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Passing the buck

U.S. hired gun is looking for money

GI Joe is starting to get expensive and Uncle Sam doesn't want to pay the bill.

President Bush is sending two missions this week to try to raise billions of dollars worldwide toward the U.S.-led economic and military campaign against Iraq.

One of the delegations left Tuesday for Paris, London, Seoul, South Korea, and Tokyo. The Associated Press reported.

Later this week, another delegation will leave for the Persian Gulf capitals. President Bush is looking for up to \$25 billion, AP reported.

Unfortunately, U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia are not toy soldiers. If the current standoff escalates into a shooting war, the loss of life won't be compensated for by any amount of money from those who stand to gain from the U.S. mission.

The United States used to dictate foreign policy for much of the world, acting as its watchdog. Now, it seems, Bush is trying to continue that role, and at the same time, pass the buck.

Asking for money is a cynical way to keep the mission afloat. Certainly it lends credibility to the argument that the U.S. move had a financial purpose: to keep the cost of oil down. A strong business instinct seems to have replaced moral indignation at the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as the motivation for the U.S. deployment.

When U.S. forces were mobilized, Bush scrambled to legitimize the move by securing support from the United Nations and U.S. allies and former enemies alike. It was never any secret, of course, which nation was the driving force behind the mission -- the United States.

Now Bush is into the second phase of his plan to pass the buck: getting those who were cajoled into supporting the mission to help pay for it.

His logic follows along these lines: Japan and many nations in Europe are much more dependent on Middle East oil than the United States. So why should the U.S. foot the bill to defend that supply?

That makes sense. But the logical answer, of course, would be to suggest that those who are dependent on the oil should not only foot the bill but supply the military forces as well.

Bush's logic puts the cart before the horse; or, in this case, the deployment before the financing.

If the U.S. wasn't prepared to pay for maintaining its access to the Middle East oil supply, it shouldn't have sent troops to protect that oil for the rest of the world in the first place.

Asking allies such as Japan -- which already has pledged \$1 billion -- to help finance the Middle East deployment gives the impression that the United States is merely a hired gun.

But this time, it appears that U.S. forces have left home without their American Express.

-- Eric Pfanner
for the Daily Nebraskan



Group lives in shadow, needs purpose

'Twentysomething' generation can't solve all world's problems

I was waiting for my bus in New York's Port Authority terminal perusing the news rack when the July cover story in Time, "twentysomething," caught my eye.

So now I had a dilemma -- do I get the bagel or do I find out what this publication has decided to tag the generation that was born between 1961 and 1972. My generation.

... I ate. About a week later I finally picked up the magazine.

And a week after that I finished the article.

It took me even longer to figure out my reaction.

I was everything the reporters at Time described, and more: lazy, inattentive and directionless.

Maybe they're right.

For those members of the "Lost Generation" who haven't had a chance to pick it up, I highly recommend going over to Love Library and reading it. But, as the article indicates, you may not even have time. You may not even know where the library is if you're between the ages of 18 and 29.

In any case, I'll recap: The twentysomething generation is going nowhere fast.

The twentysomething generation is going somewhere, but too slowly. We need a purpose in life.

A lot of folks reacted angrily to the cover and the article, saying we couldn't make such generalities about the 48 million people who make up this unsung group of youngsters.

That used to be my reaction too.

I have six siblings who are baby boomers -- and the same arguments inevitably arise when we get together. My eldest brother, 40, always chooses his words carefully, indirectly picking a fight by asking what concerns people my age.

He rolls his eyes, and gives me one of those "this ought to be good" looks. And then I start:

"It's not my fault we don't have Vietnam -- I'm sorry, my friends and I can't go and protest a senseless war. I'm sorry we're not right in the middle of another civil rights crisis. I'm sorry the women's movement isn't a big deal."

His retort comes in the form of a half-hour lecture. I learn that there are plenty of wars to be protested -- Nicaragua, maybe Kuwait eventually. And the institutionalized racism is as bad or maybe worse than the strife we saw 25 years ago. The battle is not even close to being over. And I should know better than anyone that women are still the object of prejudice in

what still seems to be a man's world. I should work to make sure I see that day when I'm not treated as a second-class citizen.

He's right, my arguments are weak -- but you can't tell me that the rest of the world is either having its umbilical cord cut or that its arteries are hardening. Our meek little generation can't solve it all.

And while our argument is over --



Lisa Donovan

the problems still remain. How do we as a generation take care of so many monumental problems? Problems such as homelessness, racial strife, the deficit, global warming and environmental deterioration.

A lot of very big causes.

I look at my own friends and the community we have cultivated in the last four years of college. All of us have different majors and different socioeconomic backgrounds, but in a way the consistent inconsistencies run throughout. We are truly the lost generation plummeting through an abyss so deeply dug by our forechippers and those before them, that we are searching for an answer. Some say REVOLUTION. Some say REPARATION.

Activism against things like industrial pollution could mean the difference between blue sky for us and no sky for our grandchildren.

But we're too busy watching television. MTV that is -- or so Time says.

But while we're consuming short doses of information on Cable News Network and USA Today, we're not even aware that sophisticated communication is all relative.

The breakdown in communication is most evident in human relations.

The other day, a friend was talking about how her daughter was the only member of her group of friends who didn't have divorced parents. While I take jabs for saying this, I firmly believe it will be a cold day in hell when I marry. And I know a lot of people who feel that way. Looking at the percentages, it might just be better to avoid the pain altogether.

Our generation has been labeled the group that wants to avoid commitment -- even in a dating relationship.

So we don't want marriage and the art of dating is scarce; so we throw ourselves into our careers instead, right?

The other day a professor asked me, "So Ms. Donovan, you're graduating this year, what do you plan to do with yourself?"

I said I was considering prostitution, but that I might run to Europe and find myself. The analysts at Time call this Wanderlust.

One of my friends, before the Kuwaiti incident, was planning to study at a Kibbutz in Israel. Another is working in London until her employment visa runs out. Yet another is taking classes until he can get into the Peace Corps.

Noble, but not very ambitious, you say.

There's nothing wrong with living simply. The price society places on affluence is nothing short of sickening.

But the line is salient between simplicity and selfishness. Sure, we're choosing a simpler path -- but it's our path. According to some of the folks, we don't work very well with others, and that's our reason for avoiding the real world.

So what if we all think everyone but ourselves is a jerk. We can whine until we have a leadership position and then make life hell for everyone.

But none of us really crave leadership. Because leadership inevitably involves politics. And no one wants to get caught in the tangle of politics. I remember high school teachers talking about how diverse our class was, but no real leader stuck out.

It doesn't help that we grew up with presidents like Richard Nixon or -- as Time says -- role models like Donald Trump.

Pretty difficult to create heroes when the mold is slowly disintegrating with the atmosphere.

Perhaps there are no heroes because we are looking back instead of forward. In this time of recycling materials, we're also recycling the past. The remakes go on and on.

So maybe we'll be known as the recycled generation -- a product of many generations. Clothes that are modified '50s. Music that's modified '60s. (I'll take that over Rap crap any day.) Cars that are sort of 1970s. And the group that rejected the '80s.

As for me, I'm glad I didn't buy the Time magazine -- I'm trying to save my money for some groceries and a trip to Europe.

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editorial

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letter

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