

also saw the enemy's corpses, weapons, tanks and other material, left on the battlefield." There was no truth to this whatever. We had witnessed none of those things. And yet, the start of the war, notably the siege of Khorramsharh, had produced frightfully bloody encounters. What's going on here? In a government paper, these Arabian Nights fantasies are no reporter's error. Perhaps, as so often, economics lies behind it.

That rabid fanatic, Ayatollah Khomeini, would like to tear down not only the government of Iraq but also the conservative regimes of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. They, in turn, are well pleased to have Iraq draining off some of his energy. Iraq's tough troops, fighting in defense of their own territory, do seem to be able to chew up Khomeini's ragtag legions of student volunteers.

Two years ago, doubtless at Russian urging, Syria cut the Korshou-Bania pipeline that carried most of Iraq's oil production to the sea. So Saudi Arabia is believed to be sending Iraq up to a billion dollars a month to make up the difference.

Since Syria cut the pipeline, Iraq's oil exports have dropped from over three million barrels a day to under one million, which pass mostly through Turkey. Saudi Arabia wants Syria to open the line, which would do wonders for Iraq's economy. Can it be that like a dog barking at an approaching stranger and then looking around for approval, President Saddam is making these ferocious noises to convince the Saudis that their billions are well spent?

Ironically, Saudi Arabia's heavy support for Iraq's war effort goes in large part to buy arms from the

Soviet Union. (The other major supplier is France.)

Having observed other military episodes of this sort, notably the India-Pakistan war of 1965, in which, like two Japanese Sumo wrestlers, after months of grunting and pushing neither contestant was ever pushed away from the center of the ring, let me venture a prediction.

The "war" will drag on, slowly losing vigor, since it no longer has any point, except the doubtful one of providing an excuse to rally the respective populations behind their revolutionary governments. When the Ayatollah gets tired of the game or departs, it will stop. And though on the map Baghdad looks close to the battle lines, it might as well be Timbuktu. The Iranians will never get close to it. The whole vast area from the city to the front is a flat, treeless

plain, strewn with minefields, a perfect killing ground. Armor, bereft of concealment and without air cover (which the Iranians cannot provide), would be pounded to pieces before advancing a quarter of the way.

And some day, Iraq will be enormously rich. With immense oil reserves and a small (14 million) population, its economic prospects are among the most promising in the Middle East. Though a visitor to Baghdad and its surroundings notices many projects where work has been suspended, many others are going forward, and in general one does not receive the impression of a beleaguered economy. Far from it.

Even so, Iraq's reserves have fallen by two-thirds—from \$30 billion to \$10 billion. So if it's no longer a fighting war, it's no less a real war of economic attrition. □

## C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

### Bethell Intrigues

I am afraid that in his February column, "Sound Minds," Tom Bethell has fallen from his usual standards. He uses the tiresome game, usually played by the more inane members of the Left, of denouncing his foes as "old-fashioned," whereas his friends are "modern," then gives us an exasperating non sequiter. It is true that in GNP accounts, government services are evaluated at input prices, rather than at output prices, because there usually are no output prices for those services. But it is certainly wrong to conclude, as Bethell does, that the value of a dollar spent on government services is therefore less than that dollar's value in the private sector.

Using input prices would tend to overvalue the services of unprofitable firms and undervalue the services of profitable firms. If government services are worth more than they cost, the GNP accounts will underestimate their value. I may be willing to pay the government to set up defenses to keep the Soviets out of Seattle, and so might my neighbor, but each of us has a strong incentive not to pay but let everyone else pay, because we get the benefits regardless of whether we pay for the service of national defense. There is substantial evi-

The American Spectator welcomes correspondence from its readers. Please limit your comments to 200 words, and include full name, address, and telephone number.

dence that property taxes often increase the value of homes, because the taxes are spent on valuable projects such as sewer systems and parks, which are more valuable than their cost. Moreover, I confess to a bit of difficulty with the notion that a dollar invested in the company that makes Pac-man is worth more than a dollar given to help feed a starving family. It hardly requires that one be a bloated bureaucrat shamelessly defending his perquisites to see that Bethell's argument is confused.

There are real difficulties with using GNP as a measure of the value of government services, and I would probably share Bethell's attitude toward the vast majority of those services, but little is gained by the sort of dogmatic rhetoric Bethell uses. At his worst he is better than Hobart Rowen at his best (is that an oxymoron?), but he would do his readers better service by more careful analysis and less dogmatism.

—William Sjostrom  
Department of Economics  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

Tom Bethell's column in the February *American Spectator*, touching on immigration and the illegal immigrant, intrigued me greatly, coming as it did on the heels of news (rumors, rather) coming out of Miami that something strange and wonderful is happening there. As you doubtless know, in addition to the tens of thousands of Cubans who have fled to Florida, in recent years

there has been a hefty influx of refugees from Haiti, all of whom are just about as illegal as they come. These unfortunate people come mostly in overcrowded, open, leaky sailing craft with frayed halliards, torn sails, and cracked rudders; a hundred in a vessel which should carry twenty at the most. That they get here at all is a credit to their seamanship, and they land, usually on the beach, anywhere from Fernandina to Key West. They are promptly rounded up by the authorities and ultimately land with their predecessors in abandoned government buildings near Miami.

