

The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIALS/LETTERS THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2013

The Judgments on Bradley Manning

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Manning Found Not Guilty of Aiding the Enemy" (front page, July 31):

Pfc. Bradley Manning's conduct in providing WikiLeaks with more than 700,000 confidential government documents undoubtedly violated some provisions of federal law, as his pleas of guilty to some of the charges and Col. Denise R. Lind's rulings as to others make plain. But Colonel Lind's brave decision — it is nothing less than that — rejecting the Justice Department's misguided efforts to convict Private Manning of violating the Espionage Act in "aiding the enemy" is worthy of special commendation.

If the government had its way, Private Manning would have been found guilty of a crime so serious that the portion of the Espionage Act said to have been violated allows the imposition of the ultimate legal sanction, capital punishment.

The government's theory was nothing if not straightforward: once confidential national defense-related information was leaked to any journalistic entity (or, in the case of WikiLeaks, a quasi-journalistic one), Al Qaeda might have read it and acted on what it read. Hence, the enemy would have been "aided."

This breathtakingly expansive view of what it takes to aid an enemy would have imperiled a good deal of invaluable journalism. Indeed, when prosecutors were asked by Colonel Lind at an earlier stage of the case whether the same charges would have been lodged against Private Manning if he had leaked the same information to this newspaper, the response was affirmative.

Guided by Colonel Lind's rejection of its efforts, one can only hope that the Justice Department learns its lesson.

FLOYD ABRAMS

New York, July 31, 2013

The writer, a lawyer who has handled high-profile First Amendment lawsuits, represented The New York Times in the Pentagon Papers case.

TO THE EDITOR:

Bradley Manning is an American hero and must be pardoned if the United States is to have any moral standing in the world. His disclosure of unconscionable acts perpetrated by the military informed the people of what our government and tax dollars were doing. He did this in the hope that the behavior of our military would improve and our reputation as a civilized nation would begin to be repaired.

Private Manning's act of civil disobedience, in the tradition of the great American rule-breakers, should be commended, not punished. Although he knew he was risking his life by disclosing heinous military actions, his courage overwhelmed his tendency toward self-preservation; he saw a wrong and risked his life to right it.

Commitment to humanity is far more important than commitment to laws.

JONATHAN PUTTERMAN

Bronx, July 31, 2013

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Loner Sought a Refuge, and Ended Up in War" (front page, July 31):

It seems to me that the Army shares some of the culpability. Your article uses the word "misfit" to describe Bradley



OLIVER M. NEW

Manning and cites instances of his being a troublemaker in the service. Why was such a person given access to such sensitive material in the first place?

TERRY SHAMES

Berkeley, Calif., July 31, 2013

TO THE EDITOR:

Whatever personal crises he was undergoing, the bottom line is that Bradley Manning did the right thing by exposing the war's atrocities to a public that had grown numb. We forget that war is our responsibility and do not appreciate its consequences.

The video of pilots killing innocent journalists, rescuers and children allowed us to see what others face every day in the fog of war, and understand why such bitterness is created.

TOM MILLER

Oakland, Calif., July 31, 2013

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MAKING IT LAST

From 'Lucky Encounter' in Vietnam to 40 Years Married

By ERIKA ALLEN

Published: July 5, 2013 62 Comments

Booming's "Making It Last" column profiles baby boomer couples who have been together 25 years or more. Send us your story and photos through our submission form.

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William English Walling III

Tran Tuong Nhu (right) and Tom Miller the day her mother predicted she would soon be married. They just celebrated their 40th anniversary.

Tom Miller and Tran Tuong Nhu, known as Nhu, have been married 40 years. They met in Vietnam during the war. Tom was an aid worker. She was the granddaughter of a court official and from age 5, lived much of her life abroad, attending boarding school in England, graduating from the Dalton School in New York City and getting her college degree from Berkeley. Tom currently has a law practice in Oakland, Calif. Nhu, who was press secretary for Jerry Brown when he was mayor of Oakland, works with Burmese refugees. They have four adult children. A condensed and edited version of our conversation follows:

How did you meet?

Nhu: In 1973 Tom was working for Unicef in Vietnam. I was back in the country staying with my uncle. Tom spoke to me about a job as a liaison between the South Vietnamese government and Unicef.

