

END TRAILS EDITION
January, 2003



CARTER WINS NOBEL

The world has not changed much since 1978. The middle east has daily bloodshed with suicide bombers and Israel's counterattacks against Arafat's silent armies.

The world has more civil wars, civil unrest and bloody conflicts than ever before; more than 3,000 conflicts. But that does not stop the Nobel Prize being awarded. It just took a retro-look back to 1978 to find a suitable winner for the peace prize.

Jimmy Carter was the darkhorse Southern Democrat victor in 1976 who lost his own party by ripping the establishment. As most

president's with a poor domestic record, it was foreign policy that lead to his bright moments. It is a standard call in the presidential playbook.

He still claims that if he had a second term, he could have solved the rest of the middle east conflict, but the Iranian hostage crisis lead to Reagan assuming power and the rest of the world fearing that

Ron would drop the Bomb on them. But the world was changing, as the terrorists were getting global power; and the middle east combatants have gone through generations at war. They know nothing else. Peace in the region is hard to find as water in the desert as the Nobel committee found.



CLINTON CRIES FOUL

Former President Clinton cried foul over the announcement that former President Jimmy Carter won the Nobel Peace Prize for 2002.

"They must have got the southern accents mixed up," he said in London. "That award is mine, because I solved the middle eastern crisis and I need that million dollar pocket money cause it is expensive to live in exile, I mean, abroad on those large speaking fees."

He was upset when the committee chairman inferred that the award was given to Carter as a message to stop President Bush II from attacking Iraq.

"That Carter was 24 years ago; and he did not win a second term, like me. Hell, I coulda won a third term except for them damn constitutional thingy that let Al Gore screw things up," he fumed.

"Maybe Al can loan me a few of them lawyers and I can demand a Nobel recount, because I had to be closer than that peanut farmer. I can peace together more campaign fundraisers than you can roast pigs at the county fair."

He did not let the moment pass without level distain for the current occu-



pant of the White House.

"Little George has had one war. I had none, and I would have been cool leading the troops over the place. I can wear drab green and sun glasses. So he should not have two wars in his first term. It is just not fair. I was a popular president, the most popular president, the only won who made the Democratic party and saved America from the those Republican reptiles."

Clinton did not rule out marching a protest rally outside the Stockholm ceremony. "I call get on the blower collect to Jesse and we can have a good, down-home protest rally that would put the fear of my Gawd into those academic pencilneck voters..

"Or I could nuke them all by sending Hillary over to collect the prize money," he smiled.

RANDOM ELECTRONS

The biggest game in Washington circles is the Jeffords switch the aisle guess. Chafee of Rhode Island switching sides, or Miller of Georgia? The balance of the Senate is at stake. Deals need to get done. But the pols don't realize that 65% of the electorate is unhappy with both Dems and Reps because they are finally figuring out that there is little difference between the two major parties (this pub's mantra for decades).

I get the Blues before and after....

The Smithereens

After a recent lecture (fee unknown) in London, ex-Pres Clinton and friends dive into a McDonalds. Clinton scarfs down a value meal, and 20 McNugs. But who picks up the \$26 tab? His bodyguard.

I know what Grant's seige of Vicksburg was like since every street in Palatine has been blown up, closed, detoured or blocked for the entire summer.

Homeownership is at record levels but homeowner equity is at an all-time low. Credit card debt is at an all-time high. The root of the economy is based upon compounding consumer debt. The only thing that keeps the engine chugging now is the Treasury presses printing Franklins 24/7.

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BUSH GROANS

Every time a Democrat opens his mouth, Bush groans. Every statement is trying to kick-start a soundbite for the fall elections. The Democrats have no issues to run on, and they fear they are going to lose the power they have in the Congressional stalemate. The Dems have the bitter poison taste of minority leadership still stuck in the craw, and they don't want to have another spoonful of humble pie.

