

Sidelights

Fifty percent of Americans believe **Hillary Rodham Clinton's** new memoir *Living History* should be filed in the history section of libraries and bookstores, according to CNN/USA Today/ Gallup Poll. Twenty-two percent believe it belongs in the fiction section.

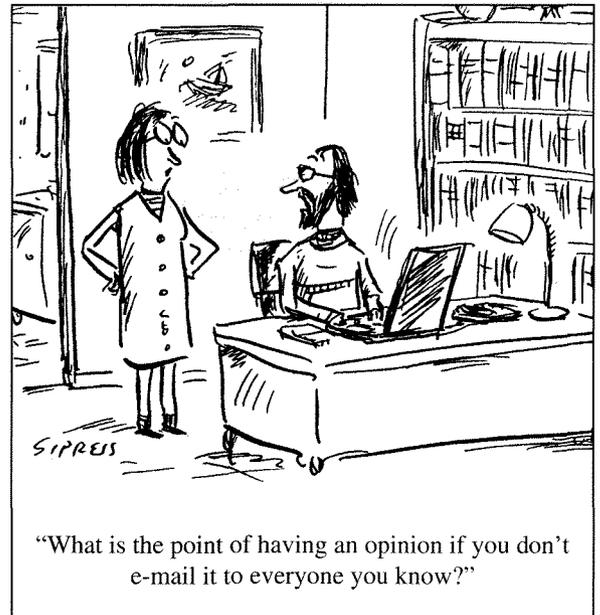
☛ At a speech in Washington, D.C., PBS's **Bill Moyers** stated that the Republicans are planning the "deliberate, intentional destruction of the United States of America." ☛ A proposed mural at the University of California, Riverside has offended some at the campus. Academic affairs director **Elisa Haro** saw the images of Shakespearean actors as "pilgrim invaders" that reminded her "of my colonization, and I don't like that." There were also complaints that the cranes in the mural were white, and that there were no same sex couples. ☛ A UCLA study found no significant correlation between secondhand smoke and death due to coronary heart disease or lung cancer. ☛ The European Central Bank predicts the European Union's economy will grow by only 0.7 percent this year. ... Unemployment in Germany has risen to 4.49 million. Germany has a population of over 82 million and is the biggest contributor to the E.U. budget.

An exiled Burmese girl wrote a letter to the *Bangkok Post* asking **George Bush** and **Tony Blair** to "please eliminate the Burmese dictators immediately. We need only one missile. Help us, please." ☛ The number of terror attacks in the world fell sharply in 2002, according to the State Department's Patterns of Global Terrorism report. There were 199 terrorist attacks last year, a 44 percent drop from

2001. This is the lowest figure in over 30 years. ☛ In Western Europe, 35 percent of software is pirated, in Eastern Europe it's 71 percent, concludes the Business Software Alliance in its annual survey on software piracy, estimating the global cost of software piracy last year at \$13.08 billion.

The dictator of Belarus, **Alexander Lukashenko**, decreed that the heads of companies, unions, and other organizations may not call themselves "presidents." Only Lukashenko himself may have that title. ☛ The Rift Valley Institute reported that, over the last 20 years, more than 11,000 people have been kidnapped in slave raids in the Sudan. Only about 500 have made it back home. ... Musician **Bob Geldof**, organizer of the 1980s Live Aid charity, told the London *Guardian* that "the Bush administration is the most radical—in a positive sense—in its approach to Africa since Kennedy." Geldof described former President **Bill Clinton** as "a good guy, but he did f--- all" to help Africa. ☛ The *New York Times* reported that incest is a serious health concern in Saudi Arabia, noting that in some parts of the country "more than half of the marriages are between close relatives." Inbreeding can produce such genetic disorders as sickle cell anemia, spinal muscular atrophy, diabetes, and possibly deafness and muteness.

Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, dean of Islamic Studies at the University of



Qatar, issued a fatwa permitting women to carry out suicide attacks, "even without the permission of her husband, and the son without the consent of his parents." ... An Australian and a German caught kissing in Dubai were sentenced to six-month jail terms, which were suspended under condition they not do it again. ☛ After weeks of striking and a halt to garbage collection, city cleaners in Marseille, France resorted to spraying the streets with lemon-grass perfume to diffuse the stench from mountains of festering trash. ☛ Sales of French wine in the U.S. dropped 13 percent over the last year.

Two thirds of Israelis believe Israel could co-exist with a Palestinian state, according to a Pew Research Center poll. Only 17 percent of Palestinians think that is possible. ... "I'm making a conscious decision to take this whole Judaism thing seriously," **Geraldo Rivera** told the *Washington Post*. "I think the Jews need me right now."