Nhu's mother had a prediction.

Nhu: She predicted that I was going to get married in 1973. I told her that even if I met the right man I wouldn't marry him just to prove her wrong. That same day Tom rang the doorbell to offer me the Unicef job.

What attracted you?

Nhu: What would you do if a handsome stranger showed up at your door? He was so handsome and charming, and really, timing is everything. Something happens and you can't stop it. Everything I said to my mother about not getting married flew right out the window. We married a month later and to her credit, she never said I told you so.

Tom: There are lots of beautiful women. What attracted me to Nhu was really her independence and intelligence.

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Tom Miller

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Booming

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"He embodied everything that was kind and decent in America, which was sowing death and destruction," she said. He: "What I like and what's made her so successful is that she has a lot of strength."

Readers' Comments

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She's feisty and smart and interesting. But her beauty is nice, too.

Why marry so soon?

Nhu: I went traveling for a while after we met, but when I got back he proposed. I said, "Don't you think this is sudden, we don't even know each other." He said, "What better way is there to get to know each other."

Tom: Right away, we became co-conspirators in life. She was beautiful and smart and understood politics. She wasn't afraid to do brave things.

Did you serve in the military?

Tom: No, my number in the draft lottery was too high, but had I been called I was prepared to go to Canada as my brother had.

Nhu, you come from a mixed political heritage; during the French occupation your father's family members were government loyalists, your mother's, revolutionaries.

Nhu: I really just wanted the war to end. People who were educated, even a little bit, knew this was an unjust war.

Did you protest while in Vietnam?

Nhu: No, you would have been jailed. Back in America I made antiwar speeches, but that wasn't such a big deal, everyone did that.

Your wedding?

Nhu: We married after we moved to New York City. It was so depressing to go down to City Hall, so a Japanese Methodist minister married us on 110th Street and Broadway at a friend's house. We didn't invite anyone, and when we got there he told us we needed another witness. I called a friend and asked if she could spare 20 minutes and she said yes, but only 20 because she was doing her laundry and didn't want it to be stolen from the dryer.

Tom: It was hard to tell whether it was great, or a disaster, but either way, I'd had enough life experience to know she was the right one.

You didn't stay in New York long.

Tom: One of the first things we did together was move. Nhu came back to our apartment on the East Side of Manhattan from grocery shopping with this wilted lettuce and said, "We have to move to California." I got a job working for the West Coast office of the Council on Economic Priorities.

Nhu: Tom's brother was teaching Chinese at Berkeley. I didn't know him very well, but I had always lived in collectives and gone to boarding schools, so I thought: "Let's go live together with him. And let's take your parents with us." We stopped in Chicago, where they lived, and brought his parents to California. They sold their home, which gave them money to buy the compound. We went from having no children to living with our three nieces.

And your four children?

Nhu: We adopted our first son from Vietnam in 1974. Our second was born in 1979 and by that time my mother and stepfather had died. My teenage sisters needed a home and came to live with us. Tom's mother said she would not spend her gold years baby-sitting,



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but she was a big help. After the war ended, my uncle's family started coming to the Bay Area — 15 of them — and we sponsored many more and helped them get settled.

Tom: When my brother's marriage split up his three daughters remained on the compound for their high school years. Having the grandparents around was wonderful. We had a lot of support.

You had your four kids plus Tom's brother's three, plus Nhu's two sisters — did so many children cause tension in your marriage?

Nhu: We always agreed on child rearing, but I was firmer. In the end I was sorry I didn't have more; it was a lot of fun. They are so interesting and they entertain each other, they are watchful of each other and they are very fair-minded. They want to make sure everything is equal.

Tom: I love children. Nhu didn't consider herself the mothering type, but she was the best nonmotherly mother there is. She is very direct with them. The burden of discipline falls unfairly on Nhu. I like to play with kids; sometimes I get carried away and an adult has to intervene.

Did you remain involved in Vietnamese causes after the war?

Nhu: We were in San Francisco when I heard an appeal for Vietnamese speakers to come where all these Vietnamese orphans were being flown in. I went to help and saw people were just picking them out like puppies. We realized, speaking to them, some of these kids were not orphans.

