

Introduction

**SIDEBAR: San Jose Mercury News, Letter to the Editor, March 25, 2003—
“Replacing the U.N.”**

“Charles Krauthammer (Opinion, March 21, 2003) recommends that the United States turn its back on the United Nations. He asserts, ‘The Security Council is nothing more than the victory coalition of 1945. That was six decades ago. Let a new structure be born out of the Iraq coalition. Maybe it will acquire a name, maybe it won’t.’ Well, let me suggest a name. Let’s call it the Bush League of Nations.”

—Jim Swanson, Los Altos

George W. Bush is surprisingly articulate and engaging when he discusses baseball. He loves the game, and he speaks about it with passion, confidence and even some knowledge. This is in sharp contrast to the way he thinks and talks about virtually any other topic—to which the label *bush league* applies perfectly.

SIDEBAR: Definitions

bush league (noun)—a league of teams (especially baseball teams) that are not part of a major league.

bush-league, or ***bush*** (adjective)—amateur, unprofessional, not of the highest sophistication or quality.

bush, also **“*bush league*”**—“an amateur play or behavior.” (From a list of common baseball terms at MLB.com, the official website of Major League Baseball)

Bush League of Nations—The Coalition of the Unwilling, the Bullied and the Bribed in Iraq.

Noah Webster slams George W. Bush and the Bush League of Nations: “Never have an American president and his policies been so aptly named.”¹

Note: The Oxford English Dictionary cites *bush league*’s first use in baseball as 1906, and its first non-baseball use as 1914.

On August 26, 2001—less than three weeks before the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks (9/11)—Bush attended the Little League Baseball World Series, the first sitting president to do so. Earlier in the year he also spent some vacation time at the NCAA Division I College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska.

In retrospect, it would have been better if Bush had spent more time—even a few minutes between innings—trying to protect America from terrorist attacks such as 9/11, and less time:

¹ Just kidding. Noah Webster, the author of America’s first dictionary, died in 1843.

- watching baseball,
- vacationing,²
- pushing massive tax cuts for the Super Rich,
- turning the White House into a parsonage and pulpit exclusively for right-wing Christians,³
- scheming about ways to milk the U.S. government (versus thinking about how to improve its performance), and
- scheming how best to get the United States to invade and occupy Iraq.

Following 9/11 Bush greatly reduced the amount of time he spent at baseball games. Appearances do count.

SIDEBAR: The Real League of Nations

The League of Nations (1920-46), formed in the aftermath of World War I, was intended to promote international security and peace throughout the world. President Woodrow Wilson was the most prominent supporter of the League, and he passionately pushed for the United States to join and support it. However, after many months of intense public debate and lobbying by groups with widely varying views, congressional approval was lacking, and the United States never joined.

This failure of the United States to join the League of Nations was a key reason the League ultimately failed in its central mission of resolving disputes peacefully and avoiding another world war. Within one generation after World War I the world again was inflamed in another world war, this one even more deadly than the first.

Other reasons for the League of Nations's failure included:

- the desire of each major power to go its own unfettered way;
- difficulty in achieving consensus among the member states, especially when the interests of the major powers were involved;
- reluctance of member nations to embrace collective security versus pursuing their own individual interests;
- the lack of any military capability on the part of the League;
- a weakening caused by the GOP Great Depression;
- a disrespect for international law; and
- the fact that the nations defeated in World War I were not consulted about the League's structure and powers.

² From his inauguration to 9/11, Bush spent more than 40% of his time on vacation. Average American workers—Joe and Sally Lunchpail—typically get only two weeks of vacation per year, and frequently they can't take any vacation during the first year of employment. "W" does not stand for "worker" or "work" or "workaholic."

³ Regarding White House activities, constitutional scholars agree that Bush's "presidential pandering in the pulpit and parsonage" is *666 times* greater a threat to America's constitutional protections—including freedom of religion, and separation of church and state—than Monica Lewinsky's "presidential pants pulling and peter pumping."

In short, the League suffered from an incomplete roster of members and lacked the necessary ingredients—mutual trust, shared objectives, political courage and military power—to achieve its purposes.

Upon the creation of the United Nations at the end of World War II, the League of Nations was officially disbanded.

In the run-up to World War II the world community, including the League of Nations, was unable to prevent major imperial powers from invading and occupying weak nations—exactly the vulnerable position of Iraq in 2003—that had done nothing to justify invasion and occupation, other than having something an imperial power wanted. Specifically, Japan under Emperor Hirohito invaded Manchuria in 1931, Italy under Benito Mussolini attacked Ethiopia in 1935, and Germany under Adolph Hitler annexed Austria in 1938 and invaded Poland in 1939. The vast majority of the rest of the world opposed these military actions, but their opinions and “votes” did not count. In each case the big bully did what it wanted—supported by the “patriotic” cheering of its domestic propaganda media—and the rest is history. Unfortunately, history repeats itself. Welcome to Bush World.

