



## American Economic Foundation

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### HANG YOUR CLOTHES ON A HICKORY LIMB

*by Admiral Elliot B. Strauss*

"Hang your clothes on a hickory limb..." Those who remember the nursery rime, where a mother gives her daughter permission to go swimming, will remember she qualifies it by the injunction, "...but don't go near the water." I would hesitate to say that the above is a standard American foreign policy device, but it has obtained, or something very like it, in a number of recent foreign policy scenarios.

Perhaps the classic example of this was the Bay of Pigs venture. It was billed as a spontaneous invasion of exiled Cubans, adversaries of the Castro regime. The underlying idea was that on the triumphant arrival of the invaders the disaffected element within Cuba would rise up and overthrow the government. For this scenario to succeed, the invasion would have to gain the initial landing.

Unfortunately the administration in Washington dithered. To have a successful landing force required air cover, since it could be presumed that the Cuban air force would not stand idly by. One faction of the Washington planners pointed out if the U.S. (a.k.a. "Cuban exile") air cover needed to drop bombs, civilian casualties might ensue. To that faction, this was unacceptable and its viewpoint prevailed. The invasion was launched. At the last minute, others of the planners foresaw that without air cover the project was doomed. Cover was called for but it was too late for it to be furnished. The rest is history.

The conduct of the Vietnam War was perhaps even less excusable because multiple strictures were imposed on a military operation.

The North Vietnamese could enter South Vietnam whenever and wherever they were capable of so doing. The South Vietnamese and the U.S. forces were denied pursuit or attack into North Vietnam. U.S. military commanders were restricted to bombing

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### PLACING AIDS IN PERSPECTIVE

*by Michael Fumento*

Not too long ago AIDS was touted as a threat to the very survival of humanity. For example, Dr. Halfdan Mahler, when he was director of the World Health Organization, proclaimed: "We stand nakedly in front of a very serious pandemic as mortal as any pandemic there has ever been. I don't know of any greater killer than AIDS." Dr. Stephen Jay Gould, a professor at Harvard University and a popular writer stated, "Yes, AIDS may run through the entire population, and may carry off a quarter or more of us." One doctor, Theresa Crenshaw, told Congress, that by 1996 there could be ten billion persons infected with the AIDS virus, graciously granting however that the earth's population is only half that. If you're laughing, the White House wasn't. It subsequently appointed her to the President's AIDS commission.

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### The Reason Foundation

The Reason Foundation is one of a number of free-market think tanks. It is the only one which publishes a popular national magazine—REASON—as part of its program.

REASON is a monthly magazine of analysis and commentary on current affairs. Its tagline of "free minds and free markets" is intended to indicate the magazine's libertarian slant, favoring both strong support for individual liberties and a laissez-faire approach to the economy. REASON features some of the best and the brightest of today's writers and thinkers—including Milton Friedman, Charles Murray, Thomas Sowell, Walter Williams, and humorist P.J. O'Rourke.

The Reason Foundation's other main claim to fame is "privatization," a term it introduced into the political

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