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# OPINION

To Build A Better World, Start In Your Own Community

## EDITORIAL

# Maintain national treasures

**"T**he parks are for the people," President George Bush declared during an August 2001 visit to Estes Park, where he talked about appropriating \$5 billion over the next five years to deal with a backlog of maintenance needs in the national parks.

With nearly 400 park units, the agency must maintain 22,000 campgrounds, 21,000 buildings, 17,000 miles of trails, 10,000 miles of roads, 5,000 homes, and 3,000 facilities that treat sewage or water.

It's been 40 years since Mission 66 came to a successful conclusion.

Admittedly, much has changed in America since August 2001: there have been terror attacks, a war in Iraq and a troubled economy. But nearly five years after Bush said he would deal with the backlog he estimated at \$4.9 billion, it may be even bigger than before.

Library of Congress researchers estimated in March 2005 that the backlog still stood at between \$4.5 billion and \$9.7 billion.

Estimates indicate by next year the Bush administration will have spent \$5.6 billion on park maintenance since Bush came into office. But only about \$700 million has been "new money."

It's not the first time the national parks have been a victim of reduced spending during a time of war. In 1949, that's how National Park Service Director Newton Drury described the parks, pointing out they had not received any repairs while the country had been fighting World War II.

The country rallied to the parks' defense then and in 1956 launched a 10-year initiative with congressional funding, called Mission 66. Its goal was to construct needed facilities and infrastructure in the parks — roads, trails, residences for park employees, administrative buildings and maintenance facilities that would serve the parks for years to come.

But it's been 40 years since Mission 66 came to a successful conclusion. Much of the infrastructure built then is what now needs repairs or updates.

With the White House, the Park Service and other federal agencies unable to agree even on the extent of the backlog, clearly there needs to be a complete inventory of Park Service facilities so a plan for dealing with the most critical needs can be developed.

Once the needs are prioritized and cost estimates affixed to them, officials can launch a more educated plan to deal with the most pressing needs.

Park Service Director Fran Mainella says it may never be possible to eliminate the backlog of needs because maintenance needs continue to evolve.

The parks are for the people, and those who represent the people in Washington, D.C., need to remember that, not just at election time, but whenever they make budget decisions.



# Tough talking, too late

By Gabriel Schoenfeld  
Special to the Los Angeles Times

The U.S. intelligence community is training its reconnaissance assets on a missile test site in North Korea right now. What the photographs reveal is advanced preparation for a test of a new missile, the Taepodong 2 — which has intercontinental range, could hit Alaska and potentially could be fitted with a nuclear warhead, of which North Korea might have five or six. What should the United States do in response?

One provocative answer comes from William Perry and Ashton Carter, who were, respectively, secretary and assistant secretary of defense under President Clinton. Writing in *The Washington Post*, the two say that, "If North Korea persists in its launch preparations, the United States should immediately make clear its intention to strike and destroy the North Korean Taepodong missile before it can be launched."

This, obviously, is a radically aggressive position. Such a pre-emptive strike could lead to untold repercussions. Would Kim Jong Il, the North's so-called "Dear Leader," be likely to retaliate with a massive artillery assault on densely populated South Korea in which hundreds of thousands might perish?

Perry and Carter argue that he would not. Why, they ask, would the North attack the South for an action taken unilaterally by the United States? What is more, "an invasion of South Korea would bring about the certain end of Kim Jong Il's regime within a few bloody weeks of war, as surely he knows." They predict the North would absorb our surgical strike rather than risk suicide.

Are they right, and how can we be sure?

Obviously, we cannot be. But one way to examine this question is to look at how Perry and Carter managed things when they advised Clinton during the last North Korean crisis.

In 1994, North Korea ejected international inspectors from its reactor at Yongbyon and was poised to reprocess its nuclear fuel, giving it the capacity to build half a dozen nuclear weapons in short order. The

## Evaluating Clinton advisors on Korea

Clinton team, Perry and Carter collected, prepared a detailed plan to attack the Yongbyon facility with precision-guided conventional munitions. "The likely result," Perry and Carter wrote in 2002, would have been a "lashing out by North Korea's antiquated, but large and fanatical, military across the (demilitarized zone) ... Thousands of U.S. troops and tens of thousands of South Korean troops would be killed, and millions of refugees would crowd the highways." Despite these potential horrors, Perry and Carter came to conclude that North Korea's nuclear program was even more dangerous, and they "were prepared to risk a war to stop it." Only when Jimmy Carter stepped in to "solve" the problem through his brand of personal diplomacy was the plan for a pre-emptive strike dropped.

Perry and Carter do not explain why a pre-emptive U.S. strike now would not lead to a horrific war, while the one they were advocating back then probably would have. One possible reason is that relations between the North and South have greatly improved in the intervening years. They might also argue, with some justification, that the increased threat of a North Korean nuclear attack on the United States justifies the risk of triggering a war.

Still, their argument is disconcerting. Was the White House really so ready to roll the dice back in 1994 as they make it seem? Or have these two former officials been engaged in a bit of historical revisionism designed to make timorousness look like toughness?

The latter seems to be the case. In open testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1995, Perry was at pains to state that a pre-emptive strike against the North Korean reactor was only a "theoretical alternative."

After ascertaining that the United States possessed the technical means to take successful military action, was that the course Perry

and Carter recommended to President Clinton?

The answer is unequivocally no. Here is Perry in his own words, which in his Senate testimony he repeated twice for emphasis: "I did not recommend that course of action to the president." Instead, Perry suggested "a robust program of sanctions on North Korea to put economic pressure on them." Yet for the Clinton administration, even this peaceful measure was weighed with great trepidation. The North Koreans, Perry testified, had "stated that the imposition of sanctions would be considered by them to be equivalent to a declaration of war. Many people wrote that off as rhetoric. I thought it was imprudent to consider it as pure rhetoric and we had to take it at face value. ... I felt we could not responsibly impose sanctions on North Korea without making a substantial augmentation of our military forces in the South."

