

Political poles

Role playing common as primary nears

During the 1988 presidential campaign, "liberal" was a dirty word. In 1992, it could become a buzzword. David Duke, the former Ku Klux Klan leader and unsuccessful candidate for national and state office in Louisiana, said Wednesday that he is after higher stakes. The imperial wizard wants to move into the White House.

The announcement by Duke — a self-proclaimed Republican — conjures up unlikely images of President Bush calling himself liberal on civil rights and other issues in an effort to distance himself and his party from Louisiana's favorite racist.

Making such a scenario even more likely is the expected announcement of another right-wing challenge to President Bush, by political columnist Pat Buchanan.

Bush is, of course, no liberal. His record on most foreign and domestic issues places him comfortably in the Republican camp. But some hard-core right-wingers obviously want more.

In an ordinary election year, Buchanan and Duke would go the way of Pat Robertson. Even now, neither stands a chance of winning the Republican nomination. But these are not ordinary times, particularly in New Hampshire, which plays a disproportionately large role in picking the next president.

The state with the first primary election in the nation is suffering through a hard winter. In 1988, New Hampshire was still enjoying the tail end of an economic boom that made it one of the most prosperous states. That, combined with the influence of John Sununu, then New Hampshire's governor, propelled Bush to a primary victory and the White House.

Now Sununu is no longer a member of the Bush entourage, and neither is prosperity, especially in New Hampshire.

Those factors, combined with the cantankerousness of Granite State residents — the state motto is "Live Free or Die" — add up to a potential problem for Bush. To maintain the respectability of the Republican Party, he must continue to disavow Duke, even though the Louisianian doesn't plan to be ready in time for New Hampshire. By doing so, however, Bush makes himself vulnerable to frustration voters.

The end result probably will be a continued polarization of the electorate. In tough times, populism and demagoguery gain appeal. Duke sounded such a call in his announcement speech: "The grass roots of America must be allowed to speak. They've got to be able to vote for people who really stand up for our principles and our values."

Democratic contenders, particularly Tom Harkin of Iowa, have voiced similar themes from the left.

Obviously, there's nothing wrong with letting the people speak. That's the purpose of a democracy.

But Duke's announcement is an assault on this process. It makes him sound like a democrat — the political philosophy, not the party — and it clouds the issues. That poses a danger not just to other candidates, but to the system itself. Especially in hard times.

—E.F.P.

What others think

Hostage release gives meaning to holidays

Thanksgiving is a day during which families traditionally gather to gorge themselves with a plethora of provisions. People spend the day after Thanksgiving buying luxurious presents such as GI Joe accessories that go "boom," electronic games that go "ping" and an endless stream of toys that would insult the intelligence of your average cat.

The return of hostages from Lebanon is a stark reminder of what the season is supposedly about. Thomas Sutherland and Terry Waite were released last week by Muslim Shiite kidnapers after spending 10 percent of their lives as hostages. There is increasing hope that the dismal decade of hostage-taking will soon be over.

—The Daily Illini
University of Illinois

Running opinion ad could start propaganda

The staff members of The Daily Texan and Texas Student Publications board are debating whether to run a full-page opinion advertisement. The writer, Bradley Smith, challenges the accepted historical fact of the genocidal policy of Hitler's Germany and argues that the Nazis did not try to systematically extinguish the Jewish race.

If The Texan runs the advertisement, we will offend many people and propagate assertions that recklessly disregard generally accepted fact. This will inevitably raise doubt in the minds of some as to the validity of the historical account of the Holocaust — those who have not been exposed to the testimonies of its survivors or the written documents of its perpetrators. Spreading these anti-Semitic, revisionist ideas seems likely to be the surest way to do what (George) Santayana warned against: to repeat the errors of history.

—The Daily Texan
University of Texas

Editor's note: A letter in Wednesday's Daily Nebraskan about the UNL women's swim team was submitted by the entire Women's Resource Center collective. Only the

signature of Tamika Simmons, volunteer coordinator, appeared with the letter. The Daily Nebraskan regrets the misunderstanding.



PAUL DOMEIER

U.S. forgetting lesson of attack

Saturday is the 50th anniversary of the day the United States woke up. After a century and a half watching European power spread, the United States found out with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor that America, too, was being watched.

The Manifest Destiny of the 19th century and Teddy Roosevelt's turn-of-the-century imperialism gave the United States momentum that couldn't be stopped. The country had too much bulk, too many resources, too long a reach to avoid world affairs.

But Americans tried. After limited involvement in World War I, the nation retreated into isolation.

We pretended that we were all alone, though our Great Depression dragged most of the world economy down, too. When World War II came around, the national conscience demanded we sell the Allies some destroyers cheap and start the Lend-Lease program.