These people are all coal black, and most of them are illiterate, and nobody at all speaks English, their language being a combination of seventeenth-century French and tribal expletives with overtones of gullah. Nobody in Miami has done very much about them except to keep them rounded up. Only a few of them have found regular employment, but the amazing thing is that the Haitian colony has created its own economy. None has heard of OSHA or FTC or Minimum Wage, and the IRS will have a tough time since most of their transactions are cash or barter. They sell their handicrafts, have created their own markets, and perform a multitude of services for one another, all entirely outside of the regular, controlled economy. They are as busy as bird dogs, and creating little trouble for anyone. The professional do-gooders are beginning to discover them, and to wring their hands, but

the illegal Haitians are reveling in a luxury they have never known. How long it will take the liberals to get these people disgruntled is unknown, but right now, it seems, they're happy as clams. —William Davies  
Melbourne, Florida

### Standard Gold

Whatever better things Vic Gold may find to do with his life, let us hope that he will always find the time to write book reviews as perceptive and as entertaining as his review of Hamilton Jordan's *Crisis: The Last Year of the Carter Presidency* (TAS, February 1983). —Arlene N. Heath  
San Francisco, California

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**The Washington Post**

Dr. George F. Will begins to show the stress of presiding over history: The ongoing emancipation of women is this country's finest social achievement. [January 9, 1983]

**The Washington Post**

For Dr. George F. Will the stress becomes unbearable:

Whales, which have quite enough problems, have now got caught in the angry waters of United States-Japan relations. But the persons protesting on the whales' behalf during last week's visit by Japan's prime minister have a grand cause.

The campaign to save the whales is a rare and refreshing example of intelligence in the service of something other than self-interest. That is one reason why it has progressed tremendously. [January 23, 1983]

**The San Bernardino Sun**

An aperçu into the amazing heuristic approaches now available to the gals at one of California's leading institutes of higher learning:

A controversial women's studies instructor at California State University-Long Beach who was suspended in June after three students branded her teaching techniques as pro-lesbian will be back in the classroom this fall.

University attorney Jaffe Dickerson said Dr. Betty Brooks will resume teaching the course "Women and Their Bodies," but she also has agreed to attend counseling sessions with a departmental dean concerning her teaching methods.

Brooks, 52, is a part-time instructor in the university's Women's Studies Program, which has been under fire since last spring from various conservative and fundamentalist Christian groups as being "anti-family."

The American Civil Liberties Union earlier this month filed suit against the university on behalf of the Women's Studies program faculty, claiming administrators were planning to dismantle the program because of political pressure.

The students claimed to be offended by Brooks' classroom use of slides depicting her genitals and then asking the students to imagine themselves "doing things" with other women at the beach. Also, they said, she invited a female model to partially disrobe in class to demonstrate gynecological self-examination. [August 21, 1982]

**Ms.**

From the correspondence page of our favorite fruitcake, two epistles, one to rue, one to glory in:

While traveling Nova Scotia, I was browsing in a rather nice gift shop when I noticed, among the expensive items, a tourist gimmick—a wooden mallet with the words "wife tamer" printed on it. In a polite but assertive manner, I carried it to the proprietor, a friendly and helpful

gentleman (who had given us advice on where to stay, eat, and so on). I suggested he return this item to the manufacturer, as it was an overt message suggesting that women be abused. Said he: "Maybe some women need taming." *Click!* He then added: "I thought you were going to buy it." At that point, I felt that discussion would be useless and told him I would not buy anything there, and walked out.

Outside the shop my traveling companion, a single career woman like myself, told me that my behavior was uncalled for and that the tourist item was "only a joke." *Click!* In attempting to explain to her that wife abuse was no joke, I got nowhere as she continued to tell me I was wrong and that carrying the item in the shop did not mean that the owner advocated abuse. I was disappointed in her and angry with myself for not being able to convince even one of the two people involved that this was more than a trivial point. —Ruth M. Stern  
Decatur, Ga.

Ms. readers who are secretaries may be interested in my daily assertiveness practice, which never fails to give me a boost. I type my initials in upper case next to the upper case initials of those of the originator's at the bottom of whatever correspondence it might be. Small, but daily. —Kay Kavanagh  
Oak Park, Il.

[April 1982]

**The Great Books Series**

The definitive description of a creep: Thus, Senator Hatfield wants first to be a political prophet to his own "country," his own people—a lonely role that frequently is frustrating but which also can be immensely rewarding. The senator has earned his stripes on the political battlefield. In so many ways fellow evangelicals, whether they agree with him or not, recognize that all along the lonesome path he has been "our senator."