Tom: When the adoption agencies ignored the fact that some of these kids had families, I became involved in a class-action lawsuit that was known as the orphan airlift lawsuit. A judicial panel heard the case, but was not receptive and we ended up helping families individually.

What about the financial pressure of a big family?

Nhu: We never starved, but we didn't have any extra. Tom resumed his law career reluctantly in 1989, at my suggestion, because we had such a large family. He's really not the hard-driving lawyer type.

Tom: We managed and we had help. We were both working until our second son was about 4, when Nhu saw his little face sitting in the window waiting for her to come home. I was working with my brother's publishing business until I realized I had to get serious about earning a living so I began practicing law again.

What do you argue over?

Nhu: We rarely disagree. He is very nonconfrontational. You can't argue with someone who doesn't argue back. It's taught me to keep things under control; there is too much suffering in the world to extend that to your family life. He reads the paper out loud sometimes, which can be annoying, but after 40 years I am used to it.

Tom: Very minor things. I do pro bono work with people who go to Cuba and end up in trouble with the U.S. government, so we travel there a lot. She wasn't eager to do another trip to Cuba, she wanted to have new experiences.

What's made it last?

Tom: Every day is interesting. It's been so interesting working on projects together. We are united in our opposition to U.S. foreign policy. Just sharing things together: our wonderful kids, the beautiful grandchildren. There is no boredom. We just enjoy being together, without reservation.

Nhu: It was just a lucky encounter. I am not sure why this happened. I had many occasions to get married before I was 26, which to my mother felt quite old. And then I

met this person and my life was transformed. Forty years later I still feel a little breathless.

You married during one of the most volatile times in American history. Did you realize it at the time?

Nhu: When Tom was awarded a prize from the American Jaycees [Junior Chamber of Commerce] for being a humanitarian in Vietnam, I sat in the audience sobbing. The U.S. was trying to destroy my country and the Jaycees were recognizing Tom for trying to save lives.

So absurd! This was also what made loving Tom acutely painful. He embodied everything that was kind and decent in America, which was sowing death and destruction. Those of us who came of age in the 1960s are sharply aware of this terrible dichotomy.

Nhu is a very strong personality. Is it difficult to get a word in?

Tom: No! It's not that type of thing. When Nhu is being strong and certain that she's right, even when she may not be, it's better not to directly oppose that and use more subtle ways to make your point, though it doesn't always work. What I like and what's made her so successful is that she has a lot of strength.

For this article, I need to ask the date you were married.

Nhu: Oh my God, it's today! I just looked at the date! July 3, 1973. See what I mean about being too busy to notice?

Tom! Should we do something today?

Previous "Making It Last" profiles can be found [here](#).

Booming: Living Through the Middle Ages offers news and commentary about baby boomers, anchored by [Michael Winerip](#). You can follow Booming via [RSS here](#) or visit [nytimes.com/booming](#). You can reach us by e-mail at booming@nytimes.com.

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62 Comments

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Glen Ridge Girl NJ

Amazing. I love this series. What strikes me about so many of these marriages is that the couples didn't have big, fancy weddings and they didn't go into marriage with a preconceived idea of how their lives would go. They were flexible and rolled with what life brought them. They weren't obsessed with money or material wealth. They both had passionate interests outside the marriage as well as shared goals and dreams. They truly support and respect each other. And they are really friends and partners. As someone who had a brief, unhappy marriage, I am in awe of these people who had the wisdom, maturity, and generosity of heart to make marriage so wonderful and lasting.

July 6, 2013 at 9:36 a.m. REPLY You recommended this 81

Steve R NY

"He embodied everything that was kind and decent in America, which was sowing death and destruction. Those of us who came of age in the 1960s are sharply aware of this terrible dichotomy." What a profound expression joy and sorrow of being American. There are so many great people and as a nation we have so much promise. Hopefully the next generation can get us closer to our potential.

July 5, 2013 at 5:39 p.m. REPLY RECOMMEND 60

Angel Austin, Texas

"Forty years later I still feel a little breathless." Just beautiful.

