

ROBERT S. MCNAMARA AND THOMAS GRAHAM JR.

Bush ABM stance endangers America

PRESIDENT BUSH and the United States have brilliantly prosecuted the war against Al Qaeda, and now that victory seems near, it is time to turn our attention to following up on that victory.

Winning the peace and achieving stability in the 21st century is all about international cooperation and strengthening international law, not about US unilateralism. The Bush administration's Afghan policy has recognized this, but some of its other actions do not.

Last month the administration refused to send even an observer to a conference at the United Nations on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, much to the chagrin of some of our closest allies. A few weeks later, the United States singlehandedly blocked international efforts to develop a verification protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention despite the importance of such a protocol in

this new age of bioterrorism.

Even the proposed reductions in strategic nuclear weapons may represent a step backward. Presidents Bush and Vladimir Putin proposed reductions to levels close to those accepted by Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin in 1997. At that time, Russia and the United States agreed to reduce in the context of a START III agreement to 2,000 to 2,500 warheads.

The Bush administration's proposal involved reductions to 1,700 to 2,200 operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons.

This would allow the United States to unilaterally and rapidly reconstitute its arsenal of 6,000 strategic warheads. And while the Clinton-Yeltsin proposal was based on the extensive verification measures included in the START agreements, the verification mechanism of the current proposal is unclear.

On top of this, the administration has announced US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty despite expert testimony that there is no technological requirement to do so at this time. Missile defense testing for systems to protect against rogue states could go on for years without colliding with the treaty's limits.

Nor is there any threat that warrants the type of missile defense sought by the administration. North Korea has indicated its willingness to trade away its missile program, Iran is moving toward the West in the wake of Afghanistan, and everyone agrees that Saddam Hussein's Iraq must be taken care of without waiting a decade or more for a functioning missile shield.

Eventually, some form of limited missile defense will undoubtedly be deployed as a hedge against some future rogue state, but Putin made clear over the last six months that he was willing to permit

the United States the flexibility to do this under the ABM Treaty.

The administration decided instead to withdraw from the treaty. This unfortunate step will likely spark an arms race in Asia, with China carrying through on its threat to more rapidly expand and modernize its strategic nuclear forces, perhaps to be followed by India and Pakistan.

Finally, because of domestic legislative conditions attached to Russia's ratification of the START I and START II treaties, both may be jeopardized by the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. Further, while President Putin's immediate reaction has wisely been muted, a seriously negative response in the medium term cannot be ruled out.

The gravest threat to US security is unquestionably attacks with weapons of mass destruction — particularly nuclear — against our cities by terrorist organizations, unstable states, or violent subnational groups. The chances of these attacks coming in the form of a ballistic missile are minimal. Our only real defense against this threat is to verifiably

and irreversibly reduce the number of nuclear weapons and the inventory of weapons usable materials around the world and to prevent the spread of those weapons and materials. At the core of this is the network of international agreements that constitute the international arms control and nonproliferation regime, of which the ABM Treaty and the START treaties are fundamental parts.

It is not too late for the United States to reverse its decision on the ABM Treaty, negotiating changes with Russia it believes are necessary to permit a system against rogue state threats. Nor is it too late for the administration to pursue strategic nuclear reductions that are verifiable and lasting. For the sake of long-term US national security, let's hope the Bush administration reorders its priorities, moves away from unilateralism, and concentrates on winning the peace.

Robert S. McNamara was secretary of defense from 1961-1967. Thomas Graham Jr. is president of the Lawyers Alliance for World Security.

ELLEN GOODMAN

Think thin

TO BE FRANK, I had nearly given up on scientific research as the road to health. I had almost abandoned the last hope that medicine would come up with a user-friendly formula for longevity.

First there was the bad news about cloning, the genetic path to immortality. Dolly the clone has come up with arthritis in her prime sheephood. Even if I could be cloned into everlasting life, each new "me" might get decrepit faster than the original.

Then there was the bad news about cancer prevention. The same protein that can protect me from cancer appears to bring on aging. The mutant mice in the lab didn't succumb to tumors, they just shriveled up and died prematurely. Some trade-off.

