

Editorial

Left to Stagnate

Californian Lindsay Davenport defeats Australian Alicia Molik in a thrilling three-set match on a blistering summer January day in Melbourne—it is the face of globalization.

Four hundred million Indians, more people than live in North America, move from poverty to the middle class in one decade—it is the face of globalization.

The Chinese economy is growing by 9.5 percent. Imagine doubling your standard of living every seven years—it is the face of globalization.

Joshua Muravchik, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, wrote last month in the *Wall Street Journal* about democracy's world spread, "In the states of the former Soviet Union and its satellites, 17 out of 27 are democratic...In Latin America and the Caribbean, 32 out of 35 states have elected governments"—this too is face of globalization.

In Southeast Asia a vicious sex trade where young rural girls are sold into prostitution thrives—this too is the face of globalization.

In the Middle East the War on Terror exists and continues because, as the President has pointed out, only one of the 18 nations in the region (Israel) is a democracy. The frustration of a region without freedom or opportunity became critical this decade—this too is the face of globalization.

And in that same terror war Osama Bin Laden tells Iraqis that if they participate in the January election they are infidels. Upon hearing Osama's verdict, the world and especially the Arab world shake their head, and say no. Modernism is coming, even to the Middle East. Change is inevitable. The pace...relentless.

Still, resisters remain.

In Oregon, and especially in Multnomah County, resistance can be felt on two fronts. The first example: the inability of many to graciously concede to the President a significant re-election victory. The President's 51 per cent of the total vote was the first time since 1988 (three elections) that an American president received more than 50 per cent of the vote (Bill Clinton received 49.6 per cent in his re-election win in '96). Agree or disagree with his policies, the President's win was significant, and should not be diminished.

A second example of resistance, again over the Bush re-election win, was the pouting performance of Gov. Kulongoski's State of the State address, where he veered into federal issues and took gratuitous shots at the President of the United States before he'd been inaugurated for his second term. Bad form.

Two things about the Governor's speech and semi-raised fist in defiance of our federal government were disturbing: The first was that he seemed to give sanction to blue state pouters who are behaving childishly about the President's re-election. The Governor told the pouters that their behavior was appropriate. Images come to mind of an inane but supposedly serious editorial

by the *Oregonian's* Doug Bates that suggested Oregon would be better off joining Canada than staying part of America. The Governor's strong and dignified presence at the memorial services of Oregonians lost in Iraq has been partially eclipsed by his partisan and inappropriate remarks at the State Capitol in January.

The second disturbing element of the Governor's speech was that his criticisms of the Iraq war and the Kyoto Agreement were an attempt to camouflage the cruel fact that he is just not up to the task of addressing the poor macroeconomic conditions in Oregon. Left to stagnate, these impaired economic indicators will keep Oregon from joining the dynamic global economy. Why would we trust him to solve global problems when he cannot solve problems at home? By speech end, the Governor seemed a small figure—too small a figure to lead us out of our generational economic troubles.

More depressing than the Governor's speech, however, is the lack of any frank talk in this state, and especially in Multnomah County, about what our future choices are for Oregon, and what the cost to us will be if we continue to opt out of the great global race. Public relations campaigns like "Things Look Different Here" or more recently "Brand Oregon" have only served to further Oregon's growing odd image of being progressive (*read weird and idiosyncratic*), but not competitive (*read successful and solvent*).

Twenty-five years ago, economist E.F. Schumacher penned the progressive economics treatise, "Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered." Schumacher's text lays out the intellectual and humanitarian reasons for an economic model that is not driven by the power of global capitalism. Many voters in Oregon, and, again especially in Multnomah County believe the Schumacher agenda. Portland's new mayor, Tom Potter, with his bid to buy PGE, his empathy for the Critical Mass Bikers, and his promotion of more homeless villages seems to be an especially apt representative of this thinking. Potter's heavy reliance on Commissioner Erik Sten for strategy and background reinforce the city's ruling class anti-money, anti-global attitudes. To those looking for a world class higher education system and exciting opportunities in the world economy, Potter and Sten's agenda is elitist and static.

Recently *Financial Times* columnist Amity Shlaes weighed in on the Harvard University President Larry Summers controversy—when Summers suggested "there might be a genetic difference between men and women when it came to performance in hard sciences."

Shlaes proposes that the problem may not be with Summers but with Harvard itself:

The trouble is not that Mr. Summers is too self-satisfied. It is that Harvard is. Harvard—and U.S. universities like it—tend to promulgate a set of views—global warming is a crisis; the U.S. is to blame for the world's troubles; governments of developed nations ought to be large; and quotas or some form of affirmative action is required when it comes to the advancement of women and minorities. These same universities often shut out, or look away from, arguments that do not support these beliefs. The result is not "neo-Stalinist" monoliths—novelist Michael Crichton's description of universities in his current best seller, "State of Fear." But it is universities that are boring, provincial, shut in.

Boring, provincial, shut in. Not a good place to be. Sounds like home right here in Oregon.