July 5, 2013 at 5:39 p.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 59

Ephemerol Northern California

What is not mentioned in this article is that Tom founded the primary burn center hospital in Vietnam for victims of American Napalm and treated the very same young girl, Kim Phuoc, who photograph was published world wide, screaming that the substance was "too hot" and thus burning her skin. She is now a medical doctor here in the USA after a long journey through Canada. Life continues to be and the most amazing and mysterious journey does it not.

<http://milwaukee.com/our-staff/atomics-atom-miller>

July 6, 2013 at 12:41 p.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 52

Tom Miller Berkeley, CA

Thanks for your kind thoughts. One slight error: Nhu's father was not a wealthy government official, but was killed in the war when a student before she was born less than a year into the marriage. Her strong mother made it on her own, with Nhu in tow, to Oxford, Columbia and California.

July 6, 2013 at 12:41 p.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 43

Martvin Mami, FL

Married so long they barely notice their anniversary. That's pretty awesome if you ask me.

July 5, 2013 at 5:39 p.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 43

Martha Ann Seattle

I had the fortune of first meeting Nhu, and later Tom, when I lived in Hanoi a few years ago when Nhu showed up at my dining room table. It was obvious that here was someone very special. Nothing brightens up a room more than when these two enter. Instead of their world becoming smaller as we all get older, it only gets larger, and more fun.

July 5, 2013 at 9:29 p.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 38

Susan Brooklyn, NY

In addition, these two had the strength of character to share their happiness with an extended family of blood relatives and unrelated people in need of advocates. These kinds of lives are exceedingly rare and this is a couple well worth press coverage. They have clearly gained a lot of happiness by thinking of the needs and lives of others.

In reply to Glen Ridge Girl July 6, 2013 at 5:44 p.m. [RECOMMEND](#) 36

Stella NYC

This lovely couple reminds me of what Enid Bagnold said when asked the secret of her long and famously happy marriage, "I had him and he had me."

July 5, 2013 at 6:52 p.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 32

CRC CT

Maybe it's just because she has a strong personality. Do you scour the paper in search of opportunities for feminist outrage?

In reply to G July 6, 2013 at 6:41 a.m. [RECOMMEND](#) 29

G nyc

Gosh this is rude:

"Nhu is a very strong personality. Is it difficult to get a word in?"

Is it because she's a woman you ask?

July 5, 2013 at 9:30 p.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 29

MORE IN BOOMING (16 OF 24 ARTICLES)

ss NJ **A Quiet Drink: Up on the Roof, Peaceful**

With respect **as Can Be**

them that [Read More »](#)

was lucky. They were not. I imagine these two think a great deal about

those who died, as they lived in Viet Nam as it was happening.

In reply to TC July 6, 2013 at 12:42 p.m. RECOMMEND 26

NYT reader WI

Wonderful article and story, but I have to wonder at the question "Nhu is a very strong personality. Is it difficult to get a word in?"...Would that be asked of a wife regarding her husband? In an interview with a couple and article about their relationship, the question ignores even Nhu's presence in that moment - it doesn't ask them both if they have difficulty because of different personality types or discussion approaches, but only draws in Tom. I'm sure there was no intent of sidelining Nhu, but to me it subtly rings of stereotyped gender roles and the assumption that assertive, talkative and opinionated women are difficult 'to handle' and stepping beyond their expected sphere.

July 6, 2013 at 8:56 p.m. REPLY RECOMMEND 24

Mark Manhattan

I would like to be reincarnated as one of these two people, or, second choice, be one of their children.

July 5, 2013 at 5:39 p.m. REPLY RECOMMEND 22

David Holzman Lexington Massachusetts

Happy 40th!

July 5, 2013 at 6:52 p.m. REPLY RECOMMEND 21

msf NYC

Thank you!

Just beautiful - I wish there were many more couples like you!

July 5, 2013 at 5:39 p.m. REPLY RECOMMEND 21

JE New York

Tears in my eyes, reading this. Congratulations on 40 years together, doing well by doing good.

July 6, 2013 at 6:41 a.m. REPLY RECOMMEND 19

Sally TX

Nhu and Tom are not responsible for the war or the deaths of our soldiers. It is not logical nor fair to imply that his high number was responsible for other soldiers dying in the war.

