

John Nollson

THE NEW BRINKSMANSHIP

Because the Aggressors have failed to take our warnings to heart, and have not yet withdrawn, it is time to contemplate some strong medicine. The level of pain will surely be raised if we take one or more of the following steps.

The first is a total embargo on the export of blue jeans. This will cause serious unrest among the youth in the Aggressor's society, and has the added advantage of being easy to administer and politically manageable. The embargo will fall most heavily on Levi Strauss and Company, but the federal government can surely purchase the blue jean surplus to maintain the market price. Unlike the grain embargo, a blue jean embargo will have broad bipartisan support. So far as is known, there are no blue jean manufacturing facilities in the early primary states.

Though the State Department hesitates to take the step, Bette Midler's concert tour should be canceled, even if it takes presidential intervention to do it. Why should we offer outstanding entertainment to the Aggressors when they refuse to adhere to even the most rudimentary standards?

According to reliable intelligence reports, both Secretary Brezhnev and the Ayatollah Khomeini have expressed a desire to be Peppers. Too bad for them. Construction of the Dr. Pepper bottling plants in Kiev and Qom should be halted forthwith. Neither of these men should ever be allowed to say, "I drink Dr. Pepper and I'm proud." Rather, they should be made to feel shame.

On the other hand, we should move smartly along with our plans for the export of Ford Pintos, with Firestone 500 tires mounted thereon. Not only will this introduce a new note of risk into the Aggressor's calculations, it will remind them of a more fundamental point about world affairs: Even if they behave themselves, there's only so much the capitalist system can do for them. Indeed, we can drive home this point by allowing Aeroflot to proceed with its plans to purchase three dozen McDonald-Douglas DC-10s. No one else wants to buy them anyway.

Some thought should be given to appointing the Front Four of the Pittsburgh Steelers as the new SALT negotiating team. Though riddled with injuries, the Steelers' defensive line has shown itself

remarkably adept at containing the run to the outside and mounting a credible pass rush against the opposition quarterback. If, for some reason, the opposition tries to run up the middle, we can also send in the linebacking corps to plug the holes. It's time to find out whether the Aggressor's offensive line can pick up a blitz, or whether it will merely foul up the blocking assignments.

Experts are divided as to whether the Southern Cal marching band should be allowed to proceed with its planned show in Red Square. Analysts differ as to whether the loud brass will rouse the Politburo from its slumbers (bad) or bore it to death (good). In order that this be a well-informed decision, the government has begun to poll all those who attended the Rose Bowl game this past New Year's Day.

Many Kremlinologists hold that the recent Soviet gambits have been a miscalculation. They stress the importance of insuring that the Politburo does not miscalculate in the future. Accordingly, the current embargo on the export of calculators should be lifted, but not totally. In particular, the Mattel Company should be allowed to market its new computerized game, Electronic Geopolitics. Of course, this game is a bit more taxing than Othello, but the Aggressors should be encouraged to play it as much as possible. There is no use warning them about future miscalculations if you don't teach them how to avoid them.



It should also be made plain to the Aggressors that they are going to have to indemnify the Worldwide Trading Card Company of Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Worldwide had printed, under contract with the former government of Afghanistan, almost 400,000 Hafizullah Amin trading cards, only to be told that Kabul would not take delivery. Quite properly, the company refuses to print the new Babrak Karmal trading cards—nor will it wrap them with bubble gum—until someone makes good on the first contract. If we are ever to normalize relations with the new authorities, they will first have to understand that a deal is a deal.

With all the hoopla surrounding the 1980 Olympics, we have lost sight of some other equally important decisions that must soon be made. While the Olympic Committee was closeted in Colorado Springs, the National Football League owners were gathering in an undisclosed location, debating whether Moscow should be given one of the new franchises in the next expansion. This is real leverage. As is our current monopoly on the manufacture of microwave ovens. It is within our power to cut in half the amount of time the average Russian housewife spends in the kitchen preparing a roast. In fact, we have had this option for several years, and only the determined action of the Women's Caucus has prevented us from instituting a policy which, admittedly, would work greater hardship on Russian women than on Russian men. But surely, as the status-quo power, it is not *our* responsibility to export revolution.

We need to be reminded that the carrot is worthless without the stick. Either the Aggressors will cut it out, or they will be in for it when they feel the sting of a covert operation. One is already in the works. Six men will be infiltrated, one each, into the six largest cities in the Soviet Union. At precisely the same moment, each will bite into a Doritos corn chip, allowing the vibrations therefrom to wreak awesome devastation.

Withal, we have to keep up with the times. When I was a boy, patriotic Americans wanted to "unleash" Chiang Kai-shek. Old Chiang is gone now, but thank heaven we still have the Schlitz Malt Liquor Bull. □

Theo Lippman, Jr.

CAMPAIGN FUNDAMENTS

Pieced together from piles of evidence.

