you care to guess? If children or other innocent civilians had any currency in the formation of US policy, most of the sanctions would have been lifted a long time ago, and we would not now be worried about terrorism in the first place.

This is about oil. Trading basic human decency for oil. Oil is costing us our humanity, our freedoms, our self-respect, and before too long perhaps the lives of more of our own children. And what will our children think of us when they eventually find out what our government has been up to? None of us is innocent, because WE are the government. Remember...? WE THE PEOPLE. Is war the only science we know? The people who represent us, are now, and have been for a long time, out of control and out of touch. Enough is enough. We each need to accept our responsibility as citizens before it's too late. And if we can't come together to find new common ground and formulate a strategy that is based on principles of honor and

The Answer

basic human decency, then perhaps between our apathy and government's negligence, The Great Experiment will, after all of this, have finally come to naught. Start by checking out this story. Here are the referenced links:

¹ <http://pilger.carlton.com/page.asp?partid=170>
[http://www.gpln.com/Interview of Osama Bin Laden by Peter Arnett.pdf](http://www.gpln.com/Interview%20of%20Osama%20Bin%20Laden%20by%20Peter%20Arnett.pdf)

This article is dedicated to Ruth Wood, who was my homeroom teacher at Pennsauken High School in New Jersey and who loved me as she loved all children, and stayed my friend and had faith in me for over 40 years. Her former students live in every corner of this country. She died in Knoxville, Tennessee, on Sunday September 29 close to the family she adored. May God rest her sweet soul.

— m.a.g.

The Answer

Like a Bull in a China Shop

September 5, 2002



THIS ADMINISTRATION PLAYS WITH WAR LIKE A CHILD PLAYS WITH MATCHES... like a bull in a china shop chasing a red flag, trampling on civil liberties and human beings like so many glass trinkets and costume jewelry. Bombing a wedding party and denying it, leaving behind grieving parents, and dismembered orphaned children. Promising reparations without apology... and then not following through. Chasing criminals through a country like a car chase in a B movie... destroying everything in its wake, leaving death, fire, and destruction everywhere, with great bravado, pretending to be a hero. So incredibly immature, boorish and irresponsible that one can only think to send them to their room while the rest of us grieve, asking ourselves what did we do so wrong that our own child could do these things. This administration cannot be trusted with war, cannot be trusted period.

The Answer

On Hanging Flags

September 4, 2002



IN THE TOWN WHERE I LIVE, the VFW has the job of putting up flags on national holidays and I usually help out. I am not a veteran, but I enjoy doing it and I feel honored to have been asked to help out. The town sure looks spiffy with all those flags lining our main street and I like having something to do with it.

Getting all those flags up can be a challenge. Up and down the ladder thirty or more times. Taking them down in the rain. Sometimes a flag will slip out of your hand and land on the ground. Last time that happened, one of the guys was telling me that you really have to be careful hanging flags with a Marine. One day he dropped a flag and the Marine on his team had a hissy fit. Read him the riot act. Said it just wasn't right to let that happen.

The truth is I wouldn't mind hanging flags with a Marine. I would respect that kind of dedication and commitment. But I will tell you this, if a Marine will have a hissy fit if I drop a flag, I surely would expect him to have a double hissy fit if the President of the United States tries to declare a war. The Constitution of the United States authorizes only Congress to declare war. And to my way of thinking, such a violation is a bit more serious than dropping a flag. If a United States Marine will defend the symbol of our country with more resolute determination that he or she will the Constitution of the United States, than brother, we've got one hell of a problem.

Every soldier, every lawyer, every congressmen, and probably you, took an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States... and you fucking son-of-a-bitch... I expect you to keep your word!

Note: On 9/4/02, after posting this, George W. Bush announced that he would not invade Iraq without first obtaining formal approval from Congress. The point still stands.

Explanation: I don't, as a rule, use profanity. When I wrote this, I imagined I was talking to a particular Marine who needed to hear it. What do you need to hear?

The Answer

On God and Religion

September 4, 2002



GOD IS. BUT GOD IS NOT A RELIGION. Every religion is a filter that one can use to interpret God... a lens that you can look through to see God, and if you look through the lens, looking for God, what you will see... is God. But no matter what lens you look through, you will only see that “color” of God that the filter allows through.

I have no quarrel with religion, except when it invites believers to forget, or not to know... that what they are believing in is a point of view, and what they are seeing is only part of the reality. Religion encourages the practice of calling an incomplete truth, “the truth,” when, in fact, the incompleteness is so sufficiently untrue, that it is also an illusion... the problem being that some people use their illusions to quarrel with the illusions of others... and God sometimes gets forgotten in the controversy.

It is common for those who claim that, “God's wisdom is infinite,” to then go on to tell you exactly what God thinks, implying that infinite wisdom is something they also possess. After all, here they are... ready, willing, and “qualified” to explain it all to you. It's curious to me that it doesn't seem odd to them — with so many religions in the world — that they just happened to have stumbled on the true right one.

Looking for God in religion might be like looking at an elephant with a magnifying glass. The more powerful the lens, the more pronounced the details become... but also the closer in you get, the narrower your field of view. It might allow you to describe very precisely the hair on the elephant's back, without giving you a clue as to what's on his mind.

This is why the separation of church and state is so important... too many people ready, willing and “qualified” to explain it all to you.

Wouldn't it be something if God was already closer to you than your own breath?

The Answer

The War on Terrorism

February 17, 2002



THINK THIS ADMINISTRATION'S WAR ON TERRORISM violates and is incompatible with America's goals and values. I think we all want to put an end to terrorism. That's why we should all oppose this war.

I think most of us agree that the attacks of September 11 require the United States to upgrade its security and intelligence so that future attacks can be avoided. I think most of us agree that we should search out those responsible for the attacks and bring them to justice. But beyond that, I think our government is on the wrong track.

We need to carefully examine what the root causes of terrorism are, explore how America's foreign and domestic policy have contributed to the threat of terrorism, and create a coherent, enlightened vision for how America can now best contribute to lasting peace, prosperity, and security in the world. We must insure that those who might contemplate the use of terrorism, as a last resort to achieving political ends, will henceforth and forevermore consider that strategy unnecessary, unworkable, and obsolete. Such a vision has not been advanced by this administration or by any administration since this country embarked on The Marshall Plan in 1948.

Our foreign policy is founded and has been operating for many years on the illegitimate presumption that having unfettered access to the natural resources and underpaid labor in other parts of the world, (including the oil of the Middle East), is more vital to America's national security interest than is freedom, honor, courage, democracy, or basic human decency. I believe that the American people will be more secure and enjoy a higher standard of living—as will the rest of humanity—when this worldview is finally put to rest. If we don't put it to rest, I believe the price we, and our posterity, will pay, will far exceed any short-term gains that this nation has enjoyed or ever will enjoy.

Terrorism spawns in places where there is poverty, insecurity, injustice and oppression. I believe that militarization, privatization, deregulation, and globalization have moved, and continue to move, more and more of humanity into states of poverty, insecurity, and oppression. If we continue

The Answer

down this path, I believe more human beings will become disenfranchised and desperate, and terrorist acts will become more commonplace. As our government pursues its strategy of terrorizing terrorists and making “collateral damage” of people who live in their midst, an endless cycle of violence, oppression, and injustice will result; our wealth will be squandered and the opportunity for world peace and prosperity will be lost.

The society that we all want to live in cannot come into being if we ignore the lessons of history, shroud government processes under a veil of secrecy, reverse humanity's march toward hard won freedoms, or deceive the public about the true motives of policy makers and/or those who influence them.

The society we all want to live in needs to be governed by a sovereign people. The critical institutions that allow government to work must be administered without arrogance, widespread corruption, and hypocrisy, but rather must reflect an enlightened vision of a responsible, well-educated, well-informed citizenry.

Managing the nation's resources is a sacred trust. I believe a nation's wealth should be used for the good of its people and for its posterity, and not deceptively administered for the good of a few.

I believe that the one and only superpower now operating in our solar system, has a responsibility to each inhabitant of planet Earth — to foster peace, to protect the environment, to lift the human spirit and inspire the dignity of mankind... to promote, cherish, and protect democracy, justice, and the rule of law... In short, to commit itself to the full realization of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

The current administration and its war, fails on every count: the central themes promoted by this administration, convince me that we are more likely to suffer defeat from the slow steady decline of our own institutions, and the loss of our moral authority, than from any outside enemy. This administration has ignored history, lied about it, and now attempts to hide what history can teach us. The source of terrorism as it exists in the world can be traced in large measure to a failed U.S. foreign policy, pursued in

The Answer

secret, based on faulty logic, punctuated by corrupt, illegal, cruel and uncivilized acts against unsuspecting people in every corner of the globe.