I would bet that, like many boomers, they were deeply affected by all the deaths caused by the Vietnam war.

In reply to TC July 6, 2013 at 12:40 p.m. RECOMMEND 18

frankiethepunk toronto

Very attractive couple. Maybe it sounds a bit shallow, but they've aged well.

July 5, 2013 at 10:33 p.m. REPLY RECOMMEND 16

Laura California

Beautiful story, wonderful series. Lovely photographs too. I admire their priorities, especially around parenting.

July 5, 2013 at 5:39 p.m. REPLY RECOMMEND 16

Robert Rotterdam

This information, not in the story, says to me, either bad journalism or astounding humility. My guess is the latter.

In reply to Ephemeral July 6, 2013 at 2:41 p.m. RECOMMEND 15

John Pozzerle Katy, Texas

After years of reading different stories like this one, I have arrived to the conclusion that we are a great country with sorry governments. Especially when it comes to foreign policy. What bothers the heck out of me, it's the fact that I never could vote for a candidate that I really liked; I always had to vote for the least of the evils...

July 6, 2013 at 2:41 p.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 15



A Reader Detroit, MI

They sound fantastic! Wish I could invite them over for dinner.

July 6, 2013 at 10:20 a.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 15



dsnk Pittsburgh, PA

Love this series and this particular story made me both tear up and smile. What a beautiful example of what a marriage can be, so happy for them and their family.

July 6, 2013 at 7:33 a.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 14



Hope Springs Michigan

One of my favorites in this series. Just heart warming.

July 6, 2013 at 7:32 a.m. [REPLY](#) [RECOMMEND](#) 14

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Tom Miller Berkeley, CA Not You?

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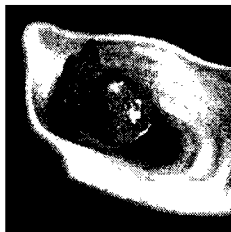
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A Global Quest. Touching Down in New York



The Bartender With a Lab Coat

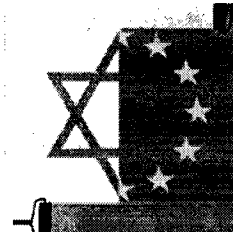


Amy Arbus's One-Woman Show With a View

Editorial: Mr. Spitzer and His Money
Eliot Spitzer promises to spend plenty on the race for New York City comptroller without revealing where it comes from.



The Original Green Lantern



Op-Ed: Europe's Stance on Settlements Is a Blunder

San Francisco Chronicle

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HEARST NEWS

Tuesday, July 30, 2013

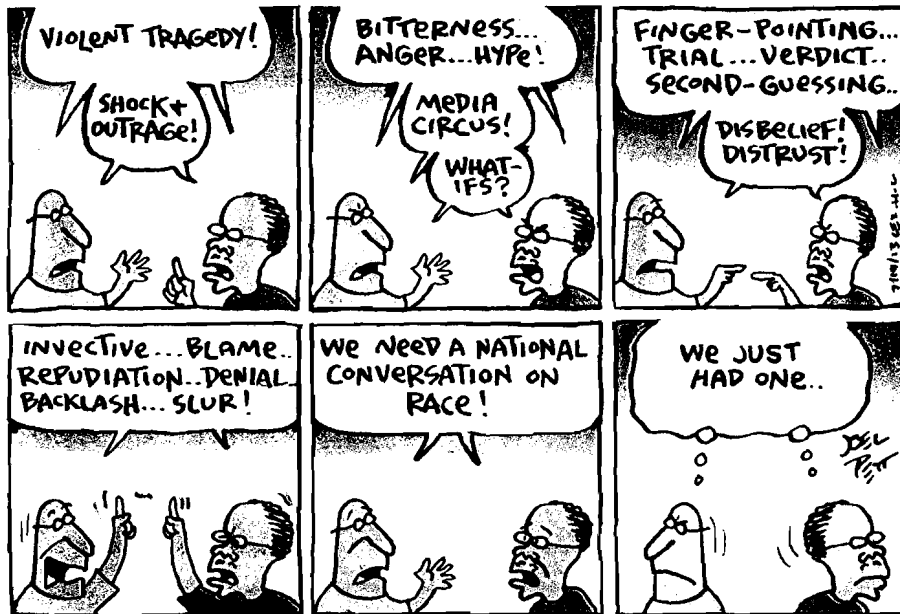
Reach out to North Korea

Pete McCloskey's observation that better communication with China might have avoided the Korean War "Opening dialogue with North Korea" (Open Forum, July 26) is good reason for better communication with North Korea instead of trading invective. Beneath the harsh exterior, there is a whole generation of educated North Koreans eager to reach out and face world problems together rather than be enemies.

