

The Opinion Pages

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Where are Our Morals?

Anthony Lewis

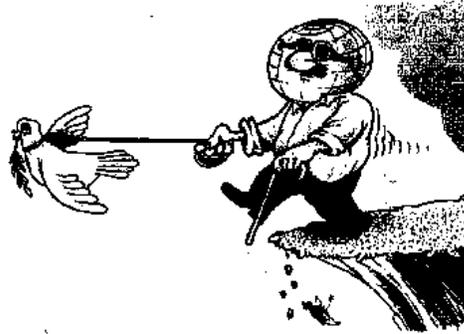
The crisis in Brynania has shown U.S. foreign policy for what it is--arrogant apathy bordering on downright depravity. The discrediting of Wilsonian idealism and its replacement by the cool calculation of security "interests" has meant a foreign policy far removed from any morality.

As death tolls mount, and as refugee numbers swell, Washington stands idly by, smugly content as long as American business interests are secure-- and so far, they are.

It is our vision of security which is so fundamentally flawed. Surely, secure borders and a healthy national pocketbook cannot guard against the flow of migrant populations and the spread of increasingly extremist ideologies?

It is up to the United States, insofar as we claim the position of leader of the free world, to enable others less fortunate than ourselves access to a tiny measure of that freedom.

For these reasons, I urge the president to intervene-- economically if possible, militarily if necessary, to restore human dignity to the people of Brynania.



The Slippery Slope

William Safire

United States policy regarding Brynania is heading down a slippery slope -- one that will lead the United States into Brynania with no clear roadmap of how to get out.

Proposals now under consideration have the United States along with the European Union contributing billions of dollars to prop up an unpopular regime in the hope that a tentative peace agreement can in fact be signed. Anyone following the tragic history of this nation knows that a disruption in fighting is only ever short term and that a lasting peace is only a dream.

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What is worrisome is how quickly the United States is willing to throw large sums of money -- via the World Bank - into Brynania's coffers without considering the risk. What will the Administration do to protect this investment once civil war breaks out again? Send in American troops?

The Somalian disaster should have taught us that American intervention does not fix ethnic hatreds and that the players in these conflicts do not want American help. Should we once again turn on the 6 o'clock news to see the bodies of young American men paraded through the streets of hostile nation? The road from monetary investment to the investment of our troops is a short one.

The Passions of Brynania

by Ou'ad Jajami

For the past fifteen years the malignant, atavistic passions of Brn, Zaharians, and Icasian have wrought death and destruction upon the equatorial cyberspace country of Brynania. They have all fought their tribal and clannish wars with tireless hatred and primordial rage. Early in this most uncivil of civil war, we in the Western cyberspace realized that the Bren were homicidal and the rest were suicidal. The clannish solidarity of the northern Brn is rooted in an ageless feeling of victimization. While the Zaharians, molded by the ruggedness of their rural origins, gradually cultivated an unmistakable instinct for survival, crucial weapons in a land that has known in its past nothing but war and misery. But these are the tangled ways of Brynania.

Brynianians always found time and reason to engage in their fratricidal wars. Brn massacred Zaharians and Icasians, Zaharians sought revenge from the Icasians, and they all turned their weapons against their own ilk. We never were able to understand that sorrowful place. Poble's rule brought to politics the rustic ways of the rural crowds. His sloganeering proved empty, and his nationalistic ways were replaced by the brutal dictatorship of an army loyal only to clan and region. This is the stuff bloody coups are made of, not democratic politics. The leaders of Hamrville are not Bismarks, nor are the ragtag Zaharaian guerillas modern Robin Hoods. The petty wars of these warlords are clannish struggles, consuming and always untidy.

Lurking behind the recently negotiated fragile peace in Brynania is a tribal mentality laden with the anxiety of Hamlet and the restlessness of Othello. It is a mentality hostile to civic politics, rooted in an immutable, tribal political culture battered by war and nostalgia. The only thorn that grows in the land of Brynania is that of primal hatred. Democracy is alien to that barren and sombre place. Public opinion sells for nothing. Peace is a fleeting phantom, never had deep roots in Brynania, never will. Brynania is an arena for colliding wills. America would do better staying out of a neighbourhood whose ways are so alien and foreign to us. We should leave the passions of Brynania to the peoples and neighbours of Brynania.

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Disclaimer: This is not the real New York Times. Brynania is not a real country and exists as part of a fictional conflict simulation.