

## Enron-style Management In a Danger. Complex World

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**A**t least North Korea won't have Bush droning about fake documents for the sale of uranium from Niger. He's already played that role, and it wasn't well received. Besides, North Korea reprocesses spent nuclear-reactor fuel to extract plutonium, and they now politely inform us they have enough to build six nuclear devices. Former Defense Secretary Perry, normally a man of soft words and low blood pressure, says the US will be at war with North Korea before very long.

Iran tests a missile that can travel 800 miles, its eighth test, making it ready for military service. It is almost certain that the Iranians are working to create nuclear weapons, and who can blame them? It is so clear that nuclear weapons make a difference about the way you are treated in the world.

Israel is very concerned over what is happening in Iran. After all, it does not want to lose its nuclear monopoly in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, Israel arrested a man said to be from the Real IRA working with Palestinian terrorists, only it turns out he was someone else altogether who happened to have the same name as one supplied by British security services. Do you think this kind of sloppy work might have helped Blair's idiotic Iraqi claims? Or is this just an elaborate intelligence stunt to take pressure off Tony?

Speaking of Blair, he does appear to be in serious political trouble, fighting members of his own party, former ministers, members of the opposition, and the BBC. I've always regarded the British as among the world's most decent, sound, and sensible people. They're proving it once again, holding Blair accountable for the dirty, lying mess in Iraq.

Things tend to go a little more slowly in the US where Bush remains popular. Lincoln's line about fooling some or all the people has been boiled down by marketing consultants to fooling enough of them long enough to do what you want, knowing most will lose interest in anything that happened more than a week ago.

Afghanistan remains pretty much a chaotic, murderous patchwork of government by warlords, some financed by a huge expansion of drug production. The situation bears an uncanny resemblance to what we find in many „inner-urban" areas of America. Somehow, I doubt we'll see any time soon a Congressional program, like the one pushed on South American countries, to spray poison over growing fields. Meanwhile, the US, wanting to limit the risks to its boys, badgers every country in the Western world to police the chaos they've created there.

The CIA advises that concern over Syria having „weapons of mass destruction" has been overblown. The good ol' boys in Langley spend about \$30 billion dollars a year to come up with cream puffs like this. So Bush's war on the Syrian front, at least for now, appears postponed. Anyway, all the stories on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction probably have passed their best-consumed-by date-stamp and can safely be dumped.

US soldiers are ambushed and killed almost each day in Iraq. The Pentagon and the press serving its interests keep calling the attackers "militants loyal to the former regime," although how they could possibly know that is impossible to say.

Little is said in the American press of the daily misery in which Iraqis must live, a situation that just might motivate many otherwise decent people to attack Americans. The morale of American soldiers is reported to be falling in the face of so much hatred against occupation.

A fair part of America's militarily-active forces — as opposed to that part dealing with worldwide beer shipments, hot showers, appearances by aspiring starlets, and selecting new fabrics for future uniforms — is tied up in Iraq while Bush prays for guidance over which one of a half dozen countries to attack next in his sacred mission to bring the forces of evil to heel finally and forever.

Pressure reached a very high level for the US to intervene in Liberia's bloody mess. Bush has felt the pressure and hopes a token, much-publicized military inspection will dampen it. America's loony-right crowd has busied itself with articles about why the US should not

become involved in Africa, wrapping itself in a cloak of higher ideals, but it is painfully clear what lurks just beneath the rhetoric for many of them.

Can any rational person imagine America's right wing supporting Americans dying for blacks in Africa? Does anyone remember Republican Tom DeLay's racist-tinged comments on President Clinton's trip to Africa? Look at the rest of the cast of characters including Trent Lott.

Situations like Liberia are authentic calls for help. There are no geopolitical considerations of weight, just people suffering under a terrible situation. The US, of course, is not in the business of genuine humanitarian or toss-the-tyrant interventions, despite all the comic-book-hero nonsense about Iraq and Afghanistan and a dozen other smashed-up places. America's establishment uses force where foreigners stand in its way. All the rest of Washington's foreign-policy words serve only to keep „folks back home" putting up tax dollars and sons for the job.

The world is becoming a very complex place. Just as free markets are messier and more complex than state-run ones for individual countries, all the elements of globalization contribute to vastly increasing complexity for the entire world. One feels sometimes almost a twinge of nostalgia for the Cold War's simple verities.

The more complex the world becomes, the more we need transparency and honest regulatory mechanisms in international relations. Greater complexity also increases the need for intelligent, educated, and accountable leadership. Old cliches and pat formulas that may have once served, especially on the part of the world's leading nation, become daily less useful and more dangerous for everyone. The Enron-style management we see in the White House is a formula for eventual catastrophe.

America, are you listening?

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