

Bush trip to Poland not a funeral jaunt

Once again, President Bush is off doing what he does best — traveling.

On his new visit to Europe, Bush is catching the sights at the French Bicentennial, doing a few state dinners, and in-between photo opportunities, engaging in a war of public relations with the far-more photogenic Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Mind you, we do not think of all of this as mindless pomp and circumstance. When Bush was last in Europe, for the NATO summit two months ago, he scored his first big foreign policy coup. And there do seem to be some positive actions coming out of this junket.

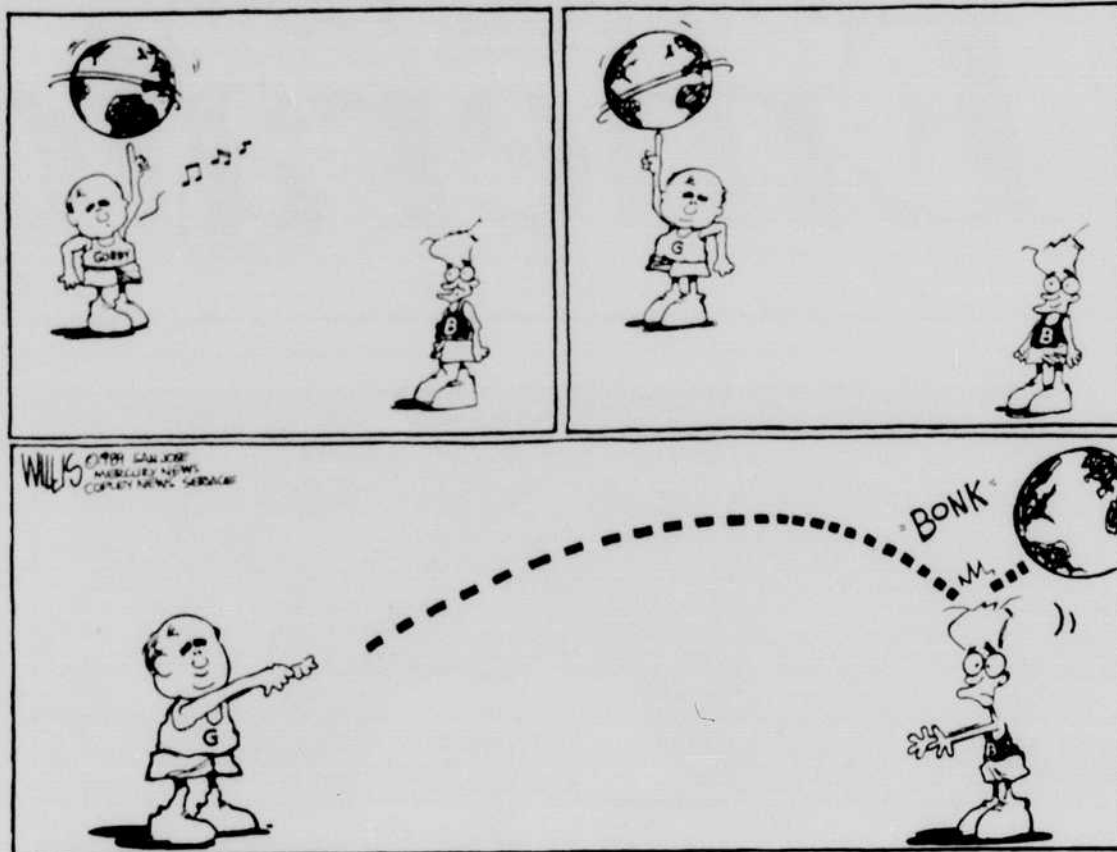
Bush will visit Hungary and be the first president to do so in some time. On his stop in Poland, Bush unveiled a number of U.S.-Polish joint efforts to stimulate and reform the Polish economy. In both nations, he has announced the U.S. support for the new signs of openness and tolerance that is occurring behind the Iron Curtain. This support is more than words; a \$100 million fund is expected to be made available to Poland. This kind of encouragement for freer societies is the stuff we should expect from the United States, and it was encouragement that was sorely lacking for the pro-democracy students in China.

At the same time though, Bush can't seem to help coming off as timid in the diplomacy arena. He has described his mission to the East Bloc as a "delicate" one. "I don't want to overpromise, do too little or do too much," Bush told reporters.

This kind of demeanor might have served Bush well at the many state funerals he attended as a vice president, but it will always leave him in Gorbachev's big shadow as a president. The Russian leader knows that big, bold initiatives do more than grab headlines; they ultimately shape events.