Bush is too popular after 9/11 to attack him personally during the current War on Terrorism. The talking heads on cable predicted wrongly that America would tire of a prolonged war against bin Laden after a year.

The Dems could have ran on the prosperity and huge stock market gains of their commanding Clinton second term, except like the Clinton legacy, it is a mirage. The stock market bubble was fueled by inflated numbers, outright fraud, and con-man sales pitches that the politicians have used for decades to get re-elected time and time again.

The parties cannot find any solice in the government surplus, because that was another myth. The GAO cannot audit the federal government books for the last five years because the agency books are so out of balance no one knows how much money was collected and where it was spent.

The groans from the White House are the pained expression of the cable news beast trying to



sustain any story. Is bin Laden dead? Will the sniper ever be caught? Where is my 401(k)? Why is Texas oilmen not in jail? Why can't daddy find a job?

But like throwing uncooked pasta at the kitchen cabinet, the commentators can't pin the blame on Bush yet. The water is boiling over with potential scandal, but Bush is still not a wet noodle in the eyes of the general public. And this ticks off the Democratic and news pollsters. Slow news days are driving the networks crazy; crazy enough to seek merger partners.

Bush must also groan with the snipes by former President Clinton. Clinton pushed himself into the NY primary limelight as the de facto leader of the state party. His finger prints were all over the Torricelli bailout. The new Democratic plan is that if you are losing, quit so you can't be labelled as being a loser. It makes no sense, which is why nothing is getting done in D.C.

THE REAL FEAR FACTORS

Massive ground beef recalls. Massive chicken recalls. West Nile Virus deaths. The Beltway Sniper. The War on Terrorism. Major corporate lay-off quarterly lay-off notices. Bankruptcy.

The year 2002 has cumulated into a single four letter word: fear. It is not quite to the stage of War of Worlds paranoia, but there is an uneasy tension in the air.

Recall, the 1999 Y2K preparation frenzy was supposed to have prepared us for the worst. A bombshell mentality swept the land, people took extra cash out from the bank. People bought generators thinking that the computerized power grid would fail at midnight. But nothing happened.

Then we as a collective forgot about the les-

sons learned from being self reliant. Until September 11th. After the vulnerability subsided, we collectively felt that we would not be over-run by rowdy airline passengers poised to be new hijack threats.

But every week we hear on the news new things that some study claims causing cancer. Then a week later, something that prevents disease. Then a week later, the exact opposite from a different study funded by a different special interest group.

Fear has become a national funk: fear of mistakes at the same time fear of success; fear of rejection with a fear of showing one's true intentions; fear of being unemployed and poor against the backdrop of the fear of not keeping up with the Jones by maxxng out

one's credit cards. Just like the stock market wide volatility, the emotional pulse of the nation's fear meter is also swinging wildly to extremes.

Short memory recall and no sense of history compound the anxiety level. At the beginning of WWII, California was paranoid that it would be invaded and leveled like Pearl Harbor. But that never came to pass.

But with old conflicts, it was a battle of territory like field position in a football game. But with a terrorist group without a geographic nation to attack, and cells of mayhem within our own borders, this century adds another layer of fear.

But as a country, we cannot live behind rolls of police evidence scene tape. Nor can we become professional victims. We can remember the bad things in life, but those bad things cannot consume the rest of our lives. One can only live if one moves on to meet the next challenge.

America would be paralyzed if it sank into a quicksand pit of self-paranoia, overzealous reactions to unfiltered news reports, or self-loathing about terrorists. The real fear factor is that the average American loses sight of the American Dream: no job security, no family security, no savings security, no retirement security, no health security.

But history tells us that the fear of the unknown was the greatest obstacle that the colonists overcame to build the foundation of the USA. No fear.