The Bush League of Nations was doomed to failure, just as the League of Nations was in the run-up to World War II, and in both cases the United States is the central cause of the failure, but for different reasons.

The Bush League of Nations is the polar opposite of the League of Nations. The League of Nations was a noble international effort to promote peace and prosperity for the entire world. The Bush League of Nations is a charade run by the United States, the world’s one remaining superpower—of, by, and for itself—to remold the world into a structure that’s the dream of its delusional, rightwing, unilateralist, anti-democratic, militaristic *neoconservatives*, sometimes called *neocons*, the term we use in this book. Perhaps you prefer *loonies* or *conservatives* or *wackos*. Yes, “W” stands for many things, including “wacko.”

The League of Nations failed as an organization largely because the United States was *not* a member. The Bush League of Nations is a failure because the United States—led by that international pariah, George W. Bush—*is* the organization.

As was the case with the great powers during the time of the League of Nations, a great power—the United States—is now making its own way, by waging war in Iraq, without any pretense that it is a *just war* necessary for self-defense or the defense of any other nation. In waging this unnecessary war—a war at the top of the neocon agenda many years *before* 9/11—Bush greatly damaged America’s credibility, values and influence, and he undercut America’s moral right to object when other rogue nations misbehave. America lost far more than what the neocons had hoped to gain in their wildest faith-based fantasies.

The Bush League of Nations is a charade created for tens of millions of gullible American voters. In this Machiavellian sense, it was hugely successful. The charade helped the neocons successfully accomplish their initial goal—control of Iraq and its

resources—by illegally using the American military to invade and occupy that nation, and the war hysteria helped Bush win reelection in 2004.

The Republican Party (GOP) that controlled Congress enthusiastically supported the charade every step of the way, and in doing so, it put the GOP stamp of approval on it. Bush's war on Iraq is the GOP's war on Iraq. It is the worst foreign policy disaster in America's history, and Bush and the GOP must be held accountable for it.

After the horrendous 9/11 attacks on America, Bush had the opportunity to lead the world and become one of the most successful American statesmen of all time. Unfortunately, he chose poorly and executed poorly, and became the most hated person on Earth.

September 11 was a severe body blow to all Americans. However, Bush—through ideological, faith-based, no-critical-thinking-allowed policies and decisions—delivered America an even more severe blow, a low blow that will cause America and the world many more deaths and much more damage over the years than bin Laden and all the bin Laden wannabes could have imagined possible. As the most effective recruiter for terrorists and other enemies of America, Bush has made the job of future American presidents incredibly more difficult, and although some of the enormous havoc he wrought can be reversed with years of effort, much of the damage is permanent. The immediate impeachment and removal of Bush and Cheney from office is the best first step America can take to heal itself. Protection of America's Constitution and democracy demands it.

During the Cold War, when America made a mistake—and every nation makes mistakes—America nevertheless looked good in comparison to the dictatorial empire of the Soviet Union. However, as the only remaining superpower, America is now rightly viewed more closely and skeptically, and it should and must hold itself to higher standards. Unfortunately, Bush dropped America's standards into a Bush League sewer, and it will take a long time and much work by others to clean up the toxic and lethal mess.

Invading a country simply because we want to and can is arrogance run amok and is not going to cut it as a viable American strategy in the 21st century. Unfortunately for America, Bush and the GOP became the new standard for arrogance.⁴

Although it belatedly became obvious to most of America what was long ago obvious to the world—namely that America's King George III is wearing no clothes—Bush's arrogance and self-delusion continued unabated. Prior to the invasion of Iraq—which the GOP and the neocons predicted would be a *cakewalk*, a glorious quick victory for which they alone would reap the glory and the booty—Bush and his neocons gleefully heaped disrespect and scorn on the United Nations and NATO.

Bush's message to the United Nations, NATO and the rest of the world was the same words that Dick "Shooter" Cheney spat at a U.S. senator on the floor of the U.S. Senate: "Go fuck yourself." With their testosterone levels thus cranked up, the Bush neocons then proceeded to Iraq and did exactly *that* to themselves. Such bi-

⁴ During the campaign before the 2000 presidential election, the main feature of Bush's almost nonexistent foreign policy was his statement that if America were "humble," other nations would respect us. Well, he said it right then, and his words are still apt today. Bush correctly recognized that to be humble is not to be weak. Unfortunately, he forgot his own words, and he and America lost their way.

zarre self-indulgent group activity by Bush's cocooned *circle of jerks* might have been acceptable if confined to its individual deviant participants, but it wasn't, and they gave their biggest screwing not to themselves, but to America, Iraq and the world.

