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### **How About a Comprehensive Bone Ban Treaty?**

In the opening scenes of screenwriter Kubrick's film 2001: A Space Odyssey, an ape from times long past picks up a bone and begins to experiment. The viewer presumes the creature comprehends the bone's potential for destruction for in the next scene, a group of apes attack another group of apes and beats them to death with . . . you got it, bones.

Fashionable rhetoric circulating around the world today suggests moral imperatives for eliminating nuclear weapons. A test ban treaty seems to be a logical first step. Let