Storm Front Breuing for 2003

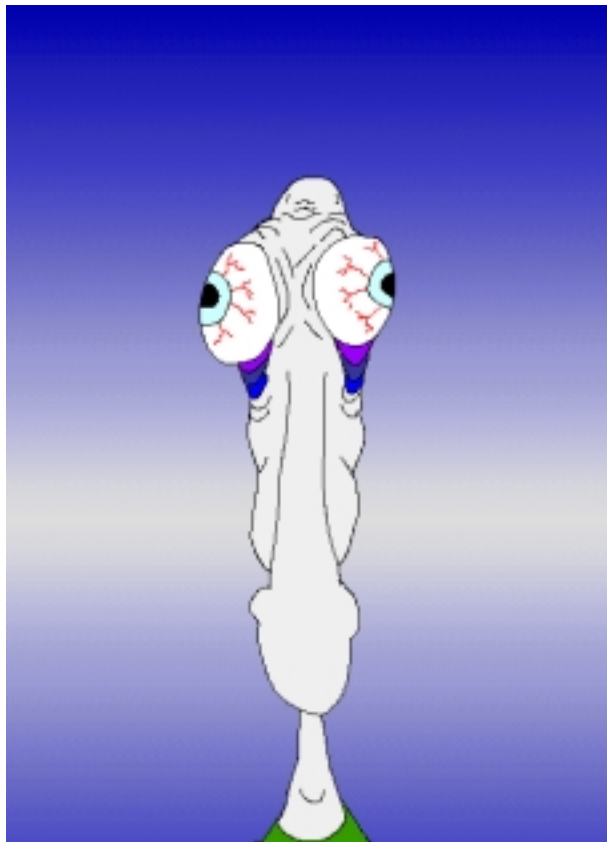
2002 will set a record in the number of bankruptcies filed in America. Public companies alone have gone into bankruptcy owing a horrific \$368 billion. Personal bankruptcies, fueled by the fear that Congress would make it more difficult for consumers to avoid their debts in full, also have reached record levels.

If one adds the loss in stock market capitalization since the bubble burst, the market being the real savings vehicle for most individuals since bank interest rates were held to nominal low levels, the loss in American wealth on paper exceeds several trillion dollars.

If one adds in the key factor that the American economy has been propped up by constant consumer spending, while corporate income taxes dried up as more and more companies contract, the modern service economy will have a hard time rebounding in 2003. This is the Hawaiian problem on a national scale.

Hawaii has been in a quadmire since the Japanese bubble burst a decade ago. Tourism, a service economy, dominates Hawaii. The recovery has been slow to non-existent.

The domino effect has yet to be fully felt. With corporations writing off \$368 billion, meaning someone is not getting paid for products or services provided, they in turn will go bankrupt, and the vicious cycle will spin like the vortex of a tornado throughout 2003.



THE TIME ZONES OF THE WEST DRIFT REALITIES

SAN DIEGO (Dec. 2002)-- WELCOME TO BOOMTOWN is the cover headline on a local tourist magazine. San Diego is under a huge central city construction bonanza. It is stark contrast to the balmy seventy degree climate that creates a laid back laid back attitude.

The bare, curved steel arches of the new Padre baseball stadium can be seen from the old financial district. The Gaslamp District had fallen into a cross between 1970s Wabash and Van Buren Street backflush commerce to the attempted revitalization with a Lincoln Park twist. Storefront pawn shop, tattoo parlor, 100 year old saloon, then a trendy nouveau bistro, then an empty storefront, an abandoned office building, another new bistro, an outdoor cafe, a seedy fried chicken joint, then a small parking lot. The city banners the buildings with the new mantra: LIVE, WORK PLAY in the central city. One rarely sees people living, working or playing in this central SoCal metropolis.. The Hispanic construction work-

ers were the only trades seen on the street; while the white males congregated at the trolley stops as long term homeless. A 900 bed mission had just closed because of infiltration of blood sucking bed bugs. The homeless were on the streets, in the midst of the boom, unemployed. Or unemployable.