*Lonely Walk: The Life of Senator Mark Hatfield*  
[Multnomah Press, 1979]

**New York Times**

Mr. J. Anthony Kosove proffers a very wholesome and sound resolution of this nuclear nonsense in the soap box section of the *New York Times*: Precisely because Paul Bracken's July 29 letter, "The Hair Trigger in Nuclear Strategy," was clear and moderate in tone and effectively made its point . . . I found it as depressing a letter as I have ever read on a public issue . . .

We are so imperiled by the existence of any kind of nuclear arms or strategy that the only useful voice is one of alarm. Our task now is to prepare the way (not to describe it) to radically changing the course of history, and we are least served by the kind of discussion contained in Mr. Bracken's letter.

From people as informed and honest as his letter suggests he is, we need an agonized scream.

[August 4, 1982]

**The Daily Californian**

Sociological finding of Dr. Harry Edwards, identified by this illustrious campus paper as "one of the more political members of the Berkeley faculty":

"Reagan is not a racist," said Harry Edwards, the vocal UC Berkeley sociology professor involved in civil rights and political activism. "He just hates people." [October 7, 1982]

**Press Release**

A press release from the incomparable Ringa Press apprises all Americans of a literary event of the first water: The Equal Rights Amendment has been defeated, leaving American feminists anxious and worried about the future of women's rights. What indeed will the defeat of the E.R.A. mean a hundred years from now?

"2084" (\$6.95 trade paperback novel) explores the possible aftermath of the E.R.A.'s failure to be ratified. It takes the reader through 96 action-packed pages of adventure, romance, and the struggle of the human spirit against vicious oppression.

The novel tells of a woman biochemist, Megan Wendeline, Ph.D., who suffers sex discrimination in her research work at UCLA. As the story begins, the staunch feminist retreats to the Big Sur to brood about her sabotaged career and passes through a strange cave by the sea. She is seized in a time warp and finds herself in the year 2084, where men outnumber women ten to one and all females are brutally enslaved. Megan fiercely clashes with an enigmatic leader of this ultimate male chauvinist society, and the story revolves around their intense conflict and eventual romantic involvement. Others opposing the cruel regime are the "Libras," guerilla fighters of both sexes who are committed to women's rights. The novel's chilling ending reveals who was behind the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment, how the viciously sexist future society emerged and how Megan struggles courageously to end its tyranny.

"2084" is available directly from Ringa Press after March 1, 1983. A response card is enclosed for your convenience.

[Ringa Press]  
6833 West Grand Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60635

**The Washington Post**

Writing with uncommon veridity the verdant Colman McCarthy describes a Halloween abounding in verdancy—he remains at large:

Halloween alarmism about predator adults is an annual rite. It's usually been nuts who jam razors into apples or needles into candy bars who are on the minds of the Protectors of Children. I have some expertise in this issue, because for the past 10 years I have gained, in some of the more fright-prone parts of my neighborhood, a reputation as one of those weirdos the kids had better avoid. My offense is that on Halloween

night I open my front door and hand out vegetables.

Last year I gave okra. . . . The year before I was into kale. . . . In other years, I have treated the innocents at my door to carrots, potatoes, onions, broccoli and turnips.

Halloween is about the only time of year I get near to proselytizing about my vegetarianism.

A decade ago, other parents in my neighborhood warned that I was asking for retaliatory trouble by giving kids vegetables like kale and carrots. My windows would be broken, they warned, the porch railing bent and the doorbell ripped out.

None of these Druidic horrors has happened. Some years, I admit, the lawn on the morning after has been strewn with kale leaves and broken carrots. The sight causes me grief, and I wonder if I shouldn't go back to the civilized way of dispensing junk food. But I have never taken offense at the leftovers on the lawn. Instead, I have taken the vegetables inside, rinsed them and cooked them all up for dinner—my annual post-Halloween stew, a high-nutrition and low-cost delight.

[October 30, 1982]

**Mother Jones**

A Mr. Christopher Hitchens lustily extrudes the product of his cartoonist's mind, sadly unassisted by a cartoonist's talents:

The Ayatollah Solzhenitsyn is not the first person to conclude, from bitter and intense experience, that the impulse for freedom and equality is a destructive one, leading only to collectivist nightmares. He proposes a return to theocracy and discipline. Tom Wolfe, from what caliber of experience I do not know, found radicalism laughable long before he read or read [sic] about Solzhenitsyn. He has reaped fame and fortune from his slight but elegant talent for ridicule. And he proposes—what? Rule by Caspar Weinberger and William Buckley and Joseph Coors? The sense of proportion revolts.

[January 1983]

**The Nation**

The incomparable *Nation* discovers the cauldron of violence that is our Ron:

Precisely why the press corps should abase itself in this fashion is puzzling. Perhaps it intuits the chaos and rage beneath the Presidential surface, a glimpse of which was provided a few weeks ago at the meeting with Republican candidates where Reagan told an annoying questioner to shut up. Casting themselves in the role of psychotherapists, the reporters may be seeking to serve the nation by behaving so cooperatively, avoiding the prospect of the real Reagan bursting forth and threatening the future of the globe. There is a function, however, to putting pressure on Presidents at press conferences: it allows the citizenry to take full measure of their elected servants.

[November 27, 1982]