I propose that taking the following three steps will reverse this course and set us heading in a different direction... a better direction, for the American people and for the rest of humanity:

1. We, the citizens of these United States, must reclaim our sovereignty in such full measure that we are able to renew and restore our faith in those we elect to public office... so that we can truly believe their allegiance is to us, The People, and to our posterity... and not to money, personal ambition, or the influence of a powerful few.
2. We must take responsibility for acts and policies that in the past have undermined the spirit, purpose and honor of our nation. We must make reparations where they are due and help those we have harmed to reclaim their dignity.
3. America must, henceforth, base its domestic and foreign policy on the advancement of human rights and the protection of the environment. We must strengthen national and international institutions that advance the rule of law. We must acknowledge that every human being on the planet is entitled to certain inalienable rights, honor and dignity... and every expression of our national sovereignty must be aligned with these values.

We are the People, and We the People are the government. We must reclaim our sovereignty, and sovereignty is reclaimed as each citizen acknowledges and takes responsibility for government... one person at a time. If we cannot find unity in these goals and aspirations, I believe that life for most Americans will become more difficult than any of us would have predicted. I believe that our security and our happiness depend on our ability to execute these three axioms for change and I don't believe any of this can ever happen unless you personally want it to happen and will say so.

The Answer

Notes:

Many Americans are unaware of what their own government has been up to these many years and so, for them, what I have to say may seem totally radical and foreign. Below I've listed key words or phrases with links to places on the Internet where additional information might put things in clearer perspective. But there are many more sources that you will need to visit to become adequately informed about what governments do (your government included) that defies human decency. If you want to add to this list, drop me a note with your suggestion:

- Militarization
<http://www.newint.org/issue294/keynote.html>
- Privatization
<http://www.ufenet.org/>
- Deregulation
<http://www.gregpalast.com/detail.cfm?artid=78&row=0>
- Globalization
<http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=12233>
- Uncivilized acts
http://www.island.net/~lbnews/9_11/Dorrel/dorrel.html
- Pursued in secret
http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Blum/KillingHope_IntroOrig.html
- Not to money
<http://www.opensecrets.org/>
- Every corner of the globe
http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Blum/KillingHope_page.html
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The Answer

Secret Trials

January 9, 2002



THERE IS NO WAY FOR A DEFENDANT in a secret trial to mount a legitimate defense. This is true because any witness for the defense could fear subsequent reprisals from the prosecution and therefore refuse to speak. This is particularly true if the defendant or defense witnesses believe that the prosecution is capable of “dirty tricks” — off the book reprisals — from which no recourse would be possible. Of course, such reprisals can take place anyway, particularly when witnesses reside in third world countries.

Even if a witness is willing to speak for the defense, the defendant may choose instead to allow him or herself to go undefended, rather than risk exposing a witness to injury. The only real protection any defense has is the public's willingness to oversee the process and defend principles of justice. The People are the watchdog of the judicial system.

If the public fails in its responsibility, there can be no justice. That is why in America we guarantee a defendant the right to a public trial. If we The People ever demonstrate to government that we do not care whether or not justice is served — whether it be in court or in any arena — then eventually it won't matter whether any given trial is public or private, and it won't matter if any political process is legitimate either.

It really doesn't matter if prosecutors or judges are honorable or not... the intimidation at a secret trial is omnipresent and therefore illegitimate on its face. And, of course, if prosecutors and or judges are not honorable, their deceit could go undetected indefinitely. It should be clear to all, that whenever people do not stand against injustice when they become aware of it, they are telling government that it can do whatever it wants — and it will.

For those who say that military tribunals are necessary for the protection of jurors, I say the rights of the defendant come first. The only way justice can be served is if every element of society does its job honorably... and this includes citizens as well as law enforcement. And surely — without courage, freedom cannot survive.

The Answer

Failed Presidency

December 23, 2001



WE HEAR REPORTS OF GEORGE BUSH receiving approval ratings of upwards of 80%. As for me, I already see a failed presidency and an arrogant President destined for impeachment.

On November 2, Bush signed an executive order giving sitting presidents the power to seal the records of any previous president even if the previous president wants the records made public. I see this is a thinly veiled attempt by the current sitting president to cover up the illegal acts and atrocities committed by his father during the former Bush's presidency, which crimes, I might add, should have resulted in the father's impeachment in 1990. This, along with the military tribunals; the dismantling of civil liberties; the denial of established legal procedures (as in the detaining of suspects without charge or the inappropriate monitoring of conversations between clients and their attorneys, or the attempt to deny public access to and scrutiny of legal processes, or eliminating legitimate judicial review of trials); the clamping down on the press and impeding their investigations into various allegations about the illegal activities of the CIA and its affiliates and former administrations; the expanded wire and internet tapping privileges in favor of the security police as they intrude into the privacy of citizens; resulting in the harassment of innocent people and the besmirching of their reputations; the effective merging of the FBI into the CIA; the heightened rhetoric and disinformation promulgated by this administration in an effort to quiet any dissent, is, I believe, all part of a conspiracy designed, at least in part, to insulate Bush senior from having to ever face a fair and adequate public scrutiny of his alleged crimes against humanity.

Given its true rationale, the dismantling of Constitutional protections and the usurping of power legitimately reserved for The People under our Constitution, is in this layman's view, patently illegal. Undermining the Constitution to cover up his father's illegal acts and/or the illegal acts of others is the obstruction of justice — an impeachable offense — and I

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predict he will either be impeached by Congress or by history. If not the former, you might as well begin shedding your tears now.

Why are we all trapped in this cover-up? I don't know all the many truths that now hide in secret files, but I do know that as a result of 9-11, some Americans are taking a closer look at US foreign policy to review what behaviors this country might have engaged in that would cause people in other parts of the world to hate and/or distrust Americans as much as they do. There is a lot to review. The evidence is voluminous and damning. I'm going to mention one example. (This alone should be enough to illustrate that Bush's claim that we are hated because we love freedom and democracy is both silly and absurd):

On December 20, 1989, on orders from then President George Bush, US troops descended on Panama in what was reported to be a legitimate hunt for “Strongman” Manuel Noriega. The mission was called “Operation Just Cause.” By January 3, 1990, Noriega was in hand and the operation was labeled a success. Mainstream media outlets, repeating what they were told, reported that about 250 Panamanians had lost their lives in the operation and Bush reported to Congress and the American people that Panama was returned to Democratic rule. Thus, the beginning of a big lie...

What didn't get reported was that this little excursion caused as many as 20,000 Panamanian civilians to lose their homes and possessions, while upwards of 4,000 men, women, and children lost their lives — brutally murdered as US military personnel wantonly laid waste large residential areas in the poorest districts of Panama. There are documented reports that US troops purposely burned entire neighborhoods to the ground, moving from house to house, block by block. Journalists were shot dead on the spot with cameras still in hand. There are reports that during the incursion, American soldiers shot and killed indiscriminately anything and everything that moved, and then, in the weeks following, rounded up black-listed Panamanians, executing some on the spot, and detaining others without charge or trial, (some of whom may still be unlawfully detained to this day). While the mainstream press was censored or while they censored themselves, eye witnesses were reporting that they saw American troops collecting scores of murdered civilians, who, as it turned out, were hastily

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tossed into mass unmarked graves, only to be dug up later by survivors who continued to look for the dead and missing. While there is no way to tell for certain how many Panamanians lost their lives, estimates from four human rights groups range from 2,500 to 4,000.

The source of this information is credible, much of it documented in the film, *The Panama Deception*, which won an academy award in 1993 for best documentary. But Academy Award or not, you never saw *The Panama Deception*... not even on PBS. I'm interested to know why? Other sources I looked at before writing this piece will be posted at the following web address: www.gpln.com/panama.htm. I'm sure you can find more.

While the American people celebrated their victory over Panama, the United Nations and the world community condemned the United States for the invasion, which clearly took place without legal authority under US law, or under any law. It was an abridgment of various treaties signed by the US, the Geneva Convention, and other authorities of international law. This fact was ignored by the American press.

“The territory of a state is inviolable. It may not be the object, even temporarily, of military occupation or other measures of force taken by another state directly or indirectly on any grounds whatsoever.”

— *Article 20, OAS Charter*

For many years, before, during, and after his ascent to power, Manuel Noriega was bought and paid for by the CIA. The CIA always knew Noriega was a corrupt despot... a drug smuggler and arms dealer. He did not become an anathema to the US until he finally became more of a liability to the CIA than an asset, at which time he took on a new persona — “Strongman” Noriega, drug dealer, and enemy of freedom loving people everywhere... In the same tradition, you might notice that the Taliban became the world's great enslavers and tormentors of women... but only after 9-11. Just like Noriega, the Taliban were always despots and the people they ruled were always in pain. But somehow, prior to 9-11, the

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treatment of women never seemed quite so troubling to US presidents, their administrations, or the CIA.

Once we take a look at what happened in Panama, we will have to look into what happened in other countries as well. Would it be a surprise to you to discover that the US strategy, time and again, was to destroy standing or budding Democracies? Why would we do that? Because democracies are difficult to control, whereas puppet dictatorships are easy to control... all you have to do is buy and pay for them, and that's what certain American interests were after, and got.

