

A WAR OF CHOICE OR OF NECESSITY?

(By Lawrence J. Korb)

Eight months after the Bush administration got us involved in a bloody war in Iraq, we are now told by one of Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's closest advisers that Iraq was a war of choice after all. According to Richard Haass, director of policy planning at the State Department until June 2003 and still the Bush administration's special envoy to Northern Ireland, the administration "did not have to go to war against Iraq, certainly not when we did. There were other options" [op-ed, Nov. 23]. Really?

This is not what the administration told us before the war and continues to tell us to this day. On March 20, as he was sending troops into Iraq because the regime of Saddam Hussein allegedly possessed weapons of mass destruction and had ties to al Qaeda, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld told them, "We are at the point at which the risk of not acting is too great to wait longer. As you prepare, know that this war is necessary . . ." Some three weeks into the war, Powell, who had made the case for war to the United Nations, stated: "We do not seek war. We do not look for war. We don't want wars. But we will not be afraid to fight when these wars are necessary to protect the American people, to protect our interests, to protect friends."

Even after it had become abundantly clear that the arguments the Bush administration advanced for going to war were specious, both Vice President Cheney and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul D. Wolfowitz explicitly rebutted Haass's position. In an Oct. 10 speech to the Heritage Foundation in which he lashed out at those who said we had a choice about invading Iraq, the vice president said: "Some claim we should not have acted because the threat from Saddam Hussein was not imminent. Since when have terrorists and tyrants announced their intentions, policy putting us on notice before they strike? On Nov. 4 Wolfowitz stated: "But one of the things that Sept. 11 changed was that it made it a war of necessity, not a war of choice."

The president himself continues to proclaim how necessary the war was. On Nov. 22 he said at a press conference in London, "Our mission in Iraq is noble and it is necessary."

On Thanksgiving Day the president told the troops in Baghdad: "You are defeating the terrorists here in Iraq so we don't have to face them in our own country."

Even more surprising is Haass's contention that despite its public pronouncements, the Bush administration knows that, because this is a war of choice, Americans will not support it unless it is relatively short and cheap. This is why the administration has changed its policy and accelerated the timetable to hand over increasing political responsibility to Iraqis, even if it means reducing what it is trying to accomplish.

Haass weakens his own case by arguing that the first Persian Gulf War was a real war of necessity and Vietnam was only a war of choice. Even those who argued against the recent invasion of Iraq would not contend that it was less necessary than the first Persian Gulf War. As Secretary of State James Baker noted in 1990, that war was really about oil. And Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as such defense hawks as Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), wanted to give sanctions more time to work before invading Iraq. (If it was so necessary, why did the administration of the elder Bush not invade until it got other nations to fund the war?)

It is equally absurd to argue that the first Gulf War was more necessary than Vietnam.

In the mid-1960s many Americans, including most of us who were in the armed forces, believed that if South Vietnam fell to the Communists all of Southeast Asia would soon follow and the containment policy would be undermined. This is why the American people supported that conflict through the Tet offensive of 1968, even though more than 30,000 Americans had died by then.

Ironically, while Haass is wrong about Vietnam and the first Gulf War, he is right about Iraq. It is a war of choice—a bad choice as it turns out. Unfortunately, he was unwilling to go public with his views, as did Gen. Eric Shinseki, while he could have made a difference. This article should have been written nine months ago when Congress and the American people had a choice. Now our only real choice is to continue to stay and absorb the casualties and the cost.

HONORING THE GUAM COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S CLUBS ON THEIR TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 15, 2003

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Guam Council of Women's Clubs on their 20th anniversary and to acknowledge the Council's present and past members. I commend the numerous contributions of the council to programs and organizations that benefit not only Guam's local population, but also the national and international community.

The Guam Council of Women's Clubs was founded in June 1983 as a response to the devastation in Guam from Super typhoon Pamela. A group of prominent local women answered the call to service, establishing the council in an attempt to unify existing organizations towards the goal of recovery. The organization was to be a congress made up of representatives from every association devoted to promoting women's issues around common backgrounds, cultures, ethnicity and purpose. Through this collaboration, the founders sought to harness the energy and spirit of such organizations to contribute to the betterment of the local community, while providing an opportunity to pursue and express the political, social and economic needs of every woman, as individuals and as a powerful collective force.

The names of the individual organizations which collectively comprise the Council include: the American Association of University Women; the Catholic Daughters of America; the Chinese Ladies Association; the Christian Women's Club; the Filipino Ladies Association of Guam; the Guam Women's Club; the Guam Memorial Hospital Volunteers Association; the International Women's Club; the Women's Division of the Japan Club of Guam; the Korean Women's Association; the Palau Women's Club; and most recently, the two Soroptomist International organizations.

As a founding member of this organization, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the Guam Council of Women's Clubs and its members for their years of hard work and dedication to the people of Guam, as they celebrate their 20th anniversary of service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM GIBBONS

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 15, 2003

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer a personal explanation of the reason for my absence on November 17, 2003 during rollcall Votes #620, 621, 622, and 623. When these votes were called, I was detained in Nevada's Second Congressional District while tending to certain duties in the State of Nevada.