All this is supremely rich. Perry and Carter are now recommending a pre-emptive U.S. strike while suggesting that a North Korean response will be relatively tame if it comes at all. But when they were in office, their calculations were reversed. They feared even tame U.S. actions would provoke a ferocious North Korean response.

In other words, the record shows that Perry and Carter did not walk the walk. Neither did they talk the talk. Indeed, contemplating even nonmilitary action against Pyongyang, they were shaking in their boots.

Perhaps, in the face of the unpredictable Kim Jong Il, the boot-shaking was entirely justified. Perhaps not. But either way, the hawkish advice they today blithely proffer to the Bush administration suggests a measure of historical amnesia.

Two doleful lessons follow, both in the realm of ornithology. First, if we had acted like hawks in 1994, before North Korea had a nuclear capability, we might not be facing a potentially nuclear-tipped Taepodong missile today. Second, the case of Perry and Carter reveals that in the right political climate, it is possible to train doves to twitter like hawks. Getting them to fly like hawks is a far more difficult feat.

Gabriel Schoenfeld is senior editor of Commentary magazine.

# Jesse Jackson has Jekyll and Hyde personalities

By Tom Fitton  
Judicial Watch

After many years of fighting government corruption, I am well-acquainted with the "Jekyll and Hyde" nature of politicians.

What we see in television interviews and campaign commercials is often a carefully crafted veneer. When the cameras aren't watching and the microphones aren't listening, we sometimes see a completely different person — a person capable of all manner of corrupt and crooked behavior.

Jesse Jackson is a perfect case study of this phenomenon. There is Jesse Jackson "the reverend," the man who comes to the aid of the "poor" and "downtrodden." And then there is the "other" Jesse Jackson, the man who participated in a violent assault against a civil rights leader, the man who blackmails corporate executives with baseless discrimination charges, threatening to initiate boycotts if they don't pay up.

I became familiar with this "other" Jackson over the past four years as Judicial Watch litigated a lawsuit on behalf of the Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson, the victim of the aforementioned violent assault, which took place at an event hosted by Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH coalition in October 2001.

After lengthy and contentious deliberations, the jury deadlocked 6-6 on the charges against Jackson.

When ordered by the judge to return a verdict, they failed to convict. However, faced with the prospect of a retrial on an assault charge against Jackson's son, Jonathan, who also participated in the attack, the Jacksons elected to settle the case.

It was important, of course, to hold Jackson accountable for his actions in court, and to force him to testify. But just as important, through discovery and testimony, we were able to learn new details about how corrupt politicians like Jackson operate.

Here are just a few of Jesse Jackson's shakedown tactics:

Jackson lobbied the Federal Communications Commission to block companies seeking government approval to merge until they donated money to Rainbow/PUSH.

Jackson initiated a boycott against Anheuser-Busch in 1982 to force the beer company to establish minority-owned distributorships. After Anheuser-Busch donated \$510,000 to Jackson and sold distributorships to Jackson's two sons, he dropped the boycott.

Jackson publicly chastised Toyota for running an ad Jackson deemed "racist." Even after Toyota pulled the ad, Jackson threatened a boycott against Toyota to force the company to launch a \$7.8 billion "diversity program."

Jackson installed one of his friends, J.L. Armstrong, in a management position at Toyota to determine which organizations would receive \$700 million in contracts awarded by Toyota.

Minority businesses pay Jackson's "Trade Bureau" a fee to help extort lucrative contracts from corporations. During the trial, Jackson compared the Trade Bureau to "Noah's Ark," claiming that minority businesses and organizations had to be inside the "ark" to survive.

Jackson never wanted these details to come out. He always wanted to be known as Jesse Jackson "the reverend," not Jesse Jackson "the extortionist."

That's why his legal team fought tooth and nail for four years to derail this litigation.

Unfortunately for Jackson, they failed, and the American people finally caught a good glimpse of the real Jesse Jackson.

Tom Fitton is president of Judicial Watch, a non-partisan educational foundation that fights government corruption. Visit [www.judicialwatch.org](http://www.judicialwatch.org) to read JW's new report, "Jesse Jackson Exposed."

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## Open Forum

### Replace fossil fuels

Re: "A warming world," June 22, Open Forum

Giving credibility to Al Gore and his movie "An Inconvenient Truth" is like believing Michael Moore accurately reports both sides of the story in his so-called "documentaries." Don't be so naive. When it comes to whether humans are contributing to global warming, there is a lot of conflicting research out there.

That said, the most important environmental issue for the United States to address is the fact that fossil fuels are a finite resource.

Eventually fossil fuels will be exhausted. Does this happen in our lifetime or 500 years from now? I

don't know.

In preparation for this eventuality, the United States needs a multi-decade energy plan that calls for the complete elimination of fossil fuels.

This starts by converting the existing utility infrastructure as it has little effect on consumers and businesses; if I flick the switch and it goes on, I'm happy. Therefore all new power plant construction and all upgrades to existing plants have to be based on renewable energy sources.

Converting our transportation system is the real long-term challenge. The entire infrastructure needs to be converted from car assembly lines to new fueling stations, etc.

While this will take decades to implement, this policy needs to be legislated now.

The principal problem in legislating this policy is that we elect new executive leadership every four to eight years.

This causes priorities to change regardless of the party that is in control.

A way to accomplish this legislation would be to create a renewable energy amendment to the United States Constitution, thus ensuring that renewable energy is enacted upon for decades to come.

Oh, and if we stem the tide of supposed global warming, then all the better.

RONALD ELSIS  
Longmont