The tragedy of 9-11 will not be forgotten and those who perpetrated the deadly deeds must be brought to justice. But those who did this, while having the ability to kill our loved ones and temporarily terrorize our nation... had no ability to fundamentally damage the Constitution itself. That task can only be accomplished from within.

To limit dissent and the free flow of information under the guise of National Security is simply a flagrant deception and a scurrilous attack on our freedoms and on our posterity. Covering up crimes and atrocities committed by a president or a shadow government (that is either under his control, or controls him), that operates in our name, but outside the framework of the Constitution and without any substantive checks and balances — is not in the National Interest... it never was and never will be.

The President is not a king or a ruler... He is servant to The People. And if you and I, being no longer ignorant or innocent, allow these illegal acts to stand, then we are not The People and he is not the servant, and America is not America anymore.

To those who claim that only Americans are entitled to justice, I say: you don't believe in justice, and you don't believe in America, either.

Those who have carried out despicable and illegal acts in our name have disgraced our country, its people, and themselves. If We The People are too afraid to seek the truth, to know the truth, to tell the truth, or to believe in justice, how can we rightfully call ourselves free?

There are too many dead and too many dying... there are too many web sites... too many books... too many tapes, too many allegations from credible, brave, and honorable sources to pretend any longer that we don't

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know, or can't know, what was done in our name or who was hurt. I'm asking you to stand up... to honor the living and the dead... to ask the questions... to take responsibility for the crimes committed in our name... to ask the world's forgiveness... and to make reparations where they are due... to help me and everyone else who prays for peace and justice... to turn this treason around.

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The Answer

Freedom is Not Free

September 27, 2001



HERE IS AN EXCERPT THAT WAS TAKEN from an msn.com news report of the Ashcroft House Judiciary Committee hearing on 9/24. Contributors to the article were MSNBC.com's Alex Johnson, NBC's Robert Hager and Mike Viqueira and The Associated Press:

“COVERAGE OF HEARING RESTRICTED

After Ashcroft finished speaking, committee Democrats called civil liberties and free-speech advocates to testify, including representatives of the American Civil Liberties Union and People for the American Way, which have echoed some of Conyers' concerns.

But while Ashcroft's testimony was open to television cameras, the committee's Republican staff ordered camera crews to leave, including those of C-SPAN, the public interest network available on cable television systems nationwide, NBC News' Mike Viqueira reported.

Print reporters and members of the general public were allowed to remain, meaning the speakers' comments could be reported, but none of them would be available for Americans to see or hear for themselves.

House rules state, “Whenever a hearing or meeting conducted by a committee or subcommittee is open to the public, those proceedings shall be open to coverage by audio and visual means,” Viqueira reported.”

I think it ironic that when free-speech advocates got up to testify about their concerns for the possible loss of civil liberties in this country, their

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testimony was censored, in effect having their point proved before it was even made.

I also think it ironic that the death and destruction we experienced on September 11, in and of itself, seemed to unite us all in greater solidarity than at any other time in memory, while the administration's talk of protracted war and its haste to encroach on our civil liberties in its preparation for conducting that war, ultimately has the potential of tearing us apart in ignominious self defeat.

Freedom is not free. It never was.

“You can pay me now, or you can pay me later.”

Before September 11, the price of freedom was that part of the national treasury and that level of participation and awareness on the part of each citizen that was necessary to root out hypocrisy where we might have found it, seeking in its place an expanded level of honor and justice in our relationships with one another and with the rest of the world.

After September 11, the price is a reduction in our civil liberties, our sense of security, the well-being of our economy, the death of our countrymen, and perhaps next, the blood of our children.

As God would have it, life is always in a state of birth, death, and renewal... pain, opportunity, and forgiveness... it is always “now” and it is always “later than you think”.

Note:

I didn't mean, when I wrote this, to imply that prior to September 11, it would never have been necessary for Americans to lay down their lives had we, in the past, pursued policies that were consistently honorable. I suppose it depends on how far back you want to go in your analysis. We are not responsible for creating every malady that exists in the world. Sometimes there is, has been, and will be, no alternative but to take up arms. And, there have been occasions, I believe, when we should have been willing to fight and did not, much to our discredit. I do think, however, that by pursuing consistent policies based on human rights, honor, justice, and compassion, that whatever sacrifices we would have made would have been worth the price, and the total price we would have paid would have been less than the total price that will be paid given some of the unseemly policies we have, in fact, pursued. Of course... that “water is over the dam” now. Nevertheless, the sooner we come into alignment with approaches that are more enlightened than those we have pursued in the past, the lower the ultimate cost will be.

— m.a.g.

The Answer

We Must Be Thankful

September 12, 2001



WE MUST GIVE THANKS FOR LOVE, for family, for friends, for freedom. We must give thanks for the bountiful life we lead. We must look for understanding, cultivate compassion, allow experience to wash over us and bring us closer to who we aspire to be... to bring us closer to wisdom. Let us seek justice... but let us seek it everywhere and always. Let us be relentless in our search for peace. Ultimately that is the only true path to security, the only true defense against terror, the only road that leads us away from darkness and into the light.

The Answer

How Do You Protect the Constitution of the United States?

August 20, 2001



YOU PROTECT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION of the United States every day by how you live and interact with others and with your environment. You stay informed, you stay conscious, you maintain your dignity and become someone who can be trusted — trusted to deal fairly with others, trusted to tell the truth, trusted to maintain a level of intellectual integrity and compassion that allows you at once to be humble, flexible, steadfast, helpful, and brave. You understand the rights and privileges guaranteed you under the Constitution and you speak up and stand up if and when you see those rights being degraded or denied to others. You do not work simply to make a living; you work to make a contribution, so that civilization, as you know it, advances for everyone in it. You realize that life isn't fair, but that doesn't stop you from trying to make it fair. You do not use what you have... whether it be education, money, or influence to exploit others who have less. Instead, you use your education, your money, and your influence to extend the rights and privileges that you enjoy to those who are denied them. You know that you are not perfect, that you have made mistakes, that you have sometimes failed... but you do not let the fact that your past is flawed or that you have stumbled, invalidate your right to stand up and try again. You are, in short, an honest, decent human being, even if being that way does not make you rich and powerful, and even if it does.

The Answer

On Citizenship



IF IT IS THE DUTY of citizens to be willingly drafted into service by their country; and it is the duty of soldiers to face the heat of battle in defense of liberty and justice even at the peril of losing their lives, then it is no less incumbent for each of us who has freely pledged allegiance to the flag of our country, and/or who has taken an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, to do as much, even at the peril of losing our jobs, our standing in the community, our license to practice law, or even a Presidential or Congressional election.

It is because we are each in a distinctive circumstance — due to information that becomes available to us... due to the special trust that the public places in the work that we do... due to expectations that others have, based on how we say we live — namely, that we regularly operate in and for and consistent to the public good — that the public has a right to expect and we each have an obligation to act, in and for the public good, when we have the opportunity to do so, particularly when doing so is aligned with, and appropriate to the work in which we are regularly engaged.

Any United States citizen, who, by his special circumstance of knowledge and position, can benefit his country, (by speaking out or by taking other appropriate measures which are in his general purview or influence, in order to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States), has a duty and an obligation to do so, lest there be citizens who are damaged by his neglect, cowardice, or willful wrong doing.

This country could not have grown and prospered were it not for those who came to this land seeking refuge and hope in the one nation of the world that above all else loves freedom and democracy. Immigrants to the United States, in order to assume the responsibilities of citizenship first must learn about our history and system of government. They then participate in a ceremony in which they voluntarily pledge allegiance to their adopted country. It is in this pledge that each new citizen promises to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all its enemies, foreign and domestic.

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It is unconscionable to think that our founding fathers would have intended, or that we should suppose, that the responsibilities of citizenship in America should be more stringent for those who were not born in this country than for those who were. Therefore, one can only conclude, that every citizen, (be that citizen foreign or native born), has a duty and an obligation to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States with the same zeal as did those who were the founders of this country, or those who fought and died so that we might remain free.

<http://www.gvnews.net/html/Opinion/abs993.html>

The Answer

The Hidden Evil

July 8, 2001



SUPPOSE IF I COMPARED YOU FAVORABLY to George Washington or Thomas Jefferson you'd be appropriately flattered. And why wouldn't you be. Washington is so highly regarded in American history that he is the only President to have a state named in his honor. Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence. On the other hand, while we believe that both these men were honorable and true, that both believed in the dignity of man, neither one — even while fighting for, speaking for, and defending liberty — chose to free their own slaves.

