

FRAT BOYS RULE THE WORLD

BY MARK MARFORD

We are at a crossroads and all you really have to do is step away for just a short period of time, break away from the daily new grind and the everyday wars and the talking-head alarmism and the commonplace unrests and the wagging fingers of hissing foreign leaders and then come back, and you can see it clearly.

It dawns on you rather suddenly, especially if you've just taken a relatively lengthy hiatus/vacation where the pressures of the world all deliciously fell away and then you calmly peel your suntan and open the paper and scan the wires like you always have and suddenly it hits you, smacks your anima like a brick: *There are no peacemakers in the world right now.*

Crusty macho hawks run the planet like never before in our generation. Violent money-addled males with far too much power and far too little perspective are in charge of far too many corporations and lobbies and governments.

You are appalled. You are saddened. You are blackened at the karmic level. You realize you don't have nearly enough wine or painkillers or warm socks for the imminent nuclear winter.

But you are not naïve. You are not stupid. You realize this is essentially the same as it ever was. It's a tragic cliché: Wars and violence and hatred and injustice and cruelty and angry old men ordering their tribes to kill each other in the name of oil and money and land and dogma. Film at 11.

Yet not all is bleak and bitter and Bush, of course. Plenty of good remains, you tell yourself. It's just your average, bitter, ultraconservative, anti-everything leadership right now and while it certainly feels more sinister and savage than usual that's just the way the cultural pendulum swings, you tell yourself hopefully, trying to shrug it off.

But then again, not. Then again, it all seems much worse than it has in your lifetime. You don't want to believe it but you look and look and cringe and wince and it's all renewed nuclear strategy this and bloody Israel conflict that, heightened tensions with Iraq here and brutal civil war there and far too much *hey get your holy hands off me, Father*, just about everywhere.

You can feel it. We're aching to annihilate Iraq. Craving some nuclear explosions in any of seven newly minted enemies. Actively avoiding the Middle East conflict like a plague, terrified our alliances could be imperiled, our oil interests compromised, Bush family friendships endangered.

World War III will not be two egomaniacal superpowers battling for supremacy and bragging rights. It will be scattershot and bewildering, a hundred different battles fought on a hundred different fronts for a thousand ever-shifting reasons, each and every one twisted and distorted by regulation GOP spin doctors who somehow convince the bulk of the populace that it's somehow patriotic to be cavity searched and fingerprinted and beaten with a stick when you buy groceries.

We are so close. We are on the verge of something very dangerous and irreversible. You can hear Dick Cheney breathing hard, just aching to press The Button. The human animal is capable of staggering atrocities and deadly choices and the



ROGER HAYES

thick-necked frat boys in charge right now are the most darkly capable we've suffered in decades.

No one is preaching peace. No one striving for genuine camaraderie or balance or compromise. And too few of us seem willing to believe that 9/11 has mutated into a brutish hollow excuse for the Bush administration to perpetuate a war for oil and to proclaim new enemies and to chip away at the Constitution and your civil liberties in the name of increased federal control and fewer dissenting voices.

And you have two choices, given your rather privileged American status allowing such choices at all: You can either quickly close the paper and turn off the TV and thank goddess that the world is variegated and colorful enough that you can live in relative happiness without having your soul pummeled on a daily basis by people who seemingly have zero connection to any sort of healthy spiritual reality or perspective. You can detach. Spin down. Avoid.

Or you can carefully dive back in, try to make sense of it all, get informed and slog through the macho muck and try to keep your soul from getting overly tainted, and make a valiant attempt to make it through the day without slapping both hands to your head and screaming and jumping in front of a speeding ideology.

All the while realizing that if there's one thing the world needs right now, it's positivism and laughter and good sex and connective energy and an enlightened populace to counteract the forces that would drag us down to cesspools of thin-lipped white-knuckle rage.

Too simplistic? Too naïve? Hardly. Peace is always much braver and more difficult than war. Just try it.

Mark Morford is a SF Gate columnist. His article was posted on the Independent Media Center webcast news.

DOGS OF WAR

BY JOHN CORCORAN

During the days immediately following 9/11, once Shrub was back from his flight to avoid whatever hit squads may have been after him, all we heard was how America — in the form of G.W. Bush — was going to get rid of the terrorists. It seemed like The Bush Posse knew right away that Osama bin Laden's hit squads were the varmints.

The Congress sided with Bush and gave him the green light to summon forth the dogs of war. Special Ops came from the shadows and into the media's spotlight. The CIA was unleashed to do what they do so well — assassinate human beings — if they can only locate targets. The bombers took to the less-than-friendly skies, dropping million dollar ordinance, as if it were confetti, upon war torn Afghanistan. Airstrikes were the order of the night as bomb after bomb rained down.

Somewhere along the way, Osama and his cohorts became less and less important — giving them time and opportunity to slip away unscathed. I refuse to believe that "we" couldn't find Osama and the upper echelon of Al Qaeda — not when "they" tracked down Pablo Escobar via some of their technological tools and had him executed several years ago. Rather, it is my firm belief that Osama & Company were permitted to escape in order for Shrub & his Posse to then justify expanding the so-called War on Terrorism into other countries.

