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resigned in disgust. Col. Millard Peck, a highly decorated career officer and veteran of three Vietnam tours, described the Pentagon's POW-MIA office as a "toxic waste dump" where information about American MIAs who might still be alive was filed and, if not forgotten, at least rarely acted upon. Peck decried what he called the Pentagon's "mindset to debunk" any evidence of living American prisoners in Southeast Asia.

In the wake of these developments, a series of photographs has surfaced purporting to show American POWs still in captivity, mostly in Laos. Although the authenticity of these photographs remains in doubt, it is possible some are genuine. Moreover, the photographs have been accompanied by reports that scores, perhaps even several hundred American POWs are alive.

man unaccounted for. Senate Republican leader Robert Dole of Kansas has suggested as a possible alternative to a select committee the creation of a presidential commission, perhaps headed by retiring Army Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf.

A bipartisan select Senate committee, especially one whose members included senators who have been working hard on the issue for many months, would probably have more credibility than a presidential commission. But, either way, it is abundantly clear that an independent review of the entire POW-MIA matter is urgently needed. The government and the country owe at least this much to those families still tormented by doubts, and to those American servicemen who served their nation bravely and well and may have remained POWs for 20 years or more.

'Abortion pill' is not the solution

RU 486, the French Synthetic steroid commonly known as the "abortion pill," has long been advertised as a scientific solution to the abortion debate. In addition to providing a woman with the option of private, unsupervised abortion, the drug supposedly could be useful in the treatment of breast cancer, Cushing's Syndrome, endometriosis, and AIDS. But the non-abortion benefits to be derived from RU 486 appear to be as chimerical as the "right" to abortion.



Will Grigg

ABROAD

Writing in the June 1990 issue of Scientific American, three scientists from Rosseul-Ulcaf, the pharmaceutical company that developed RU 486, point out that the drug "was not invented with the goal of pregnancy interruption in mind." (This is yet another enrichment of the already vast supply of pro-abortion euphemisms; an abortion does not "interrupt" a pregnancy, it ends it by killing the developing child. Nowhere in the scientists' essay is the word "abortion" to be found.)

Used in conjunction with prostaglandin, the abortion pill has an effectiveness rate of 90 percent; when used alone its effectiveness plummets as low as 60 percent. The drug must be administered in a hospital, and a return visit is necessary 48 hours after administration. In France — where the drug was introduced — a woman using the drug must be presented with the remains of the aborted child in order to verify that the abortion is complete.

RU 486 does not transform an abortion into a solitary act. It has no use as a "morning after" contraceptive: the Rosseul-Ulcaf scientists admit that "the drug is not suitable as a routine post-coital birth control agent." It is most useful as a preparatory agent, softening

and dilating the cervix before a facuum aspiration abortion.

On at least two occasions the administration of RU 486 has induced heart failure. On April 10, the New York Times reported that a French woman died after receiving the drug: the death apparently resulted from an adverse reaction to the prostaglandin that unavoidably accompanies the abortifacient. Pro-Abortion activists, invoking an imaginary "Back Alley Bloodletting" caused by illegal abortions before Roe vs. Wade, insist that even one abortion-related maternal death is too many. Accordingly, such activists have no excuse for their enhancement with RU 486 as a practical option; however, the drug retains its potent symbolic value.

In the June 24 issue of The Nation magazine, Mark Green, Commissioner of Consumer Affairs for New York City, recites the alleged non-abortion benefits of RU 486. He blames the current import ban on the drug (for medical use only; clinical testing is permissible) on a conspiracy of "anti-choice fundamentalists." Writes Green: "It's one thing for RU 486 opponents to say they are pro-life and quite another to be pro cancer."

Green's rhetorical flourish is delivered at lethal expense to the known facts. As

Charlotte Allen documents in the July issue of the American Spectator, RU 486 has no documentable use in the treatment of cancer, AIDS or any other affliction. Medical Ethicist Arthur Caplan observes that the compound would be "merely another interesting substance" were it not for its involvement in the abortion debate.

The primary impediment to American distribution of RU 486 is Rosseul-Ulcaf, which manufactures the drug. The company has no desire to expose itself to the liabilities that would result from American distribution of the drug. Allen reveals, "Rosseul started marketing the drug in France — only under orders from the French government, which owns a 36 percent interest in the company."