If, like most people, you would rather read someone's medical records than his love letters or income tax returns, the February 18 issue of *Medical World News* is for you. One of its articles lists the workings and non-workings of the vital organs of John Anderson, Howard Baker, George Bush, John Connally, Philip Crane, Robert Dole, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, and Edward Kennedy. (Jerry Brown refused to "volunteer his medical records.") You can learn all the details upon reading there, but my concern here is limited to the candidates' hemorrhoids, for this is a *political* essay, not a personality profile or "character" study.

Having hemorrhoids is political? No, but admitting to having them is. Until 1976 no presidential candidate had ever done so. It had always been a badge of shame and invited ridicule. Badge is not exactly the right metaphor, but you know what I mean. Presidents since George Washington have all denied having them, not only to their contemporaries, but to posterity. You may search the literature of the presidency and find no mention of them. In fact, Rudolph Marx, M.D., has done this with great thoroughness in *The Health of Presidents*. And I mean *thoroughness*. Franklin D. Roosevelt suffered from polio, of course, but also, according to Dr. Marx, from near-sightedness, tonsillitis, appendicitis, lumbago, high blood pressure, flu, small strokes, abscessed teeth, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, and bowel and bladder problems that cannot be properly described in a family magazine of this kind.

Dr. Marx's FDR did not suffer from hemorrhoids. I know, however, that FDR did. I saw a medical record to that effect at the FDR library a couple of years ago.

This makes me wonder about the earlier presidents, particularly the very early ones who often rode horseback. The saddle contributes greatly to the awful condition. A proctologist I know (only socially, of course) once told me that in today's America cowboys are the group most afflicted by hemorrhoids. He also told me

that half or more of all adult American men are sufferers. I think it is not undue cynicism to surmise that George Washington may have told a lie about his health. Or maybe Jefferson. The odds are that one of the two had what Jimmy Carter said he had in 1976, which is hemorrhoids. In fact, the odds are that about half of all the presidents who preceded Carter also did. Considering the odds, and recalling that even Rudolph Marx, M.D., was misled about FDR, one has to wonder. (Dr. John B. Moses, of Scarsdale, New York, has a book on this subject coming out later this year—*Presidential Courage*. He says he also found out about FDR and suspects from indirect evidence that Andrew Jackson had the dark secret.)

Carter broke precedent in 1976 by confessing publicly to having the ailment—and he was elected. This year he's still suffering, according to Dr. William Lukash in *Medical World News*. Philip Crane has "an external hemorrhoidal tag at about 7 o'clock." John Connally has a "small external hemorrhoid." Everybody else is okay. Or their doctors *say* they're okay. Remember, the odds suggest that of these nine men, four or five should be troubled, not just three. Two or three denials are probably lies.

You are doing the arithmetic in your head. Three of nine admit it. Four or five should. Why do I detect "two or three" false denials? Because, if the truth be known, Jimmy Carter *does not have hemorrhoids*. He only claims he does. It is all part of the brilliant political strategy spelled out in a still-secret postscript to Hamilton Jordan's famous 40-page memorandum of 1974, the audacious plan by which Jimmy Carter rose from unpopular Southern governor to President of the United States. I am one of the few journalists to have seen it, and luckily the only one not sworn to secrecy.

Jordan reasoned that by claiming to have hemorrhoids, Carter would accomplish two important things as a candidate. First, he would appeal to those Americans, like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who wanted a

"less imperial" presidency. Wearing blue jeans, carrying your own suitcase, cleaning out a pond—on a scale of one to ten these are twos and threes when it comes to unimperialness. Admitting to having hemorrhoids is a ten. That is true even though *having* them is almost by definition imperial, the Emperor Napoleon I being the most famous sufferer in the history of the world.

Second, by "admitting" to his condition, Carter would appeal to those millions who suffer similarly. Misery loves company, and like favors like, as they say in Georgia. People stick with their own kind. Many Southerners who voted Republican in 1968 and 1972 voted for Carter in 1976, as did many people suffering from the condition under discussion here.

This targeted group was called the "Preparation H vote" in Carter planning sessions, by the way, and is not to be confused with the so-called "asshole vote," which was an even more important element in the Carter coalition but is not related to what I am talking about.

Some political scientists and ministers may object to a candidate's deceiving the voters about his health, but in this case I believe the end justifies the means, so to speak. I am not referring to Carter's getting elected, but to a more important effect of his campaign: his making a large group of Americans feel, for the first time in history, that they are just as good as anybody else, despite their affliction. Elections and the campaigns that precede them are not just a part of a political process. They are part of our cultural well-being. It is more important that candidates reveal their human qualities to be like yours and mine than that they have "policies" or "programs" or "ideas." If a candidate has to lie to make us feel better about a quality or condition that most of us have and are concerned about, what's wrong with that?

Jimmy Carter's saying he has hemorrhoids is the best, most helpful lie an American president has told the American people since Dwight Eisenhower said he was a Presbyterian, a lie which Carter's closely resembles, and he should be praised for it. □

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