But as Roger Wilkins points out in his new book *Jefferson's Pillow: The Founding Fathers and the Dilemma of Black Patriotism*, (I haven't read it yet, but I heard Wilkins being interviewed), one can hardly fault these great men when you consider the times in which they lived. After all, they both grew up in a culture that saw slavery as a natural aspect of life. They had achieved their education, their comforts, and their professional credentials as a direct or indirect consequence of slavery. It was their source of wealth... it provided them the leisure to contemplate the meaning of government and what part government should play in the lives of men. Both knew slavery was wrong, and both had great strength and courage in most aspects of their personalities. But even as they served their country, neither had the strength or courage to face life without their slaves. No one is immune to the possibility of being blinded by the cultural realities of their times.

In Thomas Jefferson's day, if a slave was not feeling well, a slave owner could decide to give him the day off, even though that might not have been the accepted practice. In doing so he might consider himself charitable (and his contemporaries would agree). The unspoken evil here, of course, is that the slave owner believing himself charitable, simply because he is being "unusually reasonable" for a day, never considers that he is being "uncharitable" when he denies another human being his freedom every other day of his life.

In his 4th of July speech in Philadelphia last week, Bush said that if the signers of the Declaration of Independence were alive today, they would

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“...be pleased to see...religious institutions that feed the hungry, treat the addicted and give love to alienated children...” They would “...find, amid the problems of modern life, a familiar American spirit of faith and good works... they would see the signs of poverty and want, but also acts of great kindness and charity.” They would see that religious freedom “is more than the right to believe in God's love. It is the right to be an instrument of God's love. *Such work is beyond the reach of government and beyond the role of government.*” (Italics added)

How can charity be evil? When we deny that a man's suffering is due to our own incompetence and infidelity... but we nevertheless arrange to give him something that he already has a right to own... yet we arrange to give him only half ...then we characterize the transaction as a gift... so we can consider ourselves generous to a fault.

To say that government does not have a primary role in feeding the hungry, treating the sick, looking after the welfare of its youth — that is a breach of faith and an attempt to abdicate a sacred responsibility. Your government agreed to strive to see to it that all its citizens would achieve their basic human rights. These rights are enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To accomplish this, all that would be necessary, would be for each citizen and each elected official to honor the Constitution of the United States. You honor the Constitution when you execute laws and administer your oath of office with integrity and with fidelity to principles of justice. We honor the Constitution as citizens by telling the truth and by being trustworthy in our dealings with others, even though we may never know or meet the people who will be affected by our behavior, and we do so with the same level of courage that we expect soldiers to have when they are in battle, defending our freedom. In this we have failed and are failing. We set our sights so low that we shame ourselves. The only reason that every citizen of this country has not attained the full measure of his or her basic human rights is that this government and its people have not intended that it happen.

The civil war was fought over slavery, yes, but slavery is about economics. Remember?... “It's the economy, stupid.” Slave owners didn't

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fight for the right to own slaves just because they liked having black folks around. They fought to own slaves because they didn't want to be poor; they didn't want to give up the life they knew, with all of the amenities that slavery conveys to the folks who own them. They simply didn't have a clue about how to maintain a quality of life on their own without slaves. They were afraid. It takes a certain kind of courage to change, even when you know change is the right thing to do, particularly if you think you will suffer in the end for your efforts. So, in the absence of a better vision and courage, it took a bloody civil war to end slavery.

Slavery might not exist in America as it once did, but the level of consciousness on which slavery existed is still very much alive. We don't normally recognize it as such because it is so much a part of our culture that it is hidden, even though there it is, right in front of our eyes. We see our culture, our way of life, the same way George Washington and Thomas Jefferson might have... with charitable optimism and with myopia. In our culture, you can be an economist, a CPA, a Tax Attorney, a businessman, or a Senator and work with financial matters all your life and not have it hit you that the way our political economy works — its tax policies, its traditions, and its markets — insures that some people will always be forced, against their will, to donate their valuable labor for a subsistence wage or less. Poverty is man made. It is culturally engineered and protected by each succeeding generation. It is insidious, continuous, ubiquitous, and unnecessary.

Here's just one example:

If you want to buy a home in the United States, you can take out a mortgage. The interest on the mortgage is tax deductible whether the house you buy is worth \$100,000 or \$1,000,000. The government subsidizes the purchase of your home. The higher your income, the higher your tax bracket, the higher the subsidy. The lower your income is, the more meaningless the subsidy becomes. If you are a renter, you don't get a subsidy. If you are in a lower tax bracket, you don't itemize your deductions and the subsidy doesn't apply to you. If you are a middle class homeowner,

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you get a deduction but the savings are very modest compared to the most affluent participants, because you're in a lower tax bracket. So, with this one tax measure alone, we have put in place an enormous welfare system for those members of society who need welfare the least. It encourages the building of expensive homes and discourages the building of affordable housing. It makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. But this goes on in the tax code page after page after page and each time Congress "fixes" the code it usually ends up even less equitable than before. When Congress went about "changing welfare as we know it," they took as much as they could away from the poor, making sure that an even greater portion of welfare would accrue to the rich. If you are in the middle class, my guess is that you would never allow Congress to eliminate the tax deductibility of your mortgage interest payments even though you would probably save money if they did. That's because you don't understand how things work. The people who enact legislation understand what they're doing, or at least the folks they listen to do.

The faulty logic that's usually promoted is this: That in America, anyone can rise above his or her station in life and make it — a true statement. The implication is, that in America *everyone* can rise above their station and make it — not a true statement. Anyone can become President. But everyone can't become President. Everyone doesn't need to become President, but everyone needs to have the opportunity for a decent life and under the current arrangement, this can't happen, even though there is nothing in nature that precludes it.

So what are we to do? I think we need to get down to basics. Political parties, corporate media and special interest groups can spend billions of dollars to try to influence our thinking, but in the final analysis, they can't take away our ability to think — and when we go into the voting booth, no one goes with us. The game isn't over yet. But we need to wake up and start thinking for ourselves before it is.

The Answer

Addendum

April 23, 2001



AS AN ADDENDUM TO PRIOR COMMENTARIES, I would like to suggest three simple initiatives that every citizen, regardless of political affiliation, might pursue to help lead our country in a positive direction.

1. Read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a common set of principles that we endorsed when it was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. It specifies the rights and freedoms that every individual should enjoy regardless of their country of origin, and sets forth a basic standard of achievement to which every individual and every organ of society should strive. If we would only read what we as a people have all already agreed to do, we would understand the fundamental framework on which sound foreign and domestic policy ought to be based and also where our policy makers have so often gone wrong. The Universal Declaration is worthy of our support.
2. Become an advocate for the fulfillment of its promise wherever you see that it is not being fulfilled. I believe that no institution...corporate, government, or otherwise... is deserving of our support if it pursues policies that are inimical to the Declaration. And no candidate for public office should be supported if that candidate does not intend to advance us closer to the Declaration's stated objectives.
3. Just as every responsible citizen needs to understand the basic tenants of our Constitution, so should every child be required to read and understand the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

If these three initiatives were universally adopted, it would give us a common standard of reference, which we do not now have... but which we

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were promised in 1948 that we would have... to transform our relationships with one another and with the rest of the world.

It is said that within each of us there is a sacred temple. When you read a document like the Declaration you light a candle in this place that stays lit for as long as you live. You only need to read it once to kindle the flame, and as you come to understand its deeper meaning the flame burns brighter. Soon you become clear that it is not your government with its armies and weaponry that protects your freedom; it is the flame that burns in the hearts of your countrymen that protects you, and it is the light that burns in you that protects them. With each new candle lit, the hope of the world grows brighter. The way I see it, the light that burns in you is part of the light at the end of the tunnel that others first see — that they always dreamed they might one day see — if God be only listening. When you read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights someone new will see this light and the tears that flow will be for the clear recognition that someone had been listening after all.

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If I Don't, Someone Else Will



YOU DON'T NEED AN ADVANCED DEGREE to reason that any business whose customers are addicted to its products has a unique and enviable position in the marketplace. In fact, if you had to compete with such a company you might conclude that your competitor has an unfair advantage. But who competes with the tobacco industry? Well, since companies compete for money, for power, for survival, let's take a look.