Since everyone makes mistakes, including rightwing Christians, one might have expected many sincere Christian apologies from Bush regarding his Iraq lies, distortions and blunders. In Christian theology, *repentance* is not simply saying, "I'm sorry," but rather it requires a sincere *turning around* of one's life, which is necessary before one can receive *forgiveness*.

But, no, Bush never repents for anything. Far short of true repentance, he never even says he's sorry, and he never truly admits making a mistake. These are not characteristics of a true Christian.

Repentance and personal responsibility were never part of Bush's education. When Bush did one of his 180-degree turns and went hat in hand back to the international community—with that bewildered "How did I get here?" look on his face, much like that of a hooked, flip-flopping, wiggling walleyed⁵ pike finding itself in the bottom of a fishing boat—Bush's incredible condescending message to the United Nations and NATO was that *they* now had the responsibility to clean up *his* mess. It was a message right out of "Alice in Wonderland."

"Bush League of Nations," as used in this book, refers specifically to that so-called Coalition of the Willing created by George W. Bush in 2003 to invade and occupy Iraq.

During the initial phases of the 2003 Iraq invasion, while the U.S. military was doing a superb job in the rush to Baghdad, Bush's easy-chair, never-served-in-the-military neocons were busy pumping out their chests and making "You're next!" threats against other nations in the region, especially Syria and Iran.

Fortunately, additional sham coalitions by Bush beyond the Iraq disaster appear unlikely for many reasons. First, we are now involved in two unfinished wars that are part of Bush's and the GOP's legacy of "Mission *Not* Accomplished." Rather than properly fighting and winning one *just war* and one *just peace*—the war and peace in Afghanistan—the civilian *bomb-and-go* Bushies mis-seized the moment and jumped into Iraq, their primary target after all. Carpe diem became "crapa diem." This catastrophic blunder made it much more difficult for America and its allies to prosecute and win the war in Afghanistan, let alone to seriously attempt the huge long-term job of helping Afghans build a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan, a nation-building function for which the Bush bombers and their GOP enablers have neither heart nor aptitude.

Second, although it is doubtful Bush and his cloistered neocons learned any useful lessons from their unfortunate encounters with reality in Iraq, America's citizenry and perhaps even America's Big Media will be less likely to cheerlead such folly the next time around.

Third, America has run out of troops for additional battlegrounds, and Bush and the GOP do not have the backbone to implement a military draft. This effectively precludes Bush from also invading and occupying Iran—a nation three times the size

⁵ Yes, "W" also means "wiggling walleyed."

of Iraq, with four times the population, and much more united against any U.S. intervention—although it does not rule out other Bush folly such as a catastrophic air campaign against Iran, which is something he might do in a heartbeat—without a plan and without concern about the consequences—if he thought it would somehow miraculously give himself even a one percent chance of having a positive “legacy” when he finally slithers out of the White House.

Curiously, when Bush threatens this or that nation, he seems to enjoy saying that all military options remain on the table. However, his folly in Iraq has handcuffed America’s military and reduced America’s military options should another war break out, whether just or not.

In the meantime, the so-called “war on terrorism”—a misleading fear-mongering slogan used to justify anything and everything—gives Bush several political advantages, including the stifling of dissent and the creation of a false façade of a “tough president.”

More important, the “war on terrorism” provides distraction and cover for the Bush administration as it relentlessly pushes its *domestic* political agenda of doing everything possible for the Super Rich, while it panders to the extreme Christian right.

On behalf of the neo-GOP, Bush proudly carries two banners:

- Banner No. 1: “Of the Rich, By the Rich, and For the Rich”
- Banner No. 2: “The Prince of War—Pandering Warmonger for the Religious Right”

It is precisely these two banners that make Bush and the GOP unfit to lead a global war on terrorism. These two banners represent their War on America and their War on the World.⁶

Regarding international coalitions, for example, why would any nation or people trust Bush enough to support his Bush League of Nations in a major league way?

Why would poor oppressed people living under dictators rally behind a man who represents the Super Rich and whose extended family is Exhibit A for crony capitalism?

Why would oppressed Muslims anywhere in the world trust this rightwing Christian *crusader* who knows *you* are going to Hell unless you convert to his particular flavor of rightwing political Christianity, and who enjoys sleepovers at his Texas ranch with Super Rich princes of Saudi Arabia, the most vile and dangerous dictatorship in the Middle East?

Why would workers and the unemployed in Iraq expect anything good from this *two-Americas* man who joyfully stiffs America’s working class and America’s poor so that he can give unprecedented tax breaks and advantages, even during war, to the Super Rich, large corporations and his donating cronies?

A natural divider, Bush has done more than any other president to divide the world and to divide America. His two banners gained him millions of votes at home and hundreds of millions of dollars in campaign contributions, but they cost America billions of “votes” internationally. Thanks to Bush, America lost the moral high ground and lost its way.

⁶ “W” also stands for both “War on America” and “War on the World.”