The 1928 San Diego Trust and Savings Bank has been converted into a business hotel. The rooms are carved up offices; complete with the vintage old oak doors with mail slots in tact. The restaurant overflows into the old cash cage vault. The city is recycling the old financial district, one building at a time. But the seedy, 1950s grease smeared windows remain in vacant buildings; next door at the abandoned First City Bank Building reveals in copper and black block letters: HUD DOCUMENT DISPOSAL UNIT and DEPT OF FISH AND GAME.

California is two time zones away from the Midwest. It may have been a different country. The Spanish ceded control of the territory in the

1800s; today, it would appear that the Spanish descendants were reclaiming the land one brick at a time.

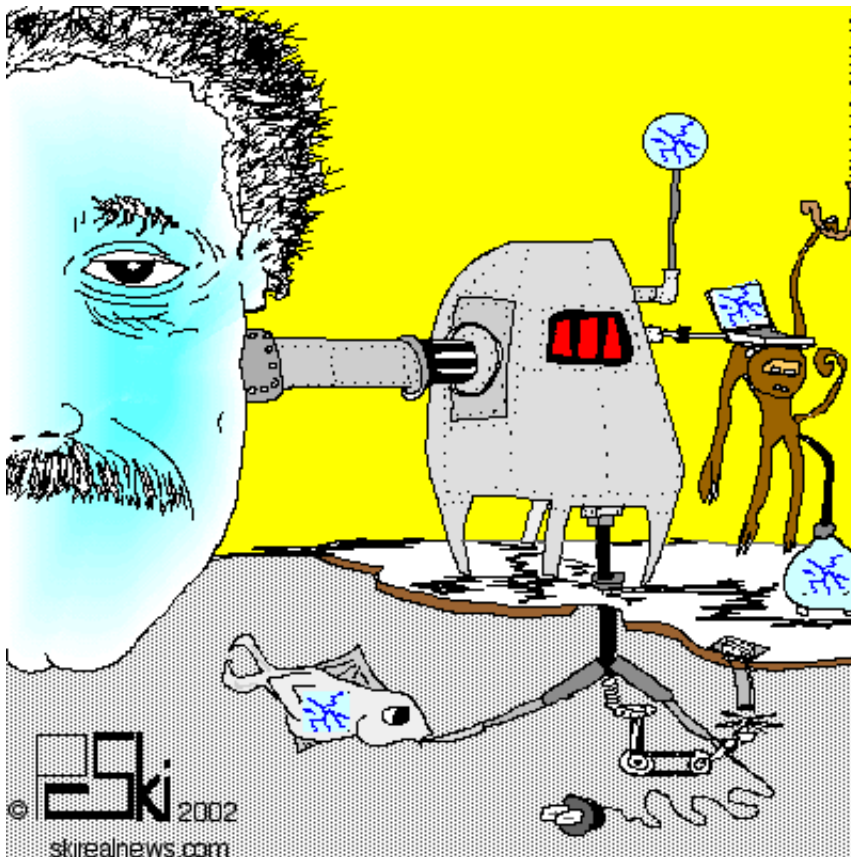
The odd hours are hard to adjust to as a business traveler. By the time the day starts here, half a business day is over. The real hours here for business are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., old banker's hours. Walking a few blocks to the new financial glass towers, the corner vendors close at 1 p.m., the deli at 2 p.m. Why? There are no office workers or visitors to compel longer days.

And the new frontier restaurants have only one or two patrons at most in the afternoon. Displaced tourists sipping margaritas wondering out loud what happened to all the other people. It has an odd Twilight Zone feel.

No one can afford to live downtown. The housing market in Coronado is booming at million dollar per bungalow lot. The armed forces jam the Bridge at 5 p.m. leaving their bases because they cannot afford to live on the island.

The finger prints on the massive redevelopment is local government. The new economy boom of the 1990s gave local governments the disposal dollars to push new public works projects or push private redevelopment in a politician's grand vision. But the bubble burst just as the government's urban plan was being excavated. California is now \$30 billion in debt at the state level; local units are in bad shape, too.

