



U.S. shouldn't turn its back on Afghanistan

It is time for President Obama to decide how many troops are to be withdrawn from Afghanistan. Some follow the logic that the troops should come home because Osama bin Laden is dead and the price tag for the war in Afghanistan is too expensive. But what is the price of freedom for the Afghan people and America's security?

Would people have us retreat before Afghan forces are capable of maintaining the freedom won, not to mention the fruits of democracy? Would they have us prematurely leave and let the Taliban retake the government and again have the country become a haven of al-Qaeda?

If so, then all the American lives spent and limbs lost will have been in vain, and it will have been a dishonor for all of the Afghan soldiers and civilians who have risked their lives to establish democracy in Afghanistan.

The bravery of Afghan civilians is vividly illustrated in the USA TODAY article that spoke of Afghanistan villagers who hid an American SEAL so that he could be rescued ("A SEAL's family remembers" News Cover story, May 27). I ask those who advise a deep and speedy retreat from Afghanistan: Are those the kind of people you wish to leave to be killed by the Taliban and its al-Qaeda allies?

Bill Smith
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Golf suits presidents

It's no surprise that so many recent presidents have played golf ("Golf, presidents: Range bedfellows," Cover story, Sports, Monday). Not only is it a great outlet for their competitive nature, but the same "PAR" principles that make them successful chief executives translate perfectly to the links: They prioritize (focus on what matters most), adapt (see change as an opportunity) and are re-

sponsible (take ownership of the outcome). The only difference is that in politics there are no mulligans.

Dan and Krissi Barr
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Foreclosures can harm

I don't get "strategic foreclosures," the situation in which people voluntarily default on their home loans ("Leaving a toxic asset," Cover story, News, Monday).

Most people would never consider robbing a bank, yet many are willing to renege selfishly on the mortgage contract they signed. While they do not wield a gun or demand a note, they are essentially doing the same thing by causing a loss to the mortgage holder.

Homeowners' excuses citing lower prices on comparable homes or a devaluation in their current home are not adequate, especially when people are not forced to move. During the real estate boom, people were not expected to pay more money for their mortgages because the value of their homes rose. They were entitled to the return on their investment. People who make investments, including purchasing homes, risk losing money. Fortunately, time usually evens out most gains and losses. Homeowners who are underwater and considering strategic foreclosure should stop focusing on immediate gratification and instead consider the long-term consequences.

Melanie Murphy
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A 'house' is not a 'home'

USA TODAY's article about owners defaulting on home mortgage loans used the words "house" and "home" as if they were wholly interchangeable. They are not. A house is a building in which people live. A home is a building in which children are raised, leave and return — perhaps with children of their own — to relive moments past and enjoy that which is intrinsic to a family.

To think of a building only in financial terms makes it unlikely for it to ever be a home.

Darrel Salisbury
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* also became very clear that I