The modest collective intelligence of the pro-abortion movement is hopelessly bewitched by the most facile anti-government slogans — for instance, "Keep the government out of the bedroom." The movement presently champions a substance developed by a government-coopted company, which was inflicted upon French women by the French government — with certifiably dangerous results. (Even routine use of RU 486 produces heavy bleeding, diarrhea, vomiting — and an increased risk of birth defects if the abortion fails). Further government intervention, in the form of a limitation upon liability, would be necessary in order to make the drug available in the U.S. Such intervention would serve the disreputable purpose of encouraging the use of a demonstrably dangerous drug with no discernible value — except for the fortification of the lethal ideology of the pro-abortion movement.

Letters

Shallow roots

Editor:

The retirements of Justices Marshall and Brennan have set the stage for the Supreme Court to overturn Roe v. Wade, its 1973 ruling recognizing every woman's fundamental right to decide whether or not to continue a problem pregnancy. The imposition of mandatory motherhood, sought by Presidents Reagan and Bush and fundamentalist Catholic and Protestant leaders, is based on the notion that fetuses are, or should be regarded as, persons from the time of conception.

This "personhood at conception" idea has very shallow roots. It is not found in the Christian or Jewish scriptures. Indeed, Genesis 2:7 defines personhood as beginning at the first breath.

"Personhood at conception" has no basis in our common culture. We celebrate birth anniversaries, not conception anniversaries. We do not hold funerals for miscarriages. We compute age from birth.

Whether we define persons theologically as "created in the image of God" or scientifically as thinking, valuing, tool-using, culture-building organisms, the science of neurobiology shows that the fetus lacks the basic equipment, a wired-up cerebral cortex, for the functions of human personhood until sometime after 28 weeks of gestation. All abortions are done before that time, 91 percent by 12 weeks, 99 percent by 20 weeks.

Any government law, regulation, or court ruling that limits any woman's freedom of choice on abortion denies that woman her fundamental right to freedom of conscience, enslaves her to the whim of male politicians and clerics, shreds the constitutional wall of separation between church and state, and endangers the basic

liberties of all persons.

As the Supreme Court can no longer be counted on to protect our unalienable fundamental rights, we the people must demand that our elected lawmakers do so or we must replace them with politicians who will.

Edd Doerr
Executive Director
Americans for Religious Liberty

Memorable event

Editor:

I wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Utah State Special Olympics Committee and the Pro-BYU volunteers who combined to put on a memorable program for our youngsters at BYU on June 6-8, 1991.

This was West's first team entry in the Special Olympics program. Needless to say, our collective efforts/successes exceeded all expectations. Students and staff enjoyed an abundance of rewards in the form of individual growth, friends and incredible fun.

On behalf of the West Panthers please accept our sincere thanks for a fantastic three days of activities (and great weather).

Walt Mehr
Head coach/SIH teacher
West High School
Salt Lake City

Correction

An editorial in Tuesday's newspaper inadvertently spelled Stephen Studdert's name incorrectly. We apologize to Mr. Studdert and his family for the error.

Doctors profit from mammography labs

WASHINGTON — American women get conflicting advice about how often they should have mammograms — breast X-rays to detect cancer. The best advice may not be that which comes from a doctor, especially if the doctor owns the mammography machine.

The mammogram is no longer just a diagnostic tool. It is a prescribed ritual, and about 3,000 new mammography machines have sprouted up around the country in the last five years to take care of the demand. The American College of Radiology gets about 10 applications a day from people seeking approval to operate a mammography



Jack Anderson & Dale Van Atta

UNITED
FEATURE
SYNDICATE

learned where others behind the lobbying effort were getting their money. The hired lobbyist, Robbins Associates, was being paid not by a group of concerned doctors.

that Spectrascan's arrangements with doctors may violate the Medicare anti-kickback law. George Souerwine of Spectrascan said, "There is no kickback involved," and noted that the Health and Human Services Department inspected the financial arrangements and found "no problem, in principle, with the Spectrascan service."

The argument for lifting the price cap doesn't hold up. Most doctors can still provide mammography services for a profit at \$55. One Florida radiologist told us that no one is losing money at that