The class economic gap is stark in this part of the land. The boat set seems comfortable in their pier communities. The transient laborers from Tijuana find plenty of work. The former middle class are several service jobs: desk clerk, cashier at 7-11. The cabs are controlled by middle eastern immigrants in vehicles that have had no service or upkeep (one can see the metal floorpan in the back seat). It is only a ten minute stop and go trip to the small airport; no time to converse about what is happening, if anything, in this city.



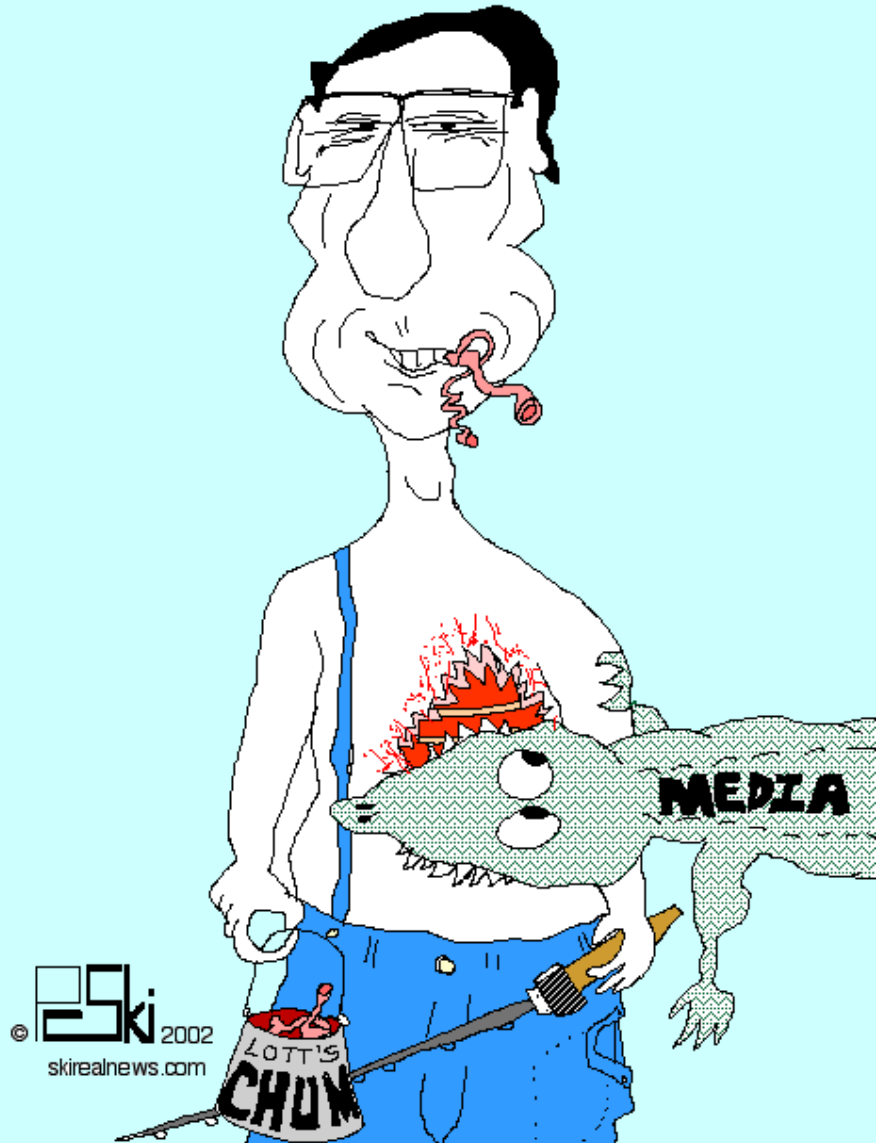
Lott's of Politics on Christmas Break

Trent Lott continued to chew on his own entrails each time he spoke into a television camera. It was a slow, painful, gut twisting national display of political suicide during a mad, blood lusting media feeding frenzy. Blood oozed from his smile each time he tried to explain away his remarks about segregationist candidate Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat presidential bid of 1948. In a media world of political correctness, times have not changed in regard to riding a person out of town on a rail in righteous indignation.