With one bulletin following another, it seemed that we were back to basics. I was left with the same dreary options for a healthy and lengthy life: eat less and exercise more.

Well, eating less, *much less*, has been long associated with longevity. But my own scientific belief — based on Einstein's theory of relativity — is that food deprivation doesn't really let you live longer, it just makes every day *feel* longer. Exercise, on the other hand, may give you some extra time, but you have to spend it all in the gym.

All this is enough to get a gal bent out of shape. If, of course, she was already in shape.

But now, just in time to rescue my New Year's resolutions from the recycle bin, comes a man with a fertile imagination. In fact a bulging imagination.

Dr. Guang Yue of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation has officially proved that you can build bigger muscles just by *thinking* about using them. You too can buff up with mental exercise.

At first glance, this physiologist sounds like the Emperor's New Personal Trainer. But the study he recently presented to the Society of Neuroscience shows what happens when 30 young adults spend 15 minutes a day thinking big.

Just visualizing the exercise of the little finger was enough to increase the strength of the pinkie by 35 percent. It was enough to buff up the muscle around the elbow some 13 percent.

This was not like bending spoons with your mind. It was like lifting weights.

Admittedly, I have no idea why anyone might want a bulging pinkie. Muscular elbows have never been high on my body dance card. But think thighs and you get the idea.

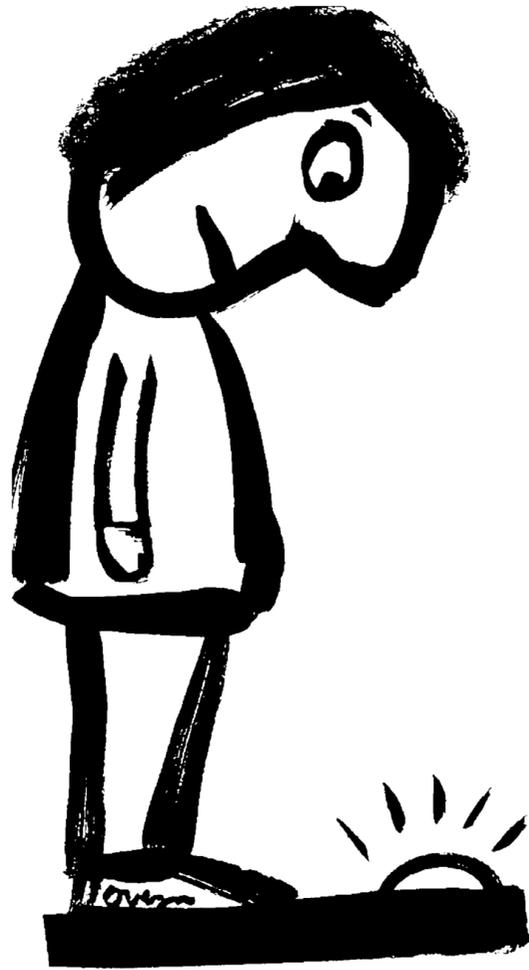
We now have a rich addition to our fitness fantasy life: The Thinking Person's Exercise Program. Welcome to the wonderful world of mental gymnastics, buffing without huffing, training without straining.

This program will bring glee to the hearts of people who have not yet unwrapped their dumbbells and will never amortize their health club memberships. It will save the lives of those who are thinking of murdering the man in the abs infomercial.

Mind you, visualization is not an entirely new idea. Coaches have used it; gurus have promoted it. As a sometime golfer, tennis and squash player I have been urged to imagine all sorts of balls reaching their appointed destiny. Most of these visualization programs require that sooner or later you actually hit the ball.

Which tends to end the fantasy. But in the Thinking Person's Exercise Program you don't *imagine* the sport. Imagination is the sport.

The good Dr. Yue warns, "It's not that easy." It requires a lot of mental energy. This is, needless



JOHN OVERMYER ILLUSTRATION

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to say, what writers tell their spouses after a long, grueling day of indoor work at the keyboard. What it does not require, however, is any heavy lifting.