If Bush and his team were serious about terrorists with global capabilities, why are they still supporting Israel's fascist government? Why are they supporting the Saudi monarchy if they are serious about eliminating terrorists with global capabilities? Why are they supporting China's government?

Now, if it appears Shrub & Company have set their sights on Iraq — with yet another villain, Saddam Hussein (will he escape to join up with Osama & Company in San Diego, where they have a corporate resort and spa?) — and the "Axis of Evil." Shrub lost in Afghanistan because there are still terrorists galore.

I am beginning to believe that G.W. Bush wants to rule the world and see his reflection in every pond. Didn't another generation have their wanna be emperors: Adolf Hitler, Joey Stalin, and others? Are we expected to stand idly by and watch while America's leader, by coup, conquers the planet — all under the guise of a war of terrorism? Are Americans really as stupid as we appear to the outside community?

I have been giving a good deal of thought lately to repression and its cousin oppression. It is difficult to estimate how many of us engage in these inane practices due to their pervasive practices in our day-to-day existences. How often does one or more member's repressive and/or oppressive acts disturb a household's tranquillity? Surely, crimes are raw examples of someone repressing and oppressing another. Nevertheless it is the repression and oppression taking place in the Middle East that currently threatens the fragile stability of the world.

I read an article in *The Wall Street Journal* about Shrub's philosophy when it comes to shaping his notion of foreign policy. It seems 'El Presidente' carries grudges, which guide his foreign policy decisions. It appears Shrub harbors ill towards Chairman Arafat because Arafat refused to grant him an audience when he was on a trip to find spiritual redemption in the Christians' Holy Land before his announcement to grab America's highest elected office. Therefore, instead of engaging the Jews and Arabs in discourse, he has chosen to straddle the fence and permit the Jews free rein to slay and oppress their Arab cousins.

I failed to see the sense in Shrub sending his VP to the Middle East to capitalize on the bones his father made during the Persian Gulf War. Yet, at the same time, Shrub kept his mouth shut as Israel's government and soldiers terrorized the Palestinians. When will it dawn on Shrub that the rest of the Arab nations care about the fate of their Palestinian kinfolk? It is difficult for me to understand how stupid Shrub is and yet call himself the President of the United States of America. It is even more difficult for me to grasp why the lackadaisical American public gives Shrub such high approval ratings for his handling of the post-9/11 reaction, which is nothing shy of revenge on its most banal level.

I remember Shrub standing beside some emergency worker at the ruins of what was once the World Trade Center complex just days after the attacks. Shrub seemed happy to be among his peers: bent on revenge. His words that day only underscored his intentions of revenge and hatred. How can this child of privilege have such hatred for his species as well as for the planet in general?

Recently I was speaking with a Native American friend who is a respected elder among the Iroquois people. As I was going on about the plight of the Palestinians she all but leapt through the monitored and recorded telephone call to jump on my perceptions of repression, oppression and alienation.

Quite suddenly I felt like the "paleskin" that I am as she berated me, a first generation American. She let me know in no uncertain terms how Turtle Island was wrenched from the 325 Native American nations by European and Asian invaders. She angrily told me that "my government" had made, signed, and then broken hundreds of treaties — attacking me as if I am to blame or that I could restore the stolen lands to the surviving Native Americans.

After we hung up, I began pondering how our species began on the plains of what is now Ethiopia and how we have migrated across the planet overflowing continents, wreaking havoc wherever we go. The cycle of repression, oppression, slaughter, forced exile, and the so politically correct term of ethnic cleansing must end in order that we, as a species, may finally mature. What better place to put an end to this timeless nonsense than on the sands of Palestine/Israel?

As the infamous Rodney King once remarked ten years ago, "Can't we all just get along?" In order to establish a solid foundation for a lasting peace in Palestine/Israel, the Jews must return the lands they stole to the Palestinians. Instead of expanding their population horizontally, the Jews must build high-rises to house its population. The Palestinians could then farm their plots of land and feed the entire populace of Palestine/Israel. When all is said and done, the Jews are actually uninvited guests in Palestine, therefore, why should Jews hold the lion's share of real estate?

If the Jews refuse to end their illegal and immoral occupation they should be banished from the world of nations — sanctioned in compliance if necessary. When will Shrub and our government grasp that Israel is no friend of America's until it restores to the Arabs the very human rights Jews were deprived of by the fascists in Europe and Russia?

Imagine what a model of tribal and ethnic cooperation Palestine/Israel could be for the rest of humanity. All it will take is respect and the mutual admiration for the fine art of living life to its fullest potential.

John Corcoran has been a prisoner in Virginia State Prison for 20 years. He is a regular correspondent with John Paul Barrett of Astoria (author of *Sea Stories*) and this is his debut in the NCTE, which he receives in prison.