It gave the Republicans the opportunity to get rid of a passive Senate leader who had a pattern of coddling the loud, obstructive Democratic minority. Strong willed Republicans wanted to have more a public speaker, an activist and an agenda setter rather than the return to an apologist-reactionary. President Bush signed the death warrant when he decided not to interject himself in the party's leadership vote. Lott was effectively hung out on a meat hook for the passing carnivores to grind off huge hunks of his political capital until he was too weak to maintain his power.

The Republicans rewarded a big fundraiser, Bill Frist, with the plum leadership post. Frist could have banded the Lott position, for in fact he is a surgeon by trade, but he left the patient to rot in the waiting room. Frist now commands the attention of the nation, and the lobbyists and fundraisers. Frist has his own skeletons in the closet, including a family hospital corporation that has had alleged billing problems with the government. But he has put such nationalized, institutional medical care for the nation one of his top priorities. Critics immediately seized on the concept as blanket self-conflict of interest.

But that is the whole point. Everything in Congress is a self absorbed conflict of interest. Democratic Senator Byrd was once a Klansman; but



he gets a pass as the elder statesman of the Senate?

The grand body of the Republic, which exempts its members from all the major laws it passes, including discrimination laws and Social Security contributions? It is a spending machine, and personal wealth generator for the Congressmen elected to do the public's business.

So knocking down a leader moves everyone up the food ladder, from the bottom feeders to the pigs. And the fallen leader, if he is still allowed at the cash trough, will feed last instead of first.

In the post midterm election, where the national Democrats were chewed like chew on a hot summer day, Lott's miscues gave them ample opportunity to twist the knife of revenge. The parties are still at election war because those in power reap the immediate rewards. With Congress out of session, the national news organization mothball the Iraqi War sets to grist mill the Lott story to dust. When it came to the End, and Lott was about to quit, the Dems had a shutter; they did not want Lott to resign his post. Why? Because Lott was the evil head on the carcass the Donkeys wanted to continue to feed on.



LEADER FRIST'S FIRST SENATE OPERATION

With a billy club in one hand, and a syringe of nuclear green toxic waste in the other, Bill Frist takes over the slim Republican Senate during halftime of George W.'s term.

The billy club is to weld the hammer of the agenda. In Bush terms, the War on Terror was getting lost in the despair of a fading domestic economy. But North Korea has decided that its near starvation, pre WWII economy, and little hope for a quick turnaround, has put it to central casting to be the new evil, Cold War Soviet Union to Uncle Sam's Cold War freedom fighters.

The toxic shot is to kill off the detractors. While others may owe him for his help in their re-elections; he is now in charge of getting the perks dispersed among his friends. If you are not on his team, you can be killed off or discarded to the lowest levels of Republicanism. The only thing is that kid gloves must be used since the Dems now have a playbook of corraling members to cross the aisle.

With possible three war fronts looming, and an economy that may be on life support before 2004, Dr. Frist has a complicated operation on his hands.

Recycled Oxygen Observations

Dateline: Dec, 2002: 29,000 feet over Albuquerque-- In the dirt brown plateaus and plains, Americans have scratched their mark, the Grid. America is checkerboarded by the Grid, from city blocks to the farm fields, to the township roads that intersect every mile in a square.

Man's first symbol scorched upon the earth was the circular outline of a fire. The circle of life had no sides; everyone in the group were of equal importance.