Already, Gorbachev is wrestling for attention during Bush's visit. There has been another round of Soviet conventional arms proposals, which Bush deflected saying it was not time to discuss such matters. It might have been a rude interruption by the Soviets, but Bush leans too heavily on his etiquette book. It's okay to change the agenda. Nobody would have thought Bush impolite or impolitic if he had used his trip in the neighborhood to consider the Soviet offer.

There is still time for Bush to make (and respond to) proposals that will work toward what he says he wants to accomplish: "a free and whole Europe." The President will be overseas for five more days, visiting Paris and Amsterdam for an economic summit. We hope he enjoys the trip, but also hope that he comes home with more than just postcards from the Bastille.



Argentina's new leader tackles economy

Just how bad are things in Argentina?

For the month of June alone, the inflation rate rose 114 percent. The country has a \$60 billion debt, of which no interest has been paid on for a year. Outgoing president Raul Alfonsín has given up and resigned five months early.

These are the tests facing the recently elected president Carlos Saul Menem and his new Peronist government which took over Saturday. Menem, with his handsome movie-star face, has been making the covers of international news magazines, but it will take considerably more work to make the pages of history books as Argentina's savior.

In a move to halt the country's soaring inflation rates, Menem's administration has cut the value of Argentina's currency in half and raised energy prices by 600 percent. Government subsidies to private businesses are being eliminated, and money-losing government-owned companies are being sold to the private sector.

Other drastic economic reforms are due soon as well; Menem said Sunday "We are going to perform major surgery, which has long been overdue, and without anesthe-

sia."

The major changes are directed at stimulating Argentina's free markets. Eliminating subsidies and enlarging the private sector will force businesses to think lean and hungry, and devaluing the austral, the country's currency, is designed to encourage exports by giving products a realistic market value.

Menem does expect hardships ahead, and has asked for two-and-a-half years to accomplish his turnaround. Whether he will get this time from the restless Argentinian populace is questionable; the Peronists' main support comes from the trade unions, but Menem has asked all classes and sectors to share in the sacrifices needed to redirect the country. At the same time, reductions and allowances in the prices of necessities have been allowed to ease the effect of the austerity program on the country's poor.

Although it is far too early to judge the impact Menem's policies will have, it is encouraging that he has come to office and taken charge right away. Stepping in early as he has, Menem needed to display take-charge leadership from the start. He has, and that is more to Argentina's immediate benefit.

Letters

Strabismus

I am writing about allegations of the animal rights people that the research of Barbara Gordon-Lickey involves cruelty to animals, and in 20 years has "achieved nothing of benefit to human health." I have known Dr. Gordon-Lickey for the entire 23 years of her career, the first three of which were spent in my laboratory.

Her work is aimed directly at understanding the cause of one of the most common kinds of human blindness, the kind that follows strabismus, or cross-eyedness. As a result of that work we have learned how to prevent that blindness. To say this work has "achieved nothing of benefit to human health" is typical of the cynicism of organizations like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals). Ethics begins at home.

To understand their behavior we need to know that PETA's goals are nothing less than completely stopping the use of animals in research. They tell us that medical research has ac-

complished nothing; polio would have been eliminated anyhow by public health measures, and that diabetes doesn't require insulin, just stop eating candy. The trouble is that if lies like these are repeated often enough, people come to believe them.

PETA's tactics are clear: work to increase the costs of research, and stop its progress with red tape and lawsuits. Dr. Gordon-Lickey's work has now been paralyzed for two years. Do we, or don't we, want solutions to AIDS, cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease and hundreds of others?

David Hubel
Nobel Prize in medicine, 1981
Harvard Medical School

Research

In response to Marge Kuehn's letter (ODE, June 27), is point 3 of the PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) ad really "as false as they come?"

Prof. Terry Takahashi has obtained his barn owls and was slated to begin research on June 1. Although the Office of Naval Research may fund non-military research, Takahashi's grant leads one to believe his is military research.

An excerpt from page 15 of Navy Grant #N00014-89-J-1582 states: "The immediate goal of this project is an analysis of a biological system that is highly adapted for the detection, localization and capture of moving acoustic targets ... to discover some global strategies by which a biological system is able to track a sound ... without emitting a tell-tale probe signal. These global strategies may be ... implemented ... to improve man-made machines to do the same."

There are strict penalties for hunters who shoot predatory birds in America, yet Takahashi has been allowed to conduct invasive brain research on barn owls (an endangered species in some states) for weapons development.

In a letter from Raptor Reha-

bilitation and Propagation Project, Inc., Walter C. Crawford Jr. states: "I personally thought our owls were going to be used for a breeding colony We feel at this time, we would not send birds to a program such as this again We propose the University return the owls to us for release into the wild in Mis-

souri, and we will refund (their) money."

University and community members who support peace and saving the planet's ecosystem should condemn this research.

Jill Freidberg
Anthropology

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