

THE DIOGENES REPORT

The Wit, Wisdom & Wituperation of Emanuel L. Strunin
“a few steps ahead of the curve”

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CHINA ON MY MIND

I am not exactly obsessed by China but I am concerned. With the long-range perspective of a Greek philosopher who detects the negative aspects of humanity, I see China as a major adversary/enemy down the road—and the road appears to be getting shorter.

As I mused about China’s booming economy, it did not seem to make sense that China would want to create problems between itself and its neighbors and its major trading partner. However there is a dark side to its booming economy. While many millions of Chinese are benefiting from education, jobs and purchasing power, many others are being left behind. In China, many others means hundreds of millions of disgruntled and angry citizens. Farmers, the traditional backbone of China, are being thrown off their land; air and water pollution are unchecked; and corruption is widespread. Despite the heavy hand of government control demonstrations by the angry and disgruntled continue to erupt around the country. And, of course, the always-disgruntled Muslim populations in the western regions of the country require special attention.

Now, what does a country do when they have problems at home? It embarks on adventures against some outside nations in order to create a patriotic fervor among its citizens so that their minds are distracted from internal problems. But with China’s booming economy, I assumed that its leaders would not dream of doing anything for many, many years that might disrupt its emergence as a modern industrial power. That was my logical conclusion.

Don’t rely on logic

Not that I believe that China is prepared to embark on foreign adventures, yet, but they did go through some typical pre-adventure scenarios recently. For one, they proclaimed their readiness to go to war should Taiwan vote to become an “independent” nation. There really was no need to make such a statement except to whip up internal nationalistic feelings, focus on other factors than discontent at home and fire a warning shot across the bows of its neighbors.

A second series of events involved demonstrations and rioting against perceived and real Japanese repentance for the horrors they inflicted on the Chinese people in the 1930s and ‘40s. It is generally believed that the Chinese Government was behind the demonstrations against Japanese diplomatic and commercial establishments in the country. Not that the Chinese were mistaken in their estimation of Japanese attitudes, but it provided an opportunity to whip up nationalistic sentiments and take people’s minds off domestic discontents.

It is unwise to evaluate an individual’s or a nation’s actions based on logic. So, although China doesn’t appear to have a logical reason for foreign adventures at the present time—who knows what evils lurk in the hearts of men or nations.

LAURA FELL SHORT AT STANDUP

Last week at a Washington event, Laura Bush apparently vowed the audience as a standup comedian. While she

did a commendable job with the humor, Diogenes thinks that her handlers missed a good opportunity to position her as possible competition for Hilary in 2008.

For example her writers could have included some political content in her anecdotes about the President. Diogenes will now write a script that could have made her a contender.

Laura: You know that the President goes to bed every night at nine o'clock while I sit up and watch Desperate Housewives on TV. But while I'm watching the show, I'm also thinking, "what wonderful dream will George tell me about tomorrow morning." Just the other day he woke up with a big smile on his face and told me he dreamt that we invaded Syria and Venezuela. I said how exciting. But, then I asked him where would we get the extra soldiers? Will we have a draft? Oh, no he answered. "I'm going to federalize the Texas Rangers and the New York and Los Angeles Police Departments."

Oh, George is such a genius...much smarter than the guys at Chippendale.

HERE COME THE JUDGE

This incredible story comes from the Associated Press with an Oklahoma City, February 9, 2005 dateline.

"Jurors and others in Judge Donald Thompson's courtroom kept hearing a strange whooshing noise like a bicycle pump or maybe a blood pressure cuff. During one trial, Thompson seemed so distracted that some jurors thought he was playing a hand-held video game or trying fly-fishing lures behind the bench.

"The explanation, investigators say is even stranger than some imagined: The judge had a habit of masturbating with a penis pump under his robe during trials.

"The lurid allegations have led to criminal charges against Thompson, brought an embarrassing end to a solid career and shocked many of his colleagues. The case also could lead to a wave of appeals from defendants claiming that the judge was not paying attention while presiding over their cases.

"Thompson, a 58 year-old married father of three grown children, has denied the allegations, and said the pump was just a gag gift received from a hunting buddy on his 50th birthday. He retired in August after being threatened with removal from the bench, but still faces indecent exposure charges brought against him last month.