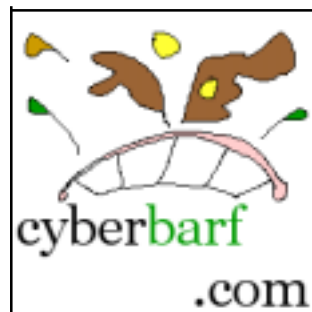
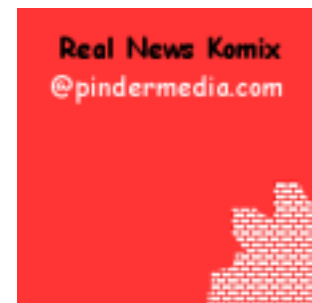
The next greatest symbol built by man was the triangle. Pyramids on all continents reflected a shift in societal organization. There was a small portion at the top (leaders) that are supported by a larger base (servants). The unequal sides represented the various degrees of class distinctions.

But America adopted the Grid pattern

of a Square. "Being Square" meant conformity. The equal sides represent equal protection and equal opportunity under the law.

If the World is still ruled by symbols and representations, that would explain why America is isolated and attacked by others. Most of the second and third world nations are based in dictatorship, triangle class structures. They do not respect the square philosophy of American ideals. It is like the puzzle of putting a square peg in a triangle hole.

Looking down on the Grid, people have marked those ideals by carving the uniformity on the dirt brown forboding landscape.



BUSH WARS II: THE EVIL AXIS

When George's dad ran the First Gulf War, what was not fully explained that the struggle to liberate Kuwait was merely a global collection suit gone horribly bizarre. Kuwait claimed that Iraq owed it millions. Iraq responded by saying it owed nothing since it placed a historical claim on that country. So Iraq invaded its neighbor instead of paying its debt.

In order to keep the Arab world from rebelling against Americans interfering with desert regional politics, it was agreed that the mission was to get Saddam out of Kuwait. U.S. forces would stop at the border. Saddam would not be overthrown. It was the half deal with the devil; the type of cursing General Patton did when his military refused his request to keep marching on to Moscow to finish WWII.

Ten years later, a Bush is back in the commander in chief saddle. This time is different. America has been directly attacked. He has proclaimed the attackers as being the Axis of Evil, which includes North Korea and Iraq.

But the political correctness that has marinated American politics is holding back direct, swift action. The globalization of America's defense is actually weakening it. It is not proper to strike an enemy alone. It has to be a consensus deci-



Villain of the Hour: Saddam Hussein

sion like a corporate marketing meeting with the budget committee.

In the good old days, a country did not need an excuse to invade a neighbor. European history is dotted with purely jealous economic or cultural conflicts.

The underpinning of the next Gulf War is still economic. But with differ-

ent players. Russia is Iraq's largest creditor nation. It wants a prime seat if Saddam is toppled. Russia's foundation is its oil reserves, which is in direct competition if Iraqi oil embargo is fully lifted, Moscow suffers.

The anti-war speakers try to paint the US attack on Iraq as a means of seizing its oil reserves. But it is more

Russia's control over international oil that will rule the day at the final UN Security Council meeting.

Democrats hole card in domestic politics is their reliance on "globalization" to solve major issues. Big governments agreeing to form a bigger government solution to the problem is their answer.

However, President Bush has been waltzing the globalization dance with the UN inspectors. He has been lining up allies. He has effectively defused the Democrats using him as a villain.

Bush has a perfect villain: Saddam. Bush has the approval numbers to push forward his foreign policy.

The major difference with Gulf War Two is that instead of one 24 hour news station, there are four times as many ex-consultant talking heads. In time, for ratings, they will get around to undermining Bush's message.

For example, a weakening domestic economy could derail a long term Middle Eastern struggle. At year's end, 56 percent of Americans' believe that the economy is getting worse. More than half of the respondents have felt the effect of a growing recession. Bush has tried to counterbalance any Dem stings by calling for legislation to extend unemployment benefits. However, there are middle class middle managers who have been out of work for more than a year. When highly skilled, highly paid workers, can't find work; the national deficit will explode creating more problems than a ground war in the desert.

Villains of the Cable Hours: Paid Talking Heads