See if you recognize any of the brand names that follow. Many of these names, listed in alphabetical order, represent once independent companies that didn't survive in the marketplace. Some were acquired and merged into one company or another before eventually being devoured by Tobacco:

Altoids	Cracker Barrel
Baker's Chocolate	Crystal Light
Balance Bar	Dairylea
Bert Grant's Ale	Del Monte
Boca Burger	Deli Delux
Breakstones	Digiorno
Breyers Yogurt	Domaine Ste. Michelle
Brim	Dream Whip
Bull's Eye Barbeque	Foster's
Cafe Hag	General Foods Int'l Coffees
Calumet Baking Powder	Good Seasons Mixes
Capri Sun	Grand Mere
Carte Noire	Grape Nuts
Chateau Ste. Michelle	Grey Poupon
Cheddarie	Hamms
Cheez Whiz	Handi-Snacks
Chips Ahoy!	Henry Weinhard's
Claussen	Honey Bunches of Oats
Columbia Crest	Honeycomb
Cool Whip	Icehouse
Corn Nuts	Jack's Pizza
Country Time	Jacobs
Jell-O	Philadelphia Cream Cheese

The Answer

Kenco	Planters
Knox	Polly-O
Knudsen	Post Cereals
Kool-Aid	Raisin Bran
Kraft	Red Dog
Leinenkugel's	Red Oval Farms
Life-Savers	Ritz
Light n' Lively	Sanka
Louis Rich	Seven Seas
Maxim	Shake'N Bake
Maxwell House	Shredded Wheat
Meister Brau	Snoqualmie
Mighty-Bite	Stella D'Oro
Milk Bone	Stove Top Stuffing
Miller Brewing	Taco Bell Dinner Kits
Milwaukee's Best	Tang
Minute Rice	Toblerone Chocolate
Miracle Whip	Tombstone
Nabisco	Vegemite
Now & Later	Velveeta
Old English	Villa Mt. Eden
Oreo	Wheat Thins
Oscar Meyer	Yuban
Peak Freens	

Except for the wines (UST, Inc.), every product or brand name on this incomplete list is owned by Phillip Morris, now not only the largest tobacco company in the world, but also the largest food company in the U.S. and Canada, and second largest in the world.¹

At this point you might ask yourself, how is it possible, given the unfair competitive advantage that addiction confers, that drug peddlers were allowed to acquire the cream of America's food industry?

Furthermore, would you suppose that the folks who poison and torment our family, friends, and children every year with nicotine and tar are likely to be good stewards of our bodies when it comes to food?²

The Answer

Nicotine is an addictive drug. It causes death and despair year after year in all corners of the world. The reward for this abuse of humanity³ is that Philip Morris' stock last year (2000) outperformed every other company in the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

Has it occurred to you, as it has to me, that the privatization of prisons, and hospitals, and other public institutions... the deregulation of so many entire industries... the relaxation of anti-trust rules... the “profitization” of journalism... the rolling back of worker safety protections and environmental controls... is really the incremental transfer of power from *The People* to The Corporation?

Do you think it's possible that you could wake up one day and come to the realization that the folks who set public policy and regulate commerce are no longer elected by *The People*, but rather are elected by Boards of Directors over which you and I have no control, and that the people we voted for to represent us, more often than not actually represent them?

Do you think it's possible that if you were to wake up one morning and come to the realization that your freedom is hanging by a thread, that you wouldn't do anything more than get dressed and go to work, as if it were the same as any other day? Is it possible that our freedom and our country could be lost inch by inch without one defining moment to mark the transformation from freedom to oppression, and is it possible that we could miss hearing the call when it comes, or if we do hear it, simply be too tired or not have the time, the strength, the energy, the know-how, or the courage to stand up for justice anyway?

After the last election, one thing should be very clear to all of us: that we will never find the answer in anyone else, not even in a true patriot and hero... until we find the answer in ourselves first.

Which brings me to the title for this commentary, which is what every executive, every politician, every employee, and perhaps every citizen hears in his or her head right before he or she gives up—or doesn't. Are these the words that are going to cost us our health, our wealth, our freedom, our happiness, and everything we ever believed in—or can we come up with an antidote before it's too late?⁴

The Answer

Special Note: On June 13, 2001 Kraft began trading on the NYSE under its own symbol. Prior to this "spin off" Phillip Morris owned 100% of Kraft; after the "spin off" it owned 97.7% of the combined voting stock of Kraft. Don't be fooled into thinking Kraft is no longer owned by PM.

¹ From the Phillip Morris and UST annual reports, and the Nabisco web site. Phillip Morris acquired Nabisco in 2000. Nabisco was once associated with Reynolds Tobacco.

² Taco Bell Tortilla chips (manufactured by Kraft) were recently taken off the market because they were found to have been illegally, but accidentally, manufactured using StarLink corn. StarLink corn is genetically engineered (GE) corn that at this point can only legally be fed to animals. Evidence already exists that GE food products are creeping into the food supply without regard to labeling? Where do you think Philip Morris stands on this issue?

³ I realize that we are better educated today than we used to be about some of the dangers of cigarette smoking. But as a reminder, we know that smoking causes premature aging of the skin and that more women now die of smoke related diseases than they do from breast cancer. We know that second hand smoke is dangerous (and also unpleasant) for non-smokers and we can extrapolate from this that smoking is one form, if not the most common form, of child abuse. We know that nicotine is a powerfully addictive drug and that people who are addicted to any substance are more likely to display socially undesirable behavior than they otherwise would in order to sustain their addiction, or simply in response to it, as in the case of smokers who discard cigarette butts on streets, sidewalks, beaches and other public thoroughfares, sometimes even throwing them out of car windows. A corollary to this is that we can postulate that people who smoke probably suffer more than the rest of the population from poor self-esteem, given that they are forever being dominated and oppressed by a force over which they experience having no control.

⁴ How will we know when it's too late? ...Or do you think it's too early?

⁵ Effective January 27, 2003, Altria Group, Inc., became the name of the parent company of Kraft Foods, Philip Morris USA, Philip Morris International and Philip Morris Capital Corporation. Collectively, these companies now form the Altria family of companies. Check out the complete list of brand names from Altria's web site using these links:

Kraft Foods North America

http://www.altria.com/about_altria/01_04_02_kraftfoodsnorthamerica.asp

Kraft Foods International

http://www.altria.com/about_altria/01_04_01_kraftfoodsinternational.asp

Philip Morris USA

http://www.altria.com/about_altria/01_04_04_pmusa.asp

Philip Morris International

http://www.altria.com/about_altria/01_04_03_pmi.asp

Check this out too:

<http://www.jeffreywigand.com>

The Answer

Oil

March 23, 2001



ONE OF THE DANGERS of accepting corporate culture as a way of life is that it requires most of us to become specialists, and in doing so limits our information and our vision. Information filters up from all sides of the pyramid providing those who live at the top, the only comprehensive view. This broad view gives them the opportunity, if they are so inclined, to take advantage of everyone below. One nice thing about the Internet is that it pokes small holes in this system, through which we can peer, and sometimes get a little glimpse of what we don't ordinarily get to see from midrange:

Dr. Colin Campbell, one of the world's foremost oil exploration geologists (<http://hubbertpeak.com/campbell/>), estimates that within the next 5 years we will reach what is called the midpoint depletion of world oil reserves. This is the point at which humans will have extracted half of all the oil we will ever extract. If he's right, it will have taken us only 130 years to consume half of what it took nature perhaps several hundred million years to create. At current rates of demand, what's left might only last another 50 years or so. Of course, some of it hasn't been discovered yet, although new finds will be harder to come by now given that we've already extracted the easy stuff. The annual discovery of new oil is currently only running at about 25% of consumption. Dr. Campbell figures the midpoint of all US reserves happened more than 20 years ago. Our oil is all but depleted, while Arab countries still have most of theirs. Opening up new fields in Alaska or other national parks will not change the scenario since those deposits have already been included in world reserve estimates and apparently represent only a relative drop in the bucket anyway.

What does this mean? It means the earth is running out of oil. Fifty years is only a few seconds in geological time, though well beyond the time horizon of most TV talking heads and most corporate boardrooms. Of course, some pyramid apex dwellers do look ahead 50 years and hopefully you will too.

The Answer

Our oil dependency could create great economic and political dislocations if we don't address the issue intelligently, and there's no evidence that we will. Maybe we're afraid to. We shouldn't be, given that we probably have within our reach the technology and the resiliency to transform what looks like a problem into an asset. But some people don't want us to move on.

Our political economy does not allocate resources nearly as well as we pretend it does. Future generations don't count for much in the marketplace. Obviously, left to their own devices, the folks in the oil business, with government's help, will continue to extract as much oil as they can until all that's left for posterity is the dregs. In the coming months, you will likely hear pundits say that price is determined by supply and demand. Just keep one thing in mind with respect to oil: we can only increase the “relative” supply of oil, not the absolute supply. We only have the choice of pumping it now or pumping it later. We don't have the option of creating more.

Apparently, if we leave long term planning to the people we work for, or the people we vote for, we expose our children and grandchildren to great risk. Since most plastics are derived from oil I would hate to think that our progeny might have to do without it. It's so much a part of our lives we don't even think about it anymore. We should, you know.

Every day we receive from the sun more energy than we will ever need. Wouldn't it make sense to discover how to use it? Of course that would take some money, (which we have), but as you know those dollars are earmarked for something else.

Note:

I've borrowed a lot from the wisdom of others. One person in particular is R. Buckminster Fuller. To review some of his contributions to the world I suggest you visit <http://www.bfi.org>

The Answer

Misallocation

March 17, 2001



RECENT STUDIES SHOW that the wealthiest 1% of American families control more financial wealth than the poorest 95%. It is not superior intelligence, initiative, perseverance, ability, justice or even luck that accounts for most of the disparity. Most of the wealth generated in America is the result of synergy — the benefit that accrues as a function of the nation's vast and complex infrastructure — the fact that all Americans, by working together, produce more than the sum of what each individual working alone could produce. You might be the head of a multi-national coffee cartel, but no matter how smart you are, if nobody picks the beans, nobody drinks coffee and you're out of a job. The wealth that can be attributed to synergy is not efficiently allocated. On close inspection, it becomes evident that our economy routinely misallocates its resources largely through antiquated and fabricated accounting systems that ignore the most important aspects of reality... while lies, deceptions, political sellouts, misinformation, disinformation, ignorance, arrogance, fear, greed, selfishness and prejudice account for the rest.

