

June 27, 2003

THE DAY OF OUR LIVES

It is the 27th day of June, the 178th day of 2003. There are 187 days left in the year. How many times have we heard days described in relation to other days this way. It was a day on which the Mormon Leader Joseph Smith was killed, the date when Boston and New York were linked by telegraph wires, the day the stock market crashed back in 1893, the day John Dean revealed the existence of Nixon's enemies list, and a day of Gay Liberation, the anniversary of the Stonewall riots of 1969. Captain Kangaroo was born today. So was Ross Perot.

And, on this day during the big war, when Allied Forces were forced to retreat from a place called Mersa Matruh in a country I don't recall, an infant who became your news dissector screamed his way into life in a hospital that no longer exists in northern Manhattan.

HE MADE ME DO IT

AND so on this special day, we learn that an almighty higher entity, praised be his name, has been revealed as the force that made him do it. Yes, folks, according to a report in Israel's Ha'aretz newspaper, we now know the truth about a recent meeting of Palestinian leaders. The Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas reported on a statement made by Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States. He is said to have finally explained his rationale for the War on Terror and the war in Iraq. He is said to have said: "God told me to strike at al Qaida and I struck

them, and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did, and now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East. If you help me I will act, and if not, the elections will come and I will have to focus on them."

And so it has been written.

TEARS, CHEERS, AND JEERS

THIS morning also revealed fresh killings of US and British soldiers in Iraq and in Gaza. Yesterday was remarkable too. It was the anniversary of Stonewall, a gay rights victory, and the day that the dean of Dixie, Strom Thurmond, defender of the Confederacy in the antebellum period, died at age 100. (I lived to film Ol' Strom as he saluted Nelson Mandela during a Congressional Awards ceremony!) Mandela is in the news today snubbing Bush on his first visit to Africa. He says he won't meet him because of the war.

On this special day, fresh details are trickling out about US practices abroad – not from the American press which should be all over this story – but, once again, from English journalists. The Independent reports from Afghanistan:

"STESS AND DURESS"

"AL-QAIDA and Taliban prisoners inside this secret CIA interrogation center – in a cluster of metal shipping containers protected by a triple layer of concertina wire – are subjected to a variety of practices. They are kept standing or kneeling for hours, in black hoods or spray-painted

goggles. They are bound in awkward, painful positions. They are deprived of sleep with a 24-hour bombardment of lights. They are sometimes beaten on capture, and painkillers are withheld.

“The interrogators call these ‘stress and duress’ techniques, which one former US intelligence officer has dubbed ‘torture-lite.’ Sometimes there is nothing ‘lite’ about the end results. The US military has announced that a criminal investigation has begun into the case of two prisoners who died after beatings at Bagram. More covertly, other terrorist suspects have been ‘rendered’ into the hands of various foreign intelligence services known to have less fastidious records on the use of torture.

“What is perhaps most disturbing about all this is that the US officials who have leaked the information have not done so out of a need to expose something that they see as shameful. On the contrary, they have made it clear that they wanted the world to know what is going on because they feel it is justified.”

PILGER’S VIEW

ALSO from that brutalized and often brutal land, we have the testimony of John Pilger, who writes in the New Statesman and the Mirror:

“America’s two “great victories” since 11 September 2001 are unraveling. In Afghanistan, the regime of Hamid Karzai has virtually no authority and no money, and would collapse without American guns. Al-Qaeda has not been defeated, and the Taliban are re-emerging.

“Regardless of showcase improvements, the situation of women and children remains desperate. The token woman in Karzai’s cabinet, the courageous physician Sima Samar, has been forced out of government and is now in constant fear of her life, with an armed guard outside her office door

and another at her gate. Murder, rape and child abuse are committed with impunity by the private armies of America’s ‘friends,’ the warlords whom Washington has bribed with millions of dollars, cash in hand, to give the pretence of stability.

“In Iraq, scene of the second ‘great victory,’ there are two open secrets. The first is that the terrorists, now besieging the American occupation force represent an armed resistance that is almost certainly supported by the majority of Iraqis who, contrary to pre-war propaganda, opposed their enforced ‘liberation’ (see Jonathan Steele’s investigation, 19 March 2003. www.guardian.co.uk)

“The second secret is that there is emerging evidence of the true scale of the Anglo-American killing, pointing to the bloodbath Bush and Blair have always denied.”

MAILER’S VIEW

LITERARY great, Norman Mailer, blames the war on a macho culture and a society that worships sports. Writing in the New York Review of Books, he calls the war, “The most dramatic and serious extrapolation of sports. The concept of victory could be seen by some as the noblest species of profit in union with patriotism. So Bush knew that a big victory in an easy war would work for the good White American male. If we could not find our machismo anywhere else we could certainly count on the interface between combat and technology. Let me then advance the offensive suggestion that this is one of the covert but real reasons we went looking for war. We knew we were likely to be good at it.”