We imposed economic sanctions against Japan. The Japanese knew our sanctions were enough to cripple their expansion plans and maybe Japan itself.

On Dec. 7, 1941, the bombing of Pearl Harbor proved our importance.

No retreat was possible after World War II. Instead we had the hydrogen bomb, the Marshall Plan, NATO and Korea. Regardless of our wishes and intentions, from Pearl Harbor on we knew we had to be the world leader.

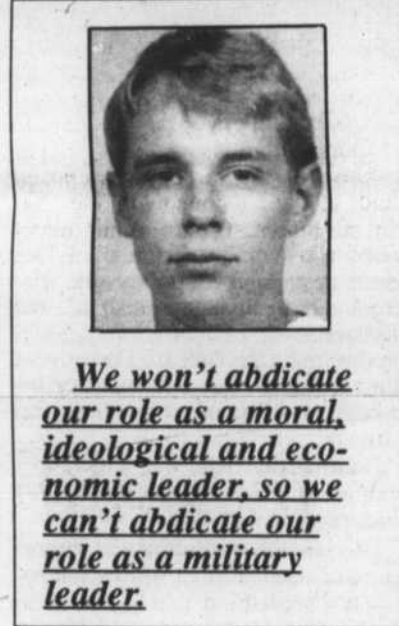
The Soviet Union was No. 2. All of our efforts were designed to stave off communism.

With the recent Soviet collapse, we have won that battle, which could lead to a new problem. We're in danger of ignoring the lesson of Pearl Harbor. We forget that we're still being watched.

With the Soviet threat ended, we say, we can resume our preferred role as first among equals. With Pearl Harbor our enemies said that role was not an option. It's not an option now, either.

With external success and internal problems, we're experiencing a resurgence in America First. According to this motto, all of our resources should be turned inward to solve our problems. Columnist Pat Buchanan, if he runs for president, will get a lot of votes. He makes America First sound wonderful.

But if we insist on America First, it must be America Only. We can't look at other countries and complain about civil rights violations, or unfair trade,



We won't abdicate our role as a moral, ideological and economic leader, so we can't abdicate our role as a military leader.

or external aggression. The United States must become a Switzerland of 250 million people.

Buchanan wouldn't mind that. Most Americans would. Unlike Buchanan, they think the national conscience should be used to determine foreign policy.

When it comes right down to it, most of us want to be the leaders of the free world and influence other nations to stay fairly civilized. That's why the gulf war was so popular.

Americans want it both ways, on our terms. When we want to interfere we will, but don't hold it against us, and don't expect anything from us.

Now domestic programs are popular. That means cuts in military spending.

Certainly cuts are needed. The limited mobilization for the Persian Gulf war was frightfully easy and used none of the billions of dollars spent on nuclear weapons since 1945. Over and over we've heard that the United States can destroy the world countless times with nuclear weapons.

We don't need that much quantity in either conventional or nuclear capabilities.

But we must have the quality. In our rush to cut the defense budget, we're in danger of going too far.

So what if the Soviet Union collapsed from within? The United States was an imposing presence. The Soviets couldn't have won a desperation war, so it wasn't worth their effort.

The Chinese couldn't win a war

with us now. Another 10 years and they might be able to.

Another 10 years, and the borderline-fascist state in Japan might be able to.

And the next Pearl Harbor won't kill 2,400 people, it will kill 240,000,000 people.

Future enemies won't be able to ignore us if we stay strong militarily.

The technology is vital. The famous B-17 bomber from World War II was first flown in July 1935, when the most obvious threat was the American economy. The B-29, the state-of-the-art plane that dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was ordered in February 1940, almost two years before Pearl Harbor.

Even while pretending that no one was watching, we were preparing for future conflicts. Had we waited to develop new technology, World War II would have taken years longer and cost millions more lives.

If we wait before the next war, the United States will lose.

We must keep developing superior weapons systems. Maybe not the B-2, but then some other difficult-to-detect bomber. Maybe not the Strategic Defense Initiative, but then some other defense against nuclear attack.

Flaws in individual systems mean the systems should be fixed or changed, not abandoned.

President Bush will repeat these points tonight on ABC in a Pearl Harbor special. Parts of Bush's interview with David Brinkley were excerpted Sunday on "This Week with David Brinkley."

In the interview, Bush says that from Pearl Harbor we learned not to neglect foreign affairs. We must be active diplomatically. Defensively, he says, be prepared, more vigilant and less protectionist.

As Brinkley points out, Bush probably will be the last president to have served in World War II. That means Bush can't help but remember the lesson of Pearl Harbor. It doesn't mean future leaders have to forget.

We won't abdicate our role as a moral, ideological and economic leader, so we can't abdicate our role as a military leader.

We might not be able to recover if we are ever reminded again, Pearl Harbor-style, that we are being watched.

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