It may have taken Nature several hundred million years to create a gallon of oil, yet we reward folks grandly for helping to deplete as fast as possible the entire earth's supply, which at the current rate of extraction perhaps could happen in your child's lifetime. How much would you have to pay your company's CEO per hour to get him to pick apples for a living, or to make sneakers by hand? Are the people who do this kind of work for us, to enable us to live the way we do, not entitled to a home, an education, a retirement, decent health care, or a dependable public transportation system. We couldn't drive to work, pick up a fork, or a phone, brush our teeth, put on our socks or buy a pack of gum without the contribution of people we will never know or see, or even begin to think about or appreciate. These are the folks who go to work every day, work every bit as hard or harder than we do, and never get fair payment for the contribution they make. We couldn't get

The Answer

by without them and if we succeeded or are succeeding, we owe them big time. The greater our success, the more we owe.

Tell your elected officials you want to pay your taxes and then be thankful that you can... and hope that you will have the wisdom next time to vote for somebody who will have the vision, the integrity, the intelligence, and the sense of justice to spend the money wisely. It takes an enlightened government of a forward thinking people to mitigate the vagaries of the marketplace. We need your help if we are ever to have either.

Note:

"Recent Trends in Wealth Ownership, 1983-1998" by Edward N. Wolff
Jerome Levy Economics Institute. The top 1% controls 47.3% of U.S. Financial wealth, while the bottom 95% controls only 30.7%.

See report by Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, "Forty-one companies actually paid less than zero in federal income taxes in at least one year from 1996 to 1998. In those tax-free years, the 41 companies reported a total of \$25.8 billion in pretax U.S. profits. But rather than paying \$9 billion in federal income taxes at the 35 percent rate, these companies enjoyed so many excess tax breaks that they received \$3.2 billion in rebate checks from the U.S. Treasury. Just one company, Texaco, reported \$3.4 billion in U.S. profits and \$304 million in tax rebates over the three years."

Nation Center for Children in Poverty

- Over 13 million children live in poverty and the number of children living in poverty has increased by 3 million since 1979. The child poverty rate grew by 15 percent from 1979 to 1998.
- 19 percent of children live in poverty, i.e., in families with incomes below the federal poverty line (\$13,003 for a family of three in 1998).
- The United States' child poverty rate is substantially higher—often two-to-three times higher—than that of most other major Western industrialized nations.

The Answer

Bush Fleecing

March 2, 2001



(Written before new tax law)

GW SAYS THAT NO FAMILY should pay more than 1/3 of their income in income taxes. Presumably this means that some Americans should pay 1/3 of their income in federal income taxes, but as far as I can tell, under his plan that can never happen. You understand, of course, that tax payers who are in the highest brackets get a tax break at every bracket, so even if they are in the 33% bracket they will never pay 33% of their income in taxes. In addition, I should point out that the wealthiest Americans often have options that the rest of us don't: they can manipulate the way they receive their income in order to pay the lowest tax anyway. CEOs, for example, often accumulate their wealth not by earning more salary but by giving themselves more stock options instead, which are taxed at capital gains rates; much lower than ordinary income rates. He also says that the estate tax is unfair because taxpayers shouldn't have their income taxed twice. Under his plan most wealthy taxpayers would not have their wealth taxed ever. Bill Gates has not paid tax on his billions yet and under Bush's plan he never would.

Bush says that taxes paid belong to the People not to the Government. He seems not to understand something important about who the People and the Government are. In America the People are the Government and when the elected officials of government spend money, it's supposed to be on the People's behalf. And if you take 40% of the public treasury and give it to the wealthiest 1% of the population, that's not on behalf of the People... that's just the fleecing of America.

Some ideas like some products could never be sold if they were explained honestly and completely. Bush's tax plan is one of them.

The Answer

Bush's Tax Tragedy

February 22, 2001



THE BUSH TAX PLAN not only illustrates an unprecedented lack of vision, but just the fact that we are seriously considering it is a national tragedy, in and of itself.

The taxes that Americans pay is a very small sacrifice for the opportunity and privilege of having unfettered access to all of the goods and services we will ever need in this life, particularly when you compare it to how the rest of humanity lives. We have enjoyed a long and peaceful stretch of prosperity. During this period we have gone from great national deficits to hopeful surpluses. The successful investment we made in ourselves represents perhaps the greatest opportunity we have ever known and we appear not to have a clue what to do about it.

Our national treasury does not belong to those who paid the tax; it belongs to our posterity, to America's future and its promise. Don't you think that it's just a little bit of a disgrace to discover that we might have an extra \$1.6 trillion with which to solve real human problems and yet can't think of anything useful to do with the opportunity. Twenty percent of America's children live in poverty. Why is it that every public school can't assure its children good teachers and adequate facilities? What about the Constitution's equal protection clause that the Supreme Court is so fond of quoting? Shouldn't every public school be adequately funded rather than have its funding depend on the market value of nearby real estate? Equal protection! Forty million Americans do not have medical insurance. If other countries can provide all citizens access to adequate health care, why can't we? The United States signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. It says that among other things, that every citizen is entitled to adequate health care, a livable wage, a proper diet, and suitable housing as a basic human right. It says that we as a nation will strive to accomplish that. Are we striving to accomplish that?

Rush hour traffic in most major American cities is a nightmare. Air travel is unpleasant, unreliable and unhealthy. If you want to visit a city to

The Answer

see a model transportation system at work, you have to leave the country. How will most American families in the years ahead provide nursing care for an aging parent? Our prisons are one of our fastest growing industries. Drug trafficking, in the minds of so many of our youth, is seen as the only viable career choice they can make. Justice and legal services in America have become little more than just another business.

George Bush says, "I trust you to spend 'your' money better than the government can." That's a very telling comment when you think about it? When you get your forty dollar refund or your forty thousand dollar refund, are you going to use the money to improve public education, develop better transportation strategies, monitor corporate polluters, improve social services, find renewable energy sources, upgrade your local hospital, provide funds to insure that every child in your community who has the ability, also has the opportunity to attend college? Instead of having our children flip hamburgers or sell cocaine, couldn't we put them to work doing something else?

The Bush plan is the greatest rip off that has ever been postulated. It probably represents the largest single publicly sponsored transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich that was ever purposely devised. It does this in two ways, neither of which is intuitively obvious, and I'll explain that in a minute. But make no mistake about it. Every time a wealthy individual or corporation uses money or influence to buy special favors from government, it robs the public treasury, steals from the poor, and diminishes every American and every American dream. And that's what's happening here. The money dealers said to Bush, "Here's the deal, we'll provide the money and influence you need to become president, but you have to give us this."

How does it work? First, the Bush tax cut would preclude us from solving real problems that otherwise would help us all and poor folks most of all. Any publicly sponsored enhancement that benefits all Americans in equal measure, helps poor folks most when you measure the benefit against the resources they already have. Which means they are also hurt the most when promises made never materialize. Second, Bush's tax plan widens the gap between the rich and the poor, thereby reducing even further the relative buying power of those who have the least. The most likely result... higher

The Answer

prices that would put low income families right back where they started. It would leave the national debt unpaid, the wealthiest Americans with more power and influence than they even had before... and the rest of us scratching our heads wondering where all the money went?

Americans have one of the lowest, if not the lowest, savings rate of any major industrialized nation. That means a great majority of Americans live from paycheck to paycheck. In an economic downturn or new inflationary cycle most could easily give back all their recent gains in a few short months. The folks who own most of corporate America, the wealthiest 1 or 2 percent, can hire or fire its work force, at will, and never acknowledge or recognize that it is their ability to do just that, that gives them the flexibility they need to succeed and prosper. That's why the taxes they pay belong not to those who write the checks, but to all of us, particularly those who make or made writing the checks possible... which is to say, those who work or worked on the front lines every day... those who will never be recognized for the contribution they make or made to our economy, but instead live at the edge of poverty or in constant fear of losing their job, their benefits, or their rights every time the economy gets a cold or Wall Street sneezes.

Let me make one thing clear, corporations and business owners are supposed to earn a profit and make tough decisions. The contribution they make is very real and very necessary. But there needs to be some equity...the kind of equity that only honorable guardians of the public trust can insure. If we need a fiscal stimulus to get the economy moving again, an honest attempt to solve any of our national problems would be a much better way to provide an economic stimulus than a tax cut that in its design is likely to punish those who need a lift and reward those who don't.