BUSH'S SILENCE

BIZARRE? No more than Bush's behavior on September 11. A new video recently obtained by the Memory Hole shows Bush being approached by Andrew Card, presumably with information about the attack, and then the president sitting passively for five minutes as the children in the classroom perform. Says Bob Harris on This Modern World, "When the footage ends, he's still not moving, although we can hear the press being told the photo-op is over. Eyewitness accounts indicate that he continued to do virtually nothing for at least another several minutes."

(Thanks to Undernews)

THE MEMORY HOLE <http://www.thememory-hole.org/911/bush-911.htm>

THIS MODERN WORLD http://www.thismodernworld.com/weblog/mtarchives/week_2003_06_22.html#000833

WMD HUNT GOES ON

LAST night I watched CNN's David Ensor interview former UN inspector David Kay who supported US policy in the lead up to the war. He has now been hired in Iraq after a stint at the Uranium Institute, a nuclear industry front. Kay was being interviewed over a "secure" communication at CIA headquarters. Strange that CNN relies on the CIA to speak to people working with the agency. Kay of course was saying that the search for weapons is making progress. Lou Dobbs asked Ensor if Kay wasn't known for being skeptical about the presence of such weapons – he wasn't. Ensor said he didn't know.

Another weapons inspector, Norwegian scientist Jørn Siljeholm, who spent 100 days in Iraq from December 2002 to March 2003, told a Nor-

wegian paper he believes there are chemical or biological weapons in Iraq, but not enough to represent a threat. He also criticizes US Secretary of State Powell for overstating the nuclear threat in Iran.

NO VALIDATION

THE New York Times is dismissing the recent backyard discovery of some documents by an Iraqi scientist – another big smoking gun presented by the cable news nets. The newspaper of record opines:

"The new discovery falls far short of validating the Bush administration's pre-invasion claims that Iraq had reconstituted its nuclear weapons program."

Scarier than that is a report from Australia by AFP:

"Australian servicemen and women who served in the recent Iraq war were reporting symptoms of uranium sickness, a United States nuclear weapons expert said today. Dr Douglas Rokke is a former US Army nuclear health physicist and was the Pentagon's expert on health effects of depleted uranium ammunition.

Speaking in Melbourne today, Dr Rokke said Iraqi women and children and American and Iraqi military personnel had reported respiratory illnesses and rashes after the recent conflict, and he had also been told of Australian servicemen and women with similar symptoms."

And even scarier than that, is a story less covered than that – a report from South Africa's Mail and Guardian: "Ten million children under the age of 5 die every year around the globe and 6,000,000 of those deaths are easily prevented."

<http://www.mg.co.za/Content/13.asp?a=13&o=23096>

CASE CLOSED?

IN Israel, the government has closed its case on US student activist Rachel Corrie, who was killed when she was run over by an Israeli bulldozer while protesting with Palestinians against home demolitions. Here's the verdict as reported by the Israeli government press service:

"An investigation conducted by the IDF Southern Command determined that the driver of the bulldozer had not seen Corrie and had not intentionally run over her. A probe conducted by the Military Police revealed similar findings."

Rachel has become a hero of solidarity for Palestinians. Edward Said, the Palestinian scholar writes of an encounter with her parents: "In early May, I was in Seattle lecturing for a few days. While there, I had dinner one night with Rachel Corrie's parents and sister, who were still reeling from the shock of their daughter's murder on March 16 in Gaza by an Israeli bulldozer. Mr. Corrie told me that he had himself driven bulldozers, although the one that killed his daughter deliberately because she was trying valiantly to protect a Palestinian home in Rafah from demolition was a 60 ton behemoth especially designed by Caterpillar for house demolitions, a far bigger machine than anything he had ever seen or driven." He reports that the parents were told by Washington State Senators, Patty Murray and Mary Cantwell, they would investigate. Writes Said: "After both women returned to Washington, the Corries

never heard from them again, and the promised investigation simply didn't materialize."

MEDIA MISHIGAS

IN a bid to restore his credibility, FCC chairman Michael Powell went on CNN this morning to boast about new rules that allow consumers to block unwanted telemarketers. Meanwhile, up in Vermont his enforcement unit of the FCC shut down a community radio station in Brattleboro. They report:

"On the cusp on celebrating five years of Community radio, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) unexpectedly entered the studios of Radio Free Brattleboro on Tuesday, June 24th and ordered the station to cease and desist from broadcasting. The staff of Radio Free Brattleboro (RFB) regrets that its mission of providing a community outlet for alternative music and news is now interrupted. The staff is considering its options and welcomes public input and comment."

To contact Radio Free Brattleboro, please call (802) 258-9879 or email stwiss@sover.net. Correspondence and donations can be sent to PO Box 1951, Brattleboro, VT 05302.

In Seattle, the independently owned Seattle Times may be in danger amidst reports that Knight-Ridder, which owns a minority, wants to buy the paper. They say no offer has been made. Times Publisher Frank Blethen has crusaded against media monopolies.