If present, I would have voted: "aye" on rollcall Vote #620, S.J. Res. 22; "aye" on rollcall Vote #621, S.J. Res. 18; "aye" on rollcall Vote #299, H. Con. Res. 299; and "aye" on rollcall Vote #623, A Motion on Hour of Meeting.

THE TRUTHS OF GENEVA

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 15, 2003

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, no situation in the world is more deeply troubling to me and many others than the ongoing conflict involving Israel and the Palestinians. I speak as a strong supporter of Israel and of the moral importance of its continuing to exist as a free, independent, secure nation. Sadly, from the moment Israel's creation was announced—in accord with a U.N. resolution—in 1948, the unremitting hostility of its Arab neighbors plunged that small nation into war. The years since have been marked by a continuation of that hostility in many parts of the Arab world, with consequent violence and with large numbers of people's lives being lost, but also some progress in achieving peace. Most notably, the government of Menachem Begin signed an important peace treaty with Egypt in 1978 which, despite the skepticism of many Israelis and some of Israel's strongest supporters in America, has in fact worked enormously for the benefit of Israel by providing a peaceful situation for much of its borders. This 1978 agreement was one in which Israel gave up a large amount of territory which it had gained in a defensive war, territory which had both important strategic value and from which Israeli settlers were moved as part of the agreement. This has obvious relevance as a precedent for an agreement to end the current conflict.

In addition to this peace agreement with Egypt, Israel has over the years worked out arrangements with its neighbor to the east, the Kingdom of Jordan, which has similarly been beneficial compared to the strife that had previously existed in that area.

The central remaining question is of course whether or not an agreement can be reached between Israel and the Palestinians which will preserve Israel's security while allowing it to maintain its important political and moral role as a free, Jewish, democratic state. I know there are people who argue that it is inappropriate for Israel to be a Jewish state. Such arguments seem to me quite hollow, particularly when they come from those who have no quarrel with the existence of a number of official Islamic states throughout the Middle

East. I strongly oppose theocracy but I do not think there is anything wrong with a particular democratic society including an official religion as long as it does so in a way that protects the rights of those in the society who do not follow that religion. Israel comes far closer to that goal than any of its neighbors, and criticism of Israel on that score therefore seems particularly hypocritical and motivated more by opposition to the existence of the state than to any commitment to principle.

In fact, the importance of Israel remaining both Jewish and democratic is one key reason why a settlement of the conflict with the Palestinians is so important to me and many other strong supporters of Israel. As Prime Minister Sharon himself has noted, it is difficult to see how Israel can remain both democratic and Jewish if it continues to control all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with the large number of Palestinian inhabitants there. Combined with the Palestinians who live within Israel, the number of non-Jewish citizens—indeed of many citizens hostile to the existence of a Jewish state—means that conducting democratic politics and maintaining the state's Jewish character are at odds. For this and other reasons, an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians is greatly to be desired.

It is in this context that I join in welcoming the efforts of those on both the Israeli and Palestinian side who have recently demonstrated what an achievable Israeli-Palestinian peace can look like. Recently, in Geneva, a ceremony was held in which leading Israeli and Palestinian citizens signed onto their version of a comprehensive peace plan which provides both for a Palestinian state, and a State of Israel, with both having the viability necessary to exist as independent nations, and in a way that minimizes the likelihood of ongoing violence between them. This initiative, led by Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabbo, reflects a great deal of serious thought by people who have been deeply involved in trying to reach peace, and demonstrates that a true peace agreement is in fact achievable in ways that meet the needs of those in both Israel and the Palestinian areas who genuinely desire peace. In addition, a recent proposal outlined by Ami Ayalon and Sari Nusseibeh is less detailed but points in a similar direction.

Mr. Speaker, I understand and there is both in Israel and in some Palestinian circles a great deal of unhappiness that these four men and others joining with them have engaged in these activities. I think the criticisms are unwarranted and in fact counterproductive. Denigrating these efforts does not seem to me to be consistent with a professed desire to reach the peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians that is so manifestly in the interests of all parties in the area.

On Friday, December 5, the distinguished newspaper *The Forward*, which has long been an important voice within America's Jewish Community, carried an editorial entitled *The Truths of Geneva*. Noting that "the Geneva initiative does not represent anything like the threat to Israel's safety that its opponents suggest," the editorial goes on to note that "by relying on respected, mainstream public figures from both sides to do the phrasing and map-making—including several of Israel's most trusted ex-generals and intelligence chiefs—they showed that a peace agreement could be reached that would satisfy the essential needs of both sides, if the leaders so chose." As the

editorial went on to note, the Geneva initiative "shows that there is a way out of Israel's deadly mess . . . it shows, in rough terms, what such a formula might look like."

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this editorial from a source that has long been one of Israel's most thoughtful and ardent defenders be printed here, as part of the effort of many of us to express our appreciation to those who have undertaken this difficult effort to demonstrate how peace can be achieved and to pledge our continuing support for their efforts.