Bush has a prescription for a well thought out tax tragedy. He and his administration seem to be very well prepared to take us nowhere and I guess that's where we'll end up if we don't put our collective intelligence and energies to better use.

"Recent Trends in Wealth Ownership, 1983-1998" by Edward N. Wolff

The Answer

Jerome Levy Economics Institute. The top 1% controls 47.3% of U.S. Financial wealth, while the bottom 95% controls only 30.7%.

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- The United States' child poverty rate is substantially higher—often two-to-three times higher—than that of most other major Western industrialized nations.

The Answer

Estate Taxation and Politics

December 12, 2000



(Written before new tax law)

About Federal Income Tax:

The highest tax bracket for a married couple is currently 39.6%. But you should understand two important things about this: The 39.6% bracket does not kick in until a family's income exceeds \$288,350. Even then, income tax rates are marginal rates, meaning that the 39.6% bracket only applies to dollars earned in excess of \$288,350. A family earning \$288,350 actually would pay \$86,854 in taxes. So after paying taxes this sample family would still have \$201,496 left over to pay for food, clothing and shelter and perhaps a few trinkets. I'm not taking into account any deductions or exemptions that might apply, which most families in that bracket would have and I have also ignored FICA and any state tax that might be applicable.

The marginal tax bracket for a family earning \$50,000 a year, not counting deductions or exclusion, is 28%. But again, this does not mean that 28% of their income goes to pay taxes. The actual tax for them, not counting deductions or exclusions, would be \$8,300 or 16.6% of their income. Notice: everyone needs food, clothing, and shelter. Some people don't make enough money to pay any taxes at all... but they also may not have enough income to buy the bare necessities either.

About Federal Estate Tax:

Under the current law, by 2006 every individual will be able to exclude \$1Million from estate tax. This means, that for a married couple to be able to leave their beneficiaries \$2,000,000 without any estate tax, all they need to do is have a competent attorney update their Wills before the first spouse dies. In addition, a married couple can begin to pass on their estates before they die by giving any number of children, grandchildren, relatives or friends \$20,000 each, every year without paying a penny of tax. And that \$20,000 does not have to be in the form of cash. This number is more or less indexed with the cost of living. In addition to that, it's now

The Answer

possible to pay for the education or medical expenses of family members without it counting for gift tax purposes. If you are leaving your estate to your spouse, the maximum marginal estate tax rate is zero, which means you can leave your US citizen spouse \$10 billion without paying estate tax. If you are leaving an estate to your children, the maximum marginal estate tax rate is 55%, but notice this: after 2006, a Washington resident with a \$20,000,000 estate will pay state and federal estate tax equal to \$10,654,200 which is only 53.3% of the estate, still less than the maximum 55% marginal tax rate. The children will still get \$9,345,800. Is that not enough? And of course, I haven't even touched on the strategies available to wealthy individuals to cut estate taxes well below what these raw numbers suggest.

I should point out that the estate tax rates can be greater than what is mentioned above if, for example, a couple leaves more than \$2,000,000 to grandchildren or others of that generation or younger. You can find anecdotal evidence that some businesses eventually fail or have to be sold because owners do no estate planning when they have the opportunity, but for every business that succumbs because its owners failed to plan, you can probably find a thousand tragic stories of families whose coffers were decimated because they couldn't afford basic health care or quality nursing care when a family member needed it.

Note this: Under current law, if you own \$1,000,000 worth of stock or real estate today and hold it until your death, neither you nor your family will pay any income tax ever on the gain even if the gain amounts to \$100,000,000,000 by the time you die. It's called a step-up in basis. Without an estate tax, it's all free and clear forever. How much money should one family be able to accumulate for itself, without giving anything back, before we as a people decide enough is enough. The problem is, the electorate understands so little about the subject, and by the time they do understand, it will be too late. What about simple justice?

I guess you can ask... "Who am I to say how much is enough or not enough?" Well at a time when the wealthiest 1% of American households control more financial wealth than the poorest 95%¹, I think it's time to

The Answer

consider the question. I believe we have the widest gap between the rich and poor of any industrialized country.

In recent years congress “reformed welfare” but only welfare for the poor. We cut back benefits and in the process perhaps did help some folks get off welfare. But we also added enormously to the grief and pain of many others. As for corporate welfare, we didn't miss a beat. We added billions and billions to their allowance.

Some people can refer to themselves as compassionate conservatives, but when 20% of children in America live below the poverty level, when so many go to bed hungry at night, one has to wonder whether a repeal of the estate tax is either compassionate or conservative. In the face of the evidence, to offer a tax break to the wealthy now seems pretty radical to me. The idea behind a progressive tax rate structure is to acknowledge that those who have larger than average incomes and larger than average assets were able to achieve their advantages to some extent by virtue of the freedoms and opportunities that they were afforded as members of our society. Since having wealth is, in and of itself, an advantage, the taxes they pay are a way to give something back, enabling government to help maintain and protect a level playing field so that real and substantial opportunities are available to all and no one is left so entirely behind or so diminished that they lose their essential human rights or dignity.

An interesting question one might ask is how would a repeal of the estate tax personally affect those who advocate for such a policy and how would it affect the rest of us. In other words, I think it is important for those who are listening to the debate to consider whether or not proponents have a conflict of interest if they purport to be advocates of policies that will benefit the country as a whole rather than just the wealthy few.

We must be particularly mindful that the debate will come to us filtered through a media that is now largely owned or controlled by wealthy individuals who would greatly benefit if the tax were repealed. I believe currently our economy has no credible need for such a fiscal policy. We don't have to look far to see how so many Americans are marginalized by institutions that are in need of repair. Our courts, schools, transportations systems, medical institutions, nursing homes, government

The Answer

agencies, inner cities, and social security all need a lot of work if they are to serve the public interest in an equitable manner and the time to do it is now, particularly when we have the money to make an honest effort.

Let me make one more point. If all the tax cuts that are being proposed actually happen, do you think the surpluses that have been projected will ever come to pass? I don't. Wealthy individuals will continue to concentrate on growing their estates by appreciating their assets. The richer they get, the less tax (as a percentage of the economy as a whole) they will pay. As soon as the estate tax is repealed, big money will move quickly into foreign or domestic trusts where very little will ever be subject to tax again, and changing the law back won't help. It will be too late, the chasm between rich and poor will widen, and the nation will suffer.

Well that's my take on it. You are welcome to disagree. I'm willing to listen. My work involves helping folks make good financial decisions. But I also love my country and I think the underlying rules ought to be fair.



The Answer

Epilogue



On March 19, 2003, US forces opened its attack on Iraq. The “Shock and Awe” campaign that was promised did not commence until the third night, after which, it became obvious that the name given it was allowably accurate. What impressed this observer, at first, was the precision with which the initial attack unfolded. The implication that it immediately conjured up, was that America had now opened up a new window of possibility: it now possessed such startling military superiority that not only was a new world order possible, but likely. But then it began to sink in... what kind of world order would it be? An unnerving question when one considers that neither this administration, nor the American people-at-large, have yet to articulate an inspiring vision of what life might be like in such a world, or even to demonstrate that as a people, we have the maturity to handle the awesome responsibility that one would hope would accompany such capability.

Even before victory could be declared, this administration was already taking advantage of its impressive public display of military might, by advancing the same bankrupt social and economic policies that has been its hallmark since Bush was inaugurated... including more tax cuts for the wealthy — a foolish squandering of its newly acquired respect.

Five days into the invasion and Iraqi leaders were apparently not so “shocked” or “awed” as to be convinced to surrender. Reports of civilian casualties were mounting, and pictures of pinpoint bombings were no longer projected onto TV screens. One suspects that precision was given way to expedience... Saddam will fall, but war is war.

Will the people of Iraq now be better off than they were under Saddam Hussein? Probably — at least the ones who will survive the war and not be driven from their homes will. Can we hope for true Democracy in Iraq any time soon? Not likely. How can we imagine that true Democracy in Iraq will be born out of an administration that has demonstrated such little respect for Democracy at home? Just witness this administration’s maneuverings at the United Nations as it tried to get votes: attempting to

The Answer

acquire them the same way it acquired them here... by buying or extorting them one way or another. Bush's election was a fraud, even treason... his administration coming to power sponsored by Enron and a host of other nefarious benefactors... his proposed social and tax policies undermining our economy and our Democracy... his presidential appointments... little more than poorly disguised political payoffs... that only promise diminished civil liberties, and new layers of governmental incompetence as far and as wide as one can see. Congress is out to lunch, having been purchased at wholesale or held hostage by big money interests. The election processes in America now a study in moral turpitude, which guarantees only to eliminate from high public office our most capable citizens. And where are the mainstream media and most Americans on all this? Oblivious, complacent, ineffectual, for-sale, or just plain stupefied.