Bush's two banners have also cost lower- and middle-income Americans dearly. It is class warfare in Bush's America, and the Super Rich and the powerful have won.

While giving massive tax cuts to the Super Rich and greatly expanding corporate welfare, Bush and the GOP—the Cons—have:

- presided over the largest job destruction program since the GOP Great Depression;
- cut and underfunded dozens of programs that benefit low- and middle-income working Americans;
- turned the largest budget surplus in history into the largest deficit ever;
- put Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid at risk;
- greatly increased spending and bloated the size of the federal government to record levels;
- increased pork-barrel spending and earmarks for crony contributors to record levels;
- pursued a two-Americas strategy while greatly widening the chasm between the Super Rich and everyone else;
- exploded the national debt to catastrophically dangerous levels; and
- sent America on the road to bankruptcy and financial Armageddon.

No president and no party have done more to damage generations of America's unborn. Under the GOP's reckless mismanagement, the United States lives not from paycheck to paycheck, but from grandchild's paycheck to grandchild's paycheck.

Bush eschews critical thinking, fact-based analysis, inclusion of people with varying perspectives, and respectful debate. Living in an ideological cocoon, he is a weak puppet for Dick Cheney and a small circle of neocons and faith-based advisors who have taken *groupthink* and ideology to new lows.

Regarding his plan to wage war on Iraq, Bush talked to God for direction rather than to his earthly father, the former American president who actually successfully created and led a legitimate coalition against Iraq in 1991. Bush's weak leadership and childlike naiveté resulted in the sham Bush League of Nations invading Iraq in 2003—and the subsequent loss of that unjust war.

Bush leads an unprecedented assault on religious freedom and separation of church and state in America. His elitist, warmongering, exclusionary approach to religion must get warm nods of approval from bin Laden, the Taliban and Iran's dictatorial ayatollahs, except, of course, that they all disagree with his chosen brand of rightwing religion. Militant rightwing religions are like different brands of cigarettes—they all kill, and it matters little what particular brand you select as your cancer vehicle.

America's Religious Right abandoned the most essential principles of Christianity, especially: (1) Christ's compassion for the poor and the outcast, and (2) Christ's role as Prince of Peace. It turned Christianity upside down, to America's and the world's great loss. Mainstream Christians—including millions of evangelicals—are ashamed, as are people of other faiths in America and throughout the world.

The world yearns for America to come to its senses. But America's Prince of War, George W. Bush, like a Don Quixote at the head of a Bush League of Nations in nowhere land—except for the nuclear weapons, of course—blindly trudges on.

SIDEBAR: Bush League Sportsmanship—Texas Style

On Sunday, June 27, 2004, the University of Texas Longhorns college baseball team lost 3-2 to Cal State Fullerton, which gave the Titans a two-game sweep in the championship series of the 2004 NCAA Division I College World Series. The long-faced Longhorns—ranked number one for part of the season and heavily favored to win the championship series—were obviously disappointed. Texas coach Augie Garrido took the high road in talking about the game and his pride in the team. “I’m proud of them for the efforts they’ve made to do what’s right, in all environments. . . . I’m proud of them, and I think the university should be proud of them as well. They’ve represented the university, the State of Texas, the athletic department and themselves like champions.”

Well, not exactly.

Notwithstanding two requests from NCAA officials, the Longhorns and their coach refused to be part of the post-game trophy presentation, thus becoming the first team in 17 years to refuse to accept its second-place trophy and congratulate the winners. They also refused to give the media access to their locker room after the game, a violation of NCAA rules. These post-game antics created more controversy than the loss, and many fans questioned the team’s sportsmanship.

There’s a nasty rumor—which I’m now starting—as to why the Longhorns couldn’t attend the awards ceremony: They had just received a congratulatory call from the White House regarding their win in the upcoming recount, with Bush explaining how votes—well, runs—scored by black Titans wouldn’t be counted. Bush said the Republican judges controlling the U.S. Supreme Court were standing by, just in case.

Fortunately, the many liberal and progressive stars on the Longhorn team told Bush to take a hike. “We play by the rules—you should try that sometime.”

The story has a happy ending. One year later, in 2005, the Longhorns once again won the NCAA title, fair and square, by the rules, between the lines. Definitely not Bush League.

Of course, this book is not about a baseball game or the sport of baseball. Rather it is about war and peace, life and death, the decline of America’s democracy, and the decline of America on the world stage.

We end this introduction with a call to action to America’s youth. One day your children and grandchildren may ask you what you did during this time of national crisis to help end the war on Iraq and restore America’s democracy and Constitution. We hope you’ll be able to say you tried your best.

Make no mistake about it. The world and America are under attack by the worst presidency in America’s history, and every action by America’s citizenry, however large or small, truly counts. The occupation of Iraq must end immediately, and Bush and Cheney must be impeached and removed from office.