"We're certainly saddened by the thought that the prosecutor filed charges," said Clark Brewster, Thompson's attorney. "We thought all this was dealt with when he resigned. We didn't feel like anything that was alleged rose to the level of criminal charges."

"The trials during which he allegedly used the pump included murder cases as well as a libel suit in which a jury ordered the company that publishes The Oklahoman, a Web site and a TV station to pay \$3.7 million.

Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson, who filed the paperwork to remove Thompson from the bench, said he would be surprised if the scandal did not lead to appeals. But he said: "I don't know if they will be successful. They will still have to show actual prejudice to the point that something was done in error."

Jim Wall, police chief in the small town of Sapulpa, said he had heard rumors of the judge's behind-the-bench activities for about a month, but added: "You've got the most powerful man in Creek County, and I think a lot of people were intimidated by him."

Police built a case against the judge after one of Wall's officers testified during a 2003 murder trial. From the witness stand, the officer saw a piece of plastic tubing disappear under Thompson's robe. During a lunch break, officers took photographs of the pump under the desk.

Investigator's later collected carpet samples, Thompson's robes and the chair from behind the bench, and found semen according to the court records.

A former state legislator and a judge with more than 20 years on the bench in Creek County in eastern Oklahoma, Thompson was well liked and had helped many young prosecutors and judges learn their jobs.

Diogenes has some questions about this story: 1. If Bill Clinton had used a similar pump in the Oval Office, would the Republicans still have tried to impeach? 2.If the judge had used Monica Lewinsky instead of a pump would he still have been forced to resign? 3.Was Judge Thompson being considered by President Bush as a potential justice for the Supreme Court? 4. Can we expect the prosecutors and judges that Thompson trained follow in his footsteps? 5. If the Catholic Church distributed these pumps to its priest would we see a decline in pedophilia?

NAMES

Names that fit and names that don't.

Here are two guys with distinguished surnames who wind up on police blotters on the same day. In Stamford, CT, Efram Haileselassie was charged with disorderly conduct and second degree threatening. In Norwalk, CT, Michael Napoleone was charged with fourth- degree larceny, first degree criminal trespass and conspiracy. With their names these gentlemen should have committed crimes with national or international impact.

URBAN LEGENDS

The following probably are among the many "urban legends" that circulate on the Internet:

1. The new Pope replaced the sign of the cross with the Nazi salute.
2. He also replaced the cross with the swastika.
3. Pope John Paul II always fondly called Cardinal Ratzinger, Ratz. When the Cardinal objected by saying, "my name is Ratzinger." John Paul would say, "I know, I know, but Ratz rhymes better with Nazi."
4. Did you know Pope Benedict's father died during the holocaust? He fell off a guard tower.

HA HA

Jeremy asks his wife Naomi what she wants for their 40th wedding anniversary.

"Would you like a new diamond bracelet?" he asks.

"Not really," says Naomi.

"Well how about a Lexus sports car?" says Jeremy.

"No," she replies.

"What about a holiday home in the south of France?" he suggests.

She again rejects his offer with a "No thanks."

"Well what would you like for your anniversary?" Jeremy asks.

"I'd like a divorce, Jeremy," answers Naomi.

"Oy, I wasn't planning to spend that much!" says Jeremy.

HEADLINES AND COMMENTS

Headlines from the world's press. Comments by Diogenes.

Inmate's Rising I.Q. Score Could Mean His Death

It doesn't pay to be a smart ass.

Town Opposes Crematorium Proposal

They took straw poll and a majority decided that they want to live.

Study: Lobsters Unlikely To Feel Pain In Boiling Water

The problem comes when they take them out of the boiling water, they can't stand the change in temperature.

Preventing Obesity Should Start Early

Even before breakfast?

New Course By Royal Navy: A Campaign To Recruit Gays

Are British naval officers running out of partners?

Companies Fight To Ensure Coverage For Erectile Drugs

How democratic! The companies have been screwing the public, now they want the public to be able to screw each other.