Once the United States is in full control of Iraqi oil, what nation will be safe from economic blackmail? *"Now if you're going to be a bad boy, I don't think you will be getting any oil today."* This administration knows how to wield raw political power, but appears to be significantly deficient when it comes to the intellectual variety. So what can we expect to be the final result of this advancing American hegemony? Well, here I am not totally discouraged. I see the glass as half full. Why do I have confidence that one day we will all live in a one-nation world of free people? One reason... one ray of hope... and one reason only... I believe in you.

And why do I say "a one-nation world" rather than a multinational landscape under the auspices of American style capitalism? Because when left to its own devices, American capitalism propagates war, not democracy, and if we are to advance beyond war, our political economy will have to evolve into something better. Again, that will be up to you. Why you? Because if not you... who then?

And why do I think you will succeed where no prior generation has? Because now you are finally beginning to realize that without you, success is clearly not possible — with you... at least there's a chance.



The Answer

Acknowledgments



I want to thank my wife, Charon A. Scott-Goldman, for patiently going to work and then coming home to the back of my head, which always seems to be in the same position it was in when she left it hours, days, even months earlier.

I also want to thank Hamish Todd, publisher of our local newspaper, *The Ticket*, who always gave me the time and the space to be heard whenever I thought I had something to say.

Thanks to TS who left the crowd to stand with me, and to MO for asking the question and appreciating the answer.

And thanks to all those I heard from, or those whose work I read or saw (some of whom are referenced in the footnotes of this book), and to those who I never heard from, or never heard of, but who continue to take the time and expend the energy to express their humanity by speaking out or by simply pressing keys on a keyboard, trying to make a difference.

I want to thank my friend Barbara, who has not been well, and has no insurance to pay for medicine, and who, when I call almost every day, says to me, “I love ya darlin’ ” and means it.

And thanks to Mom and Pop for a lifetime of loving me no matter what...to my brother Jim, for his constant gentle spirit, and the steadfast love that emanates from his heart... to Markie and Cookie for their lifetime of dedicated service to children... to Michael who helps me not to wobble, to Jette for speaking out, and to Shira for winning a great battle that made me very proud though I never said so until now. And thanks to Melvin Mackey for being the first and only person to actually buy this book prior to it being sent to the printer. There was one, so I printed it.

And to You who I know is. Servant to You, I am.

The Answer

About the Author



Mark A. Goldman lives with his wife, Charon, on Vashon Island, Washington, which is located in Puget Sound, and a short ferry ride from Seattle.

Mark has a degree in economics from Franklin & Marshall College and an MBA from the Wharton Graduate School. He is a financial planner and a developer of financial planning software.

In 1988, Mark was a write-in candidate for President of the United States (one of the three hundred or so individuals who do that each election cycle), and, of course, was completely ignored by the mainstream media. He ran an unusual (some say crazy) campaign, and, according to his own unscientific poll, received no fewer than five votes in the election and enough bills from creditors to last him quite a few years. He has no intention of running again.

The Answer

Universal Declaration of Human Rights



As adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, December 10, 1948

Preamble

Whereas, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas, disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas, it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.

Whereas, it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas, the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Whereas, Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Whereas, a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore, the **General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights** as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States

The Answer

themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Articles

ARTICLE 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

ARTICLE 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-selfgoverning or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

ARTICLE 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

ARTICLE 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

ARTICLE 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

ARTICLE 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

ARTICLE 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

ARTICLE 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

The Answer

ARTICLE 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

ARTICLE 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

ARTICLE 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed.

ARTICLE 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

ARTICLE 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and return to his country.

ARTICLE 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecution genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

ARTICLE 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

The Answer

ARTICLE 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitations due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

ARTICLE 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

ARTICLE 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

ARTICLE 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

ARTICLE 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

ARTICLE 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

ARTICLE 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national

The Answer

effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

ARTICLE 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

ARTICLE 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

ARTICLE 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

ARTICLE 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding,

The Answer

tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

ARTICLE 27. (1) Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

ARTICLE 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

ARTICLE 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

ARTICLE 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, December 10, 1948.

The Answer

Finally



There is the law and there are principles of justice and sometimes they are not quite in alignment with one another.

For Democracy to thrive there needs to be the free exchange of ideas and also the truthful sharing of experience from public servants and also from the media whose job it is to be the eyes and ears and voice of The People.

Every time a lie is told by a public servant in order to influence the public to believe something that he knows isn't true, it is an act of treason. A public servant is the servant and not the master. He is duty bound to be faithful in the execution of his duties and this must necessarily include fidelity to his honor.

If a public servant attempts to corrupt the values of subordinates by having them engage in unlawful acts or dishonorable activities, such as requiring them to lie to others or to put aside their own integrity, that too is treason.

If you are a subordinate and if you are unfaithful to yourself and the truth as you know it, in order to protect yourself or to carry out the agenda of someone who supervises you, then you are a traitor to yourself and to others.

If a military commander orders a soldier to execute an order he knows to be illegal or immoral, that is treason. If the Commander-in-Chief or the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense asks you to lie, or you are purposely misled into reporting a lie or withholding the truth or misleading others, that is treason.

The Answer

Can I take the Commander-in-Chief and have him prosecuted for treason if he lies to the Nation? I don't know. But I know that when the President of the United States or any public servant lies to the public or misrepresents his actions as one thing when he knows they are something else, then that public official is attacking our Democracy and the act is one of treason. This is how I see it.

Every lie acts to diminish, tear apart, and unravel the fabric of our society. And so does every lie that justifies a lie and every dishonesty that hides a lie, or hides the truth. This is the truth of how it is.

And if you haven't the courage to tell the truth, or the consciousness to honor the truth, or the love to love the truth, then one day you will not have the truth to tell, and soon thereafter you will not live in a place that will acknowledge the truth when it is told, and not long after that the truth will not be told for it will no longer be allowed. You cannot be a traitor to life, and then expect to live in a free and just society.

Who says so? I say so. Where is it written? In every blade of grass. In the sparrow's song. In a snowflake. In every sunrise and sunset. In every star that lights the sky. In every child's eyes. Every river that flows and every kiss of a lovers lips... says it's so. Because it IS so.

And what if you are not a public servant or a member of the media? Every intentional dishonesty diminishes the fabric of life for we are all part of the weave.

I do not say this as an invitation to judge others, but rather as a reminder from time to time to look to see if the threads of our own expression are holding life together or allowing it to unravel.

The Answer

Whoever you are, wherever you are, you are a part of every destiny. Everyone makes a difference, and simply the willingness to hold fast to life, to have faith, compassion and courage is what binds us together and creates the opportunity for us, and our children, and our children's children, to experience the blessings of freedom, happiness, and success.

Thank you for reading my book.

Citizens for the Impeachment of George W. Bush

"...they said they were in Puerto Vallarta on September 9 when they learned they would not be able to go home because the US Embassy said: either the storm that is brewing or because we have word that Osama Bin Laden may be hijacking airlines!"
— *Josh Salans*

For desecrating the Office of President of the United States...

- by allowing American citizens, and innocent citizens of other nations, to be put in harms way through negligence and flagrant disregard of human life.
- by undermining the Bill of Rights and attempting to rewrite Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States — thereby showing an egregious disrespect for citizens, elected representatives, our posterity, and those who honorably fought and died to secure our hard won freedoms.
- by subverting humanity's chance for peace by pursuing policies that are likely to enflame the world's passions rather than heal its wounds, and leave in its wake new legions of enemies to fuel a perpetual war.
- by plundering and squandering our national wealth for the benefit of a few; causing economic decay among the various states; deviously shifting the burden of taxes from those who can afford to pay to those who cannot; depriving citizens of universal health care, better educational opportunities, and generally widening the gap between those who have more than their fair share and those who have much less.
- by betraying the Universal Declaration of Human Rights... those who signed it... those who hope for its universal acceptance... and those who still don't know what it says.
- by protecting, through deceit and deception, those who have committed high crimes and misdemeanors.
- by trampling on the rights of others... causing death and destruction to citizens and non-citizens alike.
- by demonstrating wanton disrespect for the earth and its life support systems.
- by damaging the reputation of America and embarrassing its citizens through incompetence, arrogance, and moral insensitivity.
- by cheating Americans out of our right to know our own history, and thereby defrauding us of the opportunity to clean up our past so that we might build a more respectable future.
- by obstructing a full and fair investigation into all the circumstances surrounding the events of 9-11, thereby keeping Americans in the dark about what really happened, who is culpable, and why.
- by taking the oath of office knowing that the final results of the election were obtained only through fraud and deception and/or by not prosecuting those who were guilty of the fraud.

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We Must Be Thankful

September 12, 2001

WE MUST GIVE THANKS
for love, for family, for friends, for
freedom. We must give thanks for the
bountiful life we lead. We must look for
understanding, cultivate compassion, allow
experience to wash over us and bring us closer to
who we aspire to be... to bring us closer to wisdom.
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and always. Let us be relentless in our search for
peace. Ultimately that is the only true path to
security, the only true defense against terror, the
only road that leads us away from darkness and
into the light.

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