

OUR VIEW Insanity Plea

Have President George Bush and the cabal of war-hawking neo-conservatives he takes his cues from officially lost it? What other explanation is there for the macho posturing that's supplanting what should be reasoned and analyzed (if stern) diplomacy in dealing with Iran's push for nuclear capability? It's one thing for the U.S. military to strategize in war game sessions how it would attack or defend itself from a foreign threat, say, Iran. This is S.O.P. (standing operating procedure) for our military, a way to stay sharp and in fighting trim. Better to plan and practice for war than to be caught off guard.

That said, it's another thing to tamp down the diplomacy and ratchet up the bullying—precipitously dangling our military superiority over a potential opponent's head. Double that probability for peril when the potential opponent quite possibly has nuclear weapons—no one knows how far Iran is from having attack-ready bombs. Triple the probability for peril when your military force is already stretched rubber band thin. We need another war like we need another Great Depression.

Have Bush, vice president Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld forgot that we're already neck deep in conflicts? Remember the 130,000-plus troops committed to Iraq. (We can't leave anytime soon lest the fledgling democracy crumbles before real reform can take root). According to CNN.com, 2,364 American troops have died in Iraq through Sunday, including 13 troops in one weekend in early April. Then there's Afghanistan, where upwards of 19,000 troops are currently deployed. (On Wednesday, Reuters reported that U.S. and Afghan troops killed six insurgents in Operation Mountain Lion in the Kunar province. CNN.com reported recently that 280 American soldiers have died in conflict).

This is only the beginning. Keep in mind that the U.S. military, while ours, is essentially a global outfit. More than a decade after the worst strife there, a couple hundred troops remain in Bosnia battling terrorism and help stabilizing the Balkans.

In 1998, Ivan Eland, writing for the Cato Institute, penned an article, "The U.S. Military: Overextended Overseas," noting that there were more than 200,000 American troops stationed in 144 countries and territories. At any given time, it usually has another 20,000 sailors and Marines deployed afloat on Navy ships," Eland wrote. "In the more benign post-Cold War international environment, why does the United States need all of those forces positioned overseas? Although some argue that ethnic tensions unleashed after the end of the Cold War have made the world less stable, statistical indicators of stability show otherwise. In the post-Cold War period, the number of armed conflicts has declined by more than half — from 55 in 1992 to 24 in 1997. In addition, most conflicts now occur within states, not between them. Of the 101 conflicts occurring from 1989 to 1996, 95 involved combatants within a state and only six took place between states. A threat to U.S. security is more apt to arise from cross-border aggression than from civil strife."

And still, by 2004, Globalsecurity.org reported that the number of American troops stationed around the world had nearly doubled to 350,000. It's as if the neo-cons think there's no problem too big for our military, no country tough enough or brave enough to put in the mouthpiece, strap on the gloves and go toe to toe with us. That this isn't the case has yet to sink in the heads of the folks at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Anytime federal lawmakers question the administration about its rapidly failing foreign policy, the neo-cons attack, brandishing them anti-U.S. and anti-troop.

What's that? You're asking about North Korea? Shhh. Don't bring that up. Don't bring up the fact that 7,000 U.S. troops are being moved into what obviously is attack position. Never mind that bullying hasn't scared North Korea from rapidly developing its nuclear capability. By our count, that makes two adversaries the U.S. is doing the nuclear two-step with. Thus, we have the answer to the original question—Have President George Bush and the cabal of war-hawking neo-conservatives he takes his cues from officially lost it? An emphatic yes.



Truth about EOB—We must care

By Dora LaGrande
Sentinel-Voice

For over 42 years, the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County has served the low-income and poor residents of Clark County in a myriad of ways.

Over the past three years, EOB has been in a constant state of turmoil and has found its organization turned upside down. They are experiencing financial difficulties and have recently lost its \$12.6 million Head Start Program and its Child Care Assistance Program. The other programs, as of this writing, are intact and functioning at full capacity, serving the needs of the specific population it is targeted to serve.

The organization has been investigated by state and federal authorities for losing track of millions of dollars, and EOB is now asking the local community to help keep them from drowning.

To that end, they have held two forums to try to shed some light on the situation for community residents who are interested in keeping EOB afloat. At the community meeting that I attended last Thursday, several of the residents expressed a very strong interest in knowing what happened to get EOB to this point and, if the organization is saved, what is going to happen to keep them from being in this situation again — very valid concerns.

I am going to make a best-guess attempt to address their first concern and shed a little



ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

light on a few things that will satisfy their second concern. However, first, let me state that EOB is a salvageable organization, and my main purpose is to take a stab at restoring confidence in the organization.

The agency's mission is to eliminate poverty by providing programs, resources, services and advocacy for self-sufficiency and economic empowerment. The target area includes Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Henderson, Boulder City and unincorporated Clark County.

EOB is the largest private, nonprofit social service organization in Nevada. EOB provides service through nine divisions, which include: Adult and Senior Services, Child Care Assistance, Child and Family Services, Health Services, Housing and Development, Micro-Business, Transportation and Substance Abuse Treatment. The organization administers 40 programs that impact 55,000 area residents per year.

While EOB is in trouble, it is not the only organization that has been in this position. Within the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Resources the problem is systemic. The

Children's Cabinet in Northern Nevada is in the exact same position. They took an advance from the State Department of Health and Human Resources, spent the funds on other bills, and the organization has been allowed to construct a payment plan to satisfy their obligation — and they are not being threatened with extinction.

Mike Walden, the head of the State Department of Health and Human Resources has chosen to handle the situation with EOB totally differently than he has handled the situation with the Children's Cabinet. He has been conciliatory with Children's Cabinet and hostile with EOB from the beginning.

In fact, his department should take responsibility for both agencies. They issued advances without requiring a proper accounting of the funds, or more succinctly, I believe they did not have any guidelines or procedures, at that time, as to how the money should be spent. In EOB's case, they advanced funds in the form of two checks for almost \$3 million and never received an accounting of where the monies were spent prior to issuing a second advance.

My experience with grant funds is that you draw down a portion, submit the paperwork substantiating how and where those monies were spent, and then you are allowed to draw down more funds. At the time of these indiscretions, it seems that was not the process.

The NAACP, Boy Scouts of America, United Way and American Heart Association within the past decade have all found themselves in a

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