The Thinking Person's Exercise Program offers no equipment beyond the gray matter that comes as part of the standard package. You don't have to wrap your body in Lycra or expose it in a bathing suit. You don't have to shell out hundreds

of dollars in shoes or buzz your biceps with little electrodes.

Best of all, many of us already have a head start. I for one have been thinking about getting in shape for years. Body building has long been a figment of my imagination. Now I know I'm on the right track.

Ellen Goodman's e-mail address is ellengoodman@globe.com.

JEFF JACOBY

Time to give Saudis an ultimatum

Second of two parts
FOR THANKSGIVING in 1990, former President George H.W. Bush went to Saudi Arabia to visit the 400,000 American soldiers stationed there as part of Operation Desert Shield. The Saudis welcomed Bush, but made it clear that no Christian worship — including grace before the Thanksgiving meal — would be permitted on Saudi soil. It was a shocking insult, but the Americans didn't protest. Instead, the president and his party went aboard a US ship in the Persian Gulf and said their prayers there.

As this episode suggests, the US-Saudi relationship has been dysfunctional for some time. The Saudis treat the Americans with highhandedness, and are rewarded for their disdain with military and diplomatic support.

At least part of the explanation for this obsequiousness is oil, of course: They have it, we need it, and our economy would suffer badly if it were to become unavailable. The tendency to be ingratiat-

ing with the Saudis is especially pronounced in the Bush family, with its roots in West Texas oil. In a striking demonstration of this last July, the elder George Bush telephoned Crown Prince Abdullah to assure him that his son's "heart is in the right place" and that he was "going to do the right thing" when it came to the Middle East.

That was the last thing Abdullah should have been told. The real issue is not whether we do what the Saudis want, but when the Saudis are going to begin doing what America wants. The House of Saud would be nothing without its vast oil wealth, and it would have lost that wealth long ago were it not for the American muscle that guarantees the security of the Gulf.

And what do the Saudi princes do with their wealth, besides financing luxurious lifestyles for themselves? They spend it to keep themselves in power by buying off their country's Wahhabi religious establishment so that it will keep a lid on the

discontent that seethes throughout the kingdom. And the more money they have poured into the Wahhabis' coffers, the more they have undermined world peace and menaced the United States.

Wahhabism — radical fundamentalist Islam — is the established creed of Saudi Arabia. It is intolerant and totalitarian, and its influence is felt across Saudi society. "Anti-Western and Extremist Views Pervade Saudi Schools," read the headline on a New York Times report last fall. And not only schools: Islamic supremacism and loathing of "infidels" permeates the mosques, many government ministries, and much of the media.

The Wahhabi sheiks work tirelessly to spread their brand of Islam to Muslims everywhere. The princes' petrodollars fund Islamist killers in Kashmir and subsidize fundamentalist subversion in the Philippines. They encouraged Al Qaeda's savagery. They radicalized Pakistan. They spread the Wahhabis' influence to the mosques of Europe and America. They

THOMAS OLIPHANT

Massachusetts is slip-sliding behind

WASHINGTON
MASSACHUSETTS IS asleep, has been for at least half a decade, and has begun to fall well behind a country that once looked to it for leadership. At least since the mid-'90s, the nation has gone elsewhere for its guidance — to Minnesota and Hawaii for health care, to Texas and California for education, to Michigan and Wisconsin for welfare reform, and everywhere else for smart thinking on the workforce of the future and the environment.

Worse, the state is beginning to appear dysfunctional to the rest of the country — mired in petty and cruel gridlock on budget issues between an old-style Legislature and no-style executive, and it has blown its big opportunity of the decade by making a laughable if not corrupt mess of the largest public works project ever.

And worst of all, this bipartisan flop has left the state unprepared for a difficult recession that is almost certain to be followed by an unusually fragile recovery.

Even in prosperity, the Massachusetts performance was uneven on its best days — weirdly unbalanced in both geography and demography. It may be the only place in the country where average working families actually lost ground during a period of unprecedented national prosperity, and where economic growth would not have occurred at all without immigration. It may also be unique in the extent to which its workforce may be unprepared for whatever opportunities recovery eventually presents.