Tom Miller, Oakland

San Francisco Chronicle

Thursday, July 18, 2013



Joel Pett / Lexington Herald-Leader

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'A nation divided'

While violence in the streets of Oakland may not achieve the desired end of a just government, it is not "hooliganism" (as suggested in your July 17 editorial, "Wrong way"), but the expression of an alienated populace frustrated at a government that does not exercise its power "from the consent of the governed" and does not exercise government's role to protect our "unalienable rights" of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," thereby conferring upon the populace the right "to alter or abolish it."

The dissonance created by the disconnect between the common good and common will and government policies will continue as long as the wealth of corporate America maintains its stranglehold.

Tom Miller, Oakland

Thursday, May 30, 2013 | A13

'Smart' rifle is dumb

The new "Smart" rifle ("Smart rifle lets startup put future in its sights," Business, May 28) sounds more like a personal drone.

When the rifle decides when to shoot "taking into account the distance, barometric pressure, temperature, the curvature of Earth and other variables," hunting is no longer a sport, and a deadly killing machine is set loose.

Tom Miller, Oakland

Misplaced outrage

Joel Brinkley's outrage at Afghanistan ("Taxing aid agencies is latest outrage from Afghan leaders," *Insight*, June 23) should instead be directed at those who chose to (1) invade Afghanistan, filled with hubris and blind to the challenges; (2) immediately aligned themselves with the corrupt warlords who are Karzai's base; and (3) refused to listen to the many dedicated Afghans who offered an alternative but were ignored.

Tom Miller, Oakland

San Francisco Chronicle

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cap-and-trade: Go global

Cap-and-trade ("Foes see disaster; backers see boon to factories, jobs," Nov. 12) cannot be a completely effective way to curb greenhouse gases until the whole world is involved, since it allows dirty industries to move to countries (or states) of least resistance such as China, where dirty coal produces a growing percentage of the energy.

To offset this, California should not only address carbon output in California but also carbon input from products imported from such countries, adding a tax commensurate with the carbon cost to the environment of such products.

Tom Miller, Oakland

A10 | Monday, April 22, 2012

Blowback against the U.S.

Shocking but we should not be shocked that two young brothers, one probably under the influence of the older, committed acts of revenge over the terrible suffering caused by the United States to people with whom they identify in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and Palestine. Vietnam taught the military establishment to abolish the draft to keep war alive. The White House and CIA thought they could fight cleaner wars through the use of drones, but no matter how "cleanly" you kill people, there are consequences, and the American people should realize that Boston may have been one of them.

Tom Miller, Oakland

TO THE EDITOR:

After one vice-presidential and two presidential debates, where's the plan?

On the Republican side, there are promises of jobs, lower taxes and prosperity, but no road map other than impossible math and the same tired mantra we have heard for decades that the sys-



KRIS MUKAI

tem will take care of itself if business is released from government controls. The Republicans' bottom line is protecting the 1 percent.

The Democrats have good ideas such as investment in education, energy sustainability, universal health care, cutting military costs and protecting Social Security. But how are they going to do this without Republican cooperation?

TOM MILLER

Oakland, Calif., Oct. 17, 2012

San Francisco Chronicle

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

Under the table, not on

Editor — It's OK for our corporate welfare state to hand billions of dollars in gifts to corporate friends through oil wars and pork-barrel projects and for senators and congresspeople to accept millions of dollars in campaign contributions from corporate beneficiaries.

But as Sen. Ted Stevens and Vice President Spiro Agnew before him have proven once again ("Senator indicted for corruption" July 30) you can't put the bag of money directly on the table.

TOM MILLER
Oakland