—BB

Scan

BELGIUM WAFFLES

An old adage says that democracies do not wage war against each other. Democratic nations, nonetheless, are finding a new way to express their disdain for their allies' foreign policies: They take the heads of government to court.

Since 1993, Belgium, through its "anti-atrocity law," has claimed universal jurisdiction for crimes "so serious that they amount to an offense against the whole of humanity." Belgium claims the right to prosecute such crimes regardless of the nationalities and whereabouts of the claimants or the defendants. As a result, the Belgian court system has become a forum for aggrieved activists to have their political views recognized on the world stage. Suits have been filed against true tyrants like Fidel Castro and Saddam Hussein, as well as democratic leaders like Tony Blair and George W. Bush.

Claimants include Belgium's state prosecutor, atrocity victims, and bystanders. In a recent suit against U.S. General Tommy Franks, four doctors with Medicine for the Third World, a Belgian relief organization, alleged that the U.S. military showed disregard for civilian life in Baghdad.

Universal jurisdiction suits can also become quite vindictive. In 2001, three lawyers filed a suit against Ariel Sharon and other top Israeli officials on behalf of 28 survivors of the Sabra and Shatila massacres in 1982. Denying the charges, Israeli officials have threatened to prosecute Belgian officials for their admitted role in the 1961 murder of Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of the Congo.

Early this summer, the United States

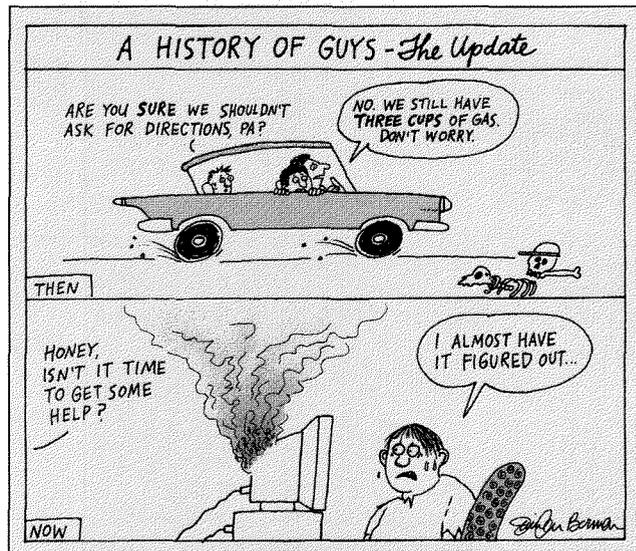
put pressure on Belgium to make its law friendlier to the leaders of allied nations. On June 12, Donald Rumsfeld, who has also had charges filed against him, warned Belgium that its law is likely to dissuade world leaders from visiting the country.

The same day, he froze funding for the construction of a new NATO headquarters in Brussels.

On June 22, Belgium announced plans to roll back its claim of universal jurisdiction. Under the new rules, only cases directly involving Belgians may be heard. Belgian officials denied that U.S. pressure is responsible for the change in the law, insisting that they independently decided that the law was often applied unjustly.

Yet even as Belgium revises its law, questions about universal jurisdiction remain. In that vein, the United States should probably take a fresh look at its 1789 Alien Tort Claims Act, which has been used in recent years to prosecute multinational corporations for their alleged connections to human rights abuses in foreign countries. The law, originally intended to prosecute pirates, now helps anti-globalization activists attack multinational corporations they dislike.

Universal jurisdiction not only fosters hostilities between government leaders, it also has the potential to aggravate both economic and foreign policy interests. Nations should return to a legal system that mandates a territorial link in order



for prosecution to take place, so that one day an adage might read: "Democratic nations do not take each other to court."

—Courtney Richard is a TAE intern.

AMERICAN IRON LADY

Phyllis Schlafly's critics have accused her of hypocrisy for celebrating traditional women's roles while pursuing an activist career. But she recently told the *Washington Times* that there is no contradiction.

"Feminism is not about female achievement," Mrs. Schlafly says. "If it was, you would hear them praising Margaret Thatcher. Feminism is about developing the notion of victimology. They want to paint women as oppressed victims, kept down by men and this oppressive patriarchal society. I think that's why they underestimated me, because they really don't believe traditional women can accomplish what I accomplished."

What Schlafly accomplished is a lot. She spent World War II working night shifts in the biggest ammunition plant in the world. "I went through college working as a gunner, firing machine guns," Mrs. Schlafly explains. "I did all the tests of the ammunition before it could be