I haven't the slightest idea whether Robert Reich will be a strong or even good candidate for governor this year. But simply by announcing his candidacy in a fashion worthy of the times, he serves as a yardstick that mocks another facet of the state's declining status — the petty condition of its politics/media culture, a far cry from the innovative days of 40 or even 10 years ago under leaders from both parties.

The airwaves and headlines of recent months have been full of babble about patronage at the port and turnpike authorities, about the acting governor's style and family life, about insider machinations that are fun to chew over in barrooms but have little relevance to kitchen tables.

So along comes Reich — new economy scholar, Clinton labor secretary,

and prominent Bill Bradley backer against Al Gore — to talk about jobs, income, and education in two thoughtful speeches that one hopes will both set the tone for the campaign and inspire his competitors.

Reich cited one estimate by MassINC, the centrist research organization, that a third of the state's workforce, more than a million people, is unprepared for the high-skilled economy ahead. He was right to focus on the innovative but underfunded (and thus under-used) community college system as the recommended hub of a modernized lifetime learning system.

But I found another set of numbers published by MassINC two years ago that even more dramatically presents the "two states of Massachusetts" Reich discussed. As of 1998, the state ranked fourth nationally in its percentage of adults over 25 with a college education (31 percent), but the ranking fell to 18th among those with at least a high school diploma because fully 15 percent of the adults do not.

Reich could have also made a strong case about health care — once a Massachusetts strength — and one hopes someone will soon. As costs jump, the economy withers, and the state dithers, access to health insurance is no longer a state strength. There are also major concerns with the stability of a delivery system that because of the large presence of teaching hospitals is in uniquely precarious financial condition. And service for the needy — Medicaid now is more than a fourth of the state budget — is seriously harmed by some lowest-payment rates relative to costs of treatment in the nation.

In this second state of Massachusetts, nearly one in five kids lives in poverty — more than 40 percent in Springfield, and more than a third in Boston. In fact, Massachusetts is now No. 12 in poverty in the whole country and gaining all the time. The '90s was a decade of squandered opportunities, not accomplishments. Until Reich came along, it was beginning to look as if the race for governor might become another.

Thomas Oliphant's e-mail address is oliphant@globe.com.

prepared the way for Sept. 11.

"By funding religious extremists from Michigan to Mindanao," military theorist Ralph Peters writes, "the Saudis have done their best to destroy democracies, turn back the clock on human rights, and deny religious freedom to Islamic and other populations — while the United States guarantees Saudi security."

A better policy would begin by retracting the elder Bush's simpering message to Abdullah and restating instead what his son told the world on Sept. 20: "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists."

If you are with us, we would tell Riyadh, you will immediately cut off the Wahhabis' funds and shut down their financial pipeline. You will close the "charities" they use to finance Islamist terrorism. You will purge them from your universities, schools, and bureaucracy. You will halt the emigration of young Saudis lusting for violence and jihad. And you will order those who are abroad to return at once or lose their citizenship.

We would make it clear to the Saudi princes that we expect their full cooperation no matter where the war on terrorism takes us. And if it takes us to a land

war in Iraq, Saudi Arabia will make its military bases available for staging the invasion.

Will the Saudis refuse? Will they protest that complying with our demands will mean the toppling of their regime? Either way, our course will be clear: We will seize and secure the oil fields.

But our purpose would not be plunder. We would appoint a respected, pro-Western Muslim ally to run the oil industry in trust for the Muslim world. No longer would the petro-wealth of Arabia be used to advance Islamist fanaticism and terror — or to maintain a decadent royal family in corrupt opulence. It would be used, rather, to promote education, health, and democracy throughout the Middle East. The Gulf's great riches, now a wellspring of disorder and unrest, could be transformed into a force for decency, stability, and peace.

Is it feasible? No question. But the first step — fixing our dysfunctional relationship with the House of Saud — will be the hardest. Let us see if President Bush is up to the task.

Jeff Jacoby's e-mail address is jacoby@globe.com.