Medical Companies Joining Offshore Trend, Too

Will seniors have to order their drugs from Pakistan or Indonesia instead of Canada?

Dr. Gal Luft: Bin Laden Is Out To Destroy U.S. Economy

President Bush: Can we get Bin Laden to support private accounts as part of his plan?

How Jesus Became Christ

The kid was always an overachiever.

Turkey Looks To Europe

They're sick and tired of those American Thanksgivings.

Colorado In Danger Of Losing Leanest Title

No surprise. 300 new McDonalds opened up in the state last year.

Panel Faults U. S. Spy Agencies

They've gotten so bad that the Russians and the Chinese are no longer stealing secrets from the C.I.A.

While Shares Fell, Viacom Paid Three \$160 Million

Do those damn shareholders think they own the company?

F.D.A. Moves To More Openness With The Public

Will they require drug companies to list side effects in type that doesn't call for a magnifying glass?

Four More Rockets Explode In Gush Katif: As terrorist-fired rockets continue to explode in Jewish Gaza, the army has begun building a wall, 6-7 meters high, along the Gaza-Egypt border.

Very clever of the Israelis to build a Maginot Line.

YU Rabbis Approve Disengagement

Would they approve if gays were being forced out of their homes?

Russia Seeking Counterterrorism Cooperation

With Iran or Syria or both?

Deputy PM Peres Laments Lack Of Support For PA

That's what Shimon laments, what does Shimon's psychiatrist say?

Mixed Messages: Terror And Talk Escalate

The Arabs are escalating the terror and the Israelis are escalating the talk.

QUOTES I LIKE

Diogenes considers them clever and/or informative, not that he necessarily agrees with them.

History is the only proven antidote for utopianism.

- Daniel J. Boorstin

Care more for the individual patient than for the special features of the disease.

- William Osler

Counting Deaths Is Not An Exact Science

- Donna Stroup

When the Greek philosophers found that the square root of two was not a rational number, they celebrated the discovery by sacrificing one hundred oxen.

- Anonymous

Nixon is one of the few men in the history of this country to run for high office talking out of both sides of his mouth at the same time and lying out of both sides.

- Harry S. Truman

One day there was four innocent people shot. That's the best shooting ever done in this town. Hard to find four innocent people in New York.

- Will Rogers

A prisoner of war is a man who tries to kill you and fails, and then asks you not to kill him.

- Winston Churchill

The preservation of human life in Judaism is a Divine commandment.. Jewish law requires physicians to do everything in their power to prolong life, but prohibits the use of measures that prolong the act of dying.

- Fred Rosner

Now, in Judaism, we know of no intrinsic rights. Indeed, there is no word for rights in the very language of the Hebrew Bible and of the classic sources of Jewish law. In the moral vocabulary of the Jewish discipline of life, we speak of human duties, not of human rights, of obligations, not entitlement. The Decalogue is a list of Ten Commandments, not a Bill of Human Rights.

- Immanuel Jakobovitz

He who is ignorant of what happened before his birth is always a child.

- Cicero

I sometimes give myself admirable advice, but I am incapable of taking it.

- Mary Wortley Montague

After eating do amphibians have to wait an hour before they can get out of the water?

- Tim O'Brien

It was one of those plays in which all the actors unfortunately enunciated very clearly.

- Robert Benchley

The following are selections of David Letterman's Top Ten Lists of some years back. I have made selections from the 10 items of each list.

Top Ten Tips For Keeping Your Husband Happy (From The Wives Of Middle East Terrorists)

1. Leave little notes in his holster
2. Don't put out for hostages
3. Double date with the Qaddafi's
4. Always go first through a minefield
5. Lull in your love life? Blow up a car.

Top Ten JFK, JR. Excuses For Failing New York Bar Exam A second Time

1. Should have actually answered essay questions instead of just writing "I'm a Kennedy"
2. Took Uncle Ted's advice—but guy next to me was really dumb
3. Confused by typo; spent months preparing for bra exam

READERS' COMMENTS

Welcome back Diogenes. I laughed out loud at the new viruses.

How about this one: The "Dick" Cheney virus:

He doesn't need the Lewinsky one; he's already got a Bush under his belt.