

Beyond Sharon

How does one explain the preoccupation of Washington officials and leading news outlets with the health of Ariel Sharon? Consider this sampling of headlines:

“Sharon Resumes Breathing, Moves Hand, Leg”; “Sharon Starts Breathing But Still Critical”; “PM’s Associates Optimistic; Say He Coughed, Moved.” Or the speculation about who will head the political party he formed, Kadima, with the media providing bios of almost every Israeli political apparatchik. And then there are the tributes, long on words and sentimental accounts of Sharon’s life story, including interviews with his high-school teachers.

Sharon’s death, we are told, could bring an end to the peace process, make it impossible to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, lead to a full-blown Middle East war, including nuclear exchanges between Israel and Iran, a devastating oil crisis, the collapse of the Global Economy, and who knows what else.

Concerns over the critically ill Sharon led Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to cancel a planned trip to Indonesia, the world’s largest Muslim nation, and to Australia, a key U.S. ally in the Pacific. Rice stayed, according to Reuters, “to liaise in Washington with President George W. Bush’s other top foreign policy aides without the problems of time differences.” She is worried that with Sharon not expected to return to politics the Bush administration’s bid to resolve the Middle East conflict might be stalled because no other Israeli official has the clout to push a settlement.

But before the White House announces the creation of a special federal agency to deal with Sharon’s health problems and CNN launches a daily news program entitled “Sharon’s Stroke: A Global Catastro-

phe,” let’s put things in perspective.

Israel is a small state with 6 million citizens and a client of the United States. Yes, it’s an important military power in a strategic part of the world. But so are Indonesia and Australia.

Moreover, there hasn’t been any peace process for a long time, and neither Sharon nor the U.S. has done much to revive it. If anything, Sharon has argued that since there was no chance of getting the Israeli-Palestinian talks restarted, his government would take unilateral steps to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and eventually parts of the West Bank.

The withdrawal from Gaza and the removal of about 9,000 Jewish settlers who lived there—it was Sharon who had helped settle them there in the first place—have been backed by more than 70 percent of Israeli voters based on cost-benefit considerations of Israeli interests. Why waste lives and resources protecting a few Jewish settlers living in the midst of a hostile Palestinian population? There was nothing really courageous about Sharon’s decision to withdraw from Gaza, and one should expect that even under the least qualified political figures, Kadima will emerge as the winner in the coming elections.

In any case, the Bushies have neither the power nor the will to take care of the mess in the Holy Land when they are drowning in the mess in Iraq and are forced to prepare for new confrontations with Iran and Syria, while pressing Egypt and Saudi Arabia to “democratize.”

Even if Sharon had continued to function as prime minister, it’s not clear how

Washington would be able to contain the rising political instability and violence in the Gaza Strip, where the moderate head of the Palestinian Authority is facing serious challenges from Hamas—thanks in part to the Bush administration’s insistence on holding elections in the Palestinian territories.

What the Bush administration is confronting in Israel/Palestine and in Iraq are the constraints on U.S. power. It hopes that by talking about “democracy” and “the peace process” and by contracting its business to Iraq’s militias or to Israel’s Sharon, it can create the impression that it’s “in charge” in Iraq and “doing something” to bring peace.

When Madeleine Albright had the nerve to suggest during a recent meeting with Bush that attacking and occupying Iraq, a fourth-rate military power, was “taking up all the energy” of the administration’s foreign-policy team—while the real threats of nuclear programs in North Korea and policies towards China and Latin America were being neglected—Bush bristled and argued that his administration “can do more than one thing at a time.”

In fact, the Bush administration doesn’t seem to be able to do more than one thing when it comes to Iraq, Israel/Palestine, and the rest of the Middle East, not to mention the rest of the world. Washington needs to recognize that it should bring in others, including the Arab states, Turkey, and Iran—not to mention the European Union, Russia, and China—to help it manage the problems of the Middle East. That’s a more important task than following Sharon’s medical condition. ■

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Americans First

What's best for the citizens we already have?

By Steve Sailer

AMERICANS ARE IDEALISTS. This is both one of our glories and curses because it makes us particularly vulnerable to manipulation by self-interested word-spinners. Nowhere is this more evident than in the immigration debate, where the restrictionists have most of the facts and logic on their side, but the beneficiaries of the current system have succeeded in blocking reform largely by defining themselves as the holders of the ethical high ground.

If you want to win at American politics, you need a moral theory. Fortunately, there is a concept that is both more practical and more attractive to American idealism than either liberal “multiculturalism” or neoconservative “propositionism.” I call it “citizenism” because it affirms that true patriots and idealists are willing to make sacrifices for the overall good of their fellow American citizens rather than for the advantage of either six billion foreigners or of the special interests within our own country. The notion is sensible, its appeal broad. Yet it has seldom been explicitly articulated.

Polls consistently show that the public is outraged by illegal immigration and uneasy about the high rate of legal immigration. For example, in a CBS News poll last October, 75 percent said the government was “not doing enough” to keep out illegal aliens, while 15 percent were satisfied and merely 4 percent thought efforts were too restrictive.

Yet legislative action has been limited to the middle of each decade, when Congress passes immigration “reforms” that ultimately do nothing. The 1986 compromise—an amnesty for current illegal

aliens combined with sanctions on law-breaking employers to prevent future illegal immigration—looked fair on paper, but enforcement quickly evaporated as firms complained to their congressmen. Similarly, the damp squib of 1996 legislation did nothing significant to slow the influx. Now, 2006 may well bring more of the same unless we publicize a counter-philosophy that our laws should be biased toward our own citizenry.

In our supposedly democratic system, the will of the people on immigration has been consistently thwarted because America's elites on both the Left and Right like the current lack of enforcement. A 2002 poll by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations found that 60 percent of Americans consider the present level of entry to be a “critical threat to the vital interests of the United States,” compared with only 14 percent of prominent Americans. Immigration provides corporations with cheap workers, the upper middle class with off-the-books servants, Democratic political machines with votes, and ethnic activists with careers.

How do they keep winning? The articulate and affluent who profit from illegal immigration look down their noses at anyone who wants to reduce it. They don't debate dissenters; they dismiss them. Their most effective ploy has been to insinuate that only shallow people think deeply about immigration. The more profound sort of intellect, the fashionable imply, displays an insouciant heedlessness about the long-term impact of immigration.

Yet the well-educated and well-to-do

aren't expected to subject their own children to the realities of living among the diverse. They search out homes removed by distance or doormen from concentrations of illegal aliens—although not so far that the immigrants can't come and clean their houses tax-free. As our Ascendancy of the Sensitive sees it, that their views are utterly contradicted by how they order their daily lives is proof not of their hypocrisy but of how elevated their thinking is.

This doesn't mean that the white elites view minorities as their equals. Far from it. Instead, they can't conceive of them as competition. Nobody from Chiapas is going to take *my* job. Status competition in the upper reaches of American life still largely consists of whites trying to claw their way to the top over other whites, who, as an example, make up 99 percent of the Fortune 500 CEOs.

That's why the media treats the outsourcing of hundreds of thousands of white-collar jobs to English-speaking, high-IQ Indians as a respectable cause for alarm, but not the insourcing of tens of millions of immigrants to perform blue-collar and servile jobs.

Immigration policy, by its very nature, is about discriminating, about selecting whom we should admit and whom we should keep out. It is one of the fundamental responsibilities of our elected representatives because if they don't decide, inevitably some private interest is going to decide who gets in.

Of the five billion foreigners who live in countries with average per capita GDPs lower than Mexico's, how many would like to move to a First World coun-