[From the *Forward*, Dec. 5, 2003]

THE TRUTHS OF GENEVA

For all its theatrics, its celebrity cast and high-concept special effects, the "launch" this week in Switzerland of the so-called Geneva Understandings did not usher in a new era in Israeli-Palestinian relations. The document's authors and architects did not have the power to do anything of the sort. Private citizens all, they could hug and sing and display a document they had written together, but they could not make peace between the two warring nations. Only governments can do that.

For that same reason, the Geneva initiative does not represent anything like the threat to Israel's safety that its opponents suggest in their more overheated flights of rhetoric. The Geneva authors did not give anything away, because they had nothing to give away. All they did—all they could do—was to bring together groups of citizens from the two embattled communities and discuss ways the sides might settle their differences, if their leaders so chose. By relying on respected, mainstream public figures from both sides to do the phrasing and map making—including several of Israel's most trusted ex-generals and intelligence chiefs—they showed that a peace agreement could be reached that would satisfy the essential needs of both sides, if the leaders so chose. But they did not produce the peace agreement. Only governments can negotiate peace.

All the incendiary rubbish aside, there was nothing fraudulent going on at Geneva. The negotiators were not purporting to speak for the Israeli government any more than Tovah Feldshuh purports to be Golda Meir in her nightly appearances on Broadway. It's all play-acting, meant to draw an audience and, perhaps, make a point.

And yet, this play's message must carry a real sting, judging by the desperation of its opponents to find something, anything, wrong with it. Consider their arguments: First, the document should be ignored because it is meaningless and toothless. Second, it should be fought because it endangers Israel by somehow handing over valuable assets. Third, the Israeli authors let themselves be duped by Palestinian extremists who will never be satisfied even by the sweeping Geneva concessions. Fourth, the authors undercut the Sharon government's negotiating position by raising Palestinian expectations, thus reducing the likelihood that they will somehow accept the far more limited concessions Sharon is contemplating as part of his own plan for extricating Israel from its deadly mess.

That, in the end, is the Geneva initiative's real threat, and its only threat. It shows that there is a way out of Israel's deadly mess. It shows that there is a broad formula that could resolve the century-old dispute on terms both sides could live with. It shows, in rough terms, what such a formula might look like. By forcing itself into the spotlight and exciting public debate, it shows that there is a critical mass on both sides that could, with some effort, accept such a deal.

And it shows who is against reaching such a deal and would rather keep fighting.

Those are the truths of Geneva, and they are real ones. But they need not leave Israel isolated. Israel's friends could and should embrace the initiative—not for its details but for its vision—and encourage Israel's prime minister to do the same. He could, if he wanted, praise the initiative as a contribution to public discussion, details aside. He could point to the violent opposition of Palestinian hard-liners, who denounce the document for its betrayal of their "right of return," as evidence of the uphill climb still ahead. And he could vow to begin that climb, so Israelis can know that their leaders genuinely want to end their long nightmare.

TRIBUTE TO MAYBELL JEANNE JACOBSON

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 15, 2003

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today, I want to pay tribute to a remarkable woman I was privileged to call my friend, Maybell Jeanne Jacobson. Jeanne passed away on October 10, 2003 following a long and valiant struggle with cancer.

Jeanne is survived by her husband, MG Hilding Leonard Jacobson, Jr.; by her son, George Chester, and her children by marriage, Grant and Linda Jacobson. She is also survived by her mother, Maude Haston, her sister Elsie Haston, and two brothers, Bud and Ernest Haston, all of whom remain in Sacramento. She leaves behind many others who love her, among them Mr. Pan Kayochar Todd of Tampa, FL, who became part of her extended family.

Jeanne was born on a small farm in Missouri on July 16, 1928. She spoke often of this rolling Missouri farm, of apple trees in the spring, with blossoms so fragrant, and birds singing in the fields as sun warmed the early morning air. This farm was a small piece of heaven she always carried with her.

With the coming of the Dust Bowl and the Depression, her family sold the farm and traveled to California to work in the migrant farm camps. Living in tents with dirt floors, her parents eventually saved enough money to buy a dairy farm outside Sacramento. Through all of this, she still managed to finish high school and attend college.

From Jeanne's simple beginnings she went on to travel the world, including China, Asia, Russia and Europe. She had an audience with the Pope at the Vatican, explored many corners of our glorious world, bringing with her respect and tolerance for other people's beliefs and customs.

Together with her husband, Major General Jacobson, Jeanne served our country in Washington, DC, Vietnam, Thailand and a final and wonderful tour of duty in Guam. Eventually settling in Lompoc, CA, in a home overlooking the first tee of the Vandenberg Village golf course, she enjoyed watching as well as playing the game of golf—and she played it very well. It was on Guam where Major General Jacobson was serving as the commanding officer at Andersen Air Force Base that I first met Jeanne and became life-long friends.

Jeanne ended this life without fear and with her family and many loved ones at her side.