

## Uncomfortable questions loom beyond cheering of actions in Middle East

By Milan Martinic  
Contributing Editor

As American troops are sent into the frying pan under the fire that is the Middle East, buttons are popping off the chests of proud citizens who once more feel a surge of patriotism, inspired by our show of strength.

As a superpower we can hardly allow small-time bullies to go around conquering friendly countries. As president George Bush put it "America will stand by its friend" and defend Saudi Arabia. But make no mistake, the largest mobilization of troops by our country since the Vietnam war is not about friendship. It is about consumerism.

### Consumerism?

Yes, consumerism, and our drive to protect our materialistic lifestyle has blinded public opinion to the dangers and inconsistencies of such action.

We all know how much our economy depends on Arab oil. Saddam Hussein's naked aggression openly threatens to disrupt our lifestyle. Less oil would mean higher prices, higher prices would lead to a recession, people would have less money to buy and consume.

We certainly have air and sea forces capable of annihilating Saddam Hussein should he act on dreams of

conquering the rest of the Arabian peninsula. But we set out to expand our sphere of influence in the the Middle East by deploying ground troops (and military advisors and other support personnel) in Saudi Arabia; once there, troops cannot be withdrawn without leaving a dangerous power vacuum. So we're in it for a long haul.

And here's where the picture goes from bad to worse. All the possibilities have the familiar ring of history.

Fortunately, Israel has kept Iraq at bay with some tough talk. "If Saddam Hussein attacks Israel, he'll bring heavy tragedy upon himself," enough to make the bully think twice. But the would-be conqueror of Arabia, backed into an economic and military corner, has already tried the Moslem fundamentalists approach, calling for a holy war against us infidels. That failing, he may see an attack on Israel as a way to stir up Arab nationalism against our ground troops. That would put them in the familiar Vietnam-like ground warfare, where our men cannot tell friend from foe.

President Bush and his aides continue to stress that our troops are a "defensive force." If no action is taken soon, however, we are liable to repeat the blunders of Lebanon and Vietnam. Americans support their president when trouble strikes. But that sup-

port soon dissipates unless they understand the reasons to take risks. Arabs, too, are sure to dissipate their unity against their Arab brother and begin resenting the presence of "foreign infidels" on their land.

Without public support at home, the will of politicians wanes; less than decisive actions are taken, and men die needlessly. Those are the risks of attempting to impose our solution in other parts of the world. The tragedy, of course, is that few of the GI's who will die understand the intricacies of the Middle East, and few know of the policies that have led to the current standoff.

Today the U.S.-led condemnation of Saddam Hussein is universal. But where were we when this same man butchered over 5,000 Kurds, his own people? And where were we when chemical weapons were used in a large scale against Iran?

The questions are uncomfortable because the answers are equally uncomfortable. We were trading with him, granting him credits and technology transfers, and looking the other way when France and Germany provided him with more advanced weaponry for his arsenal that was available from the Soviet Union. We did so because what he was doing wasn't going to affect our ability to buy and consume. And, thus, we didn't care.

## Water, the future of Las Vegas

By Tom Daniels  
Staff Reporter

The Las Vegas Valley, and all of Clark County, is learning that the practices used over the years must be changed if this area is to survive.

Clark County is suffering from a severe water shortage. To alleviate this, our county and city fathers are trying to steal water from the rural counties, where water is as necessary for agriculture as it is to the urban dwellers for drinking and other necessities.

The phenomenal growth of the "strip", with pretty but useless fountains, does nothing but waste water needed for other purposes. Each hotel has a huge swimming pool for it's guests, thus wasting more precious water. Golf courses are being constructed all over the area for those who play golf, without regard to the others who need the water used to maintain the prettiness of the fairways and greens.

Since this writer moved to Las Vegas in 1942, it appears that each immigrant here is attempting to turn the area into what they left behind. Records show that this area is receiving approximately 4000 new citizens each month. Most of these buy or rent a home, putting in lawns, planting shrubs, trees and other vegetation that would prosper back "Home", only to find that most of them are not suited to this climate after wasting much more water trying to make them grow.

Is Steve Wynn improving the image of Las Vegas by installing a pool large enough for dolphins at the Mirage if the water supply becomes so critical that the poor creatures are unable to survive? Wouldn't it be better for him to buy a bus and transport underprivileged children to Sea World

to see the sea-going mammals, instead of wasting so much of our precious resource?

The environmentalists have been warning us for years that the water table (underground streams and wells) is dangerously low. What pressure was used to receive permission for what can only be described as an ultimate fiasco? Does the County Commission have skeletons that Mr. Wynn knows of, or is someone being paid off? I cannot answer these questions at this time, but I intend to look further into what is considered by myself and many others as a complete misuse of the resources that belong to the citizens of Clark County, not just Steve Wynn.

To this humble citizen who has spent most of half a century in the Las Vegas area, it appears that the only solutions to the water problem would be to:

1. Outlaw any further construction of swimming pools, golf courses, or other high water consumption projects.

2. Encourage, by real estate tax credits or other legitimate methods, the use of desert landscaping around homes and hotels. (After all, we are living in the desert.)

3. Although we need alternate industry to supplement the gaming and tourism that has put this area on the map, we should discourage any industry that would make our water condition even more critical.

The appearance of an article published in the Las Vegas Review Journal/Sun on Sunday, July 22, leads this writer to believe that there are others, including City Councilman Bob Nolen, who probably agree with the views expressed above.

## A word to the silent majority

By Shawn Black Snider  
Staff Reporter

Did you ever wonder where we all came from? How we got here and where it will all lead? These questions have been plaguing mankind ever since he first put chalk to a cave wall. Yes, I am of course talking about 'writer'.

Those people who come at you in print day and night and in every way, shape, or form a publisher can imagine, bringing you, among other things, news, information, opinion, and editorials, which induce, among other things, joy, frustration, enlightenment, and sleep.

Well, in trying to surmise the answers to these perplexing questions, I first looked over the field of writers and saw one striking similarity that grouped them together and at the same time set them apart from, the non-writing population. What they seem to have is a need, or maybe it's a desire, to internalize things and then put them down using their own perspective and, more importantly, their own words.

Of course these words are available to everyone. In fact, the English language has over one million of them. But what makes them so special to the writer is this personal arrangement.

It's within a flexible framework of order, context, intonation, and connotation that the writer arranges his precious commodity with the express hopes that he will set the stage for his ovation and not his cancellation.

Some times we hear these people have something special about them, a secret insight, a few extra neurons firing, a abetter thesaurus. But possibly, what we are seeing is simply people who aren't afraid to speak and then have their words left behind.

The papers are full of people who think you are interested in what they have to say, and indeed, subscription rates will bear this out.

From Miss Manner's terrific insights into fork etiquette, to Andy Rooney's observations on life, to Xavier Hollander's rendition of work, we are inundated with other's thoughts.

So why aren't you writing? Do you think your perception is any less brilliant than the next guy? Or does the next guy just have you convinced of that?

So where is all this leading to? Right back to the reason for the writing on the cave wall; that reason is to communicate. We all do it whether we are aware of it or not. It is said that we cannot not communicate. So since what you are not saying is even being heard you might as well put it down on paper.

Shakespeare wrote, "The pen is mightier than the sword". If you add to that pencils, typewriter, and computers, you've got an arsenal.

So why not declare war on your silence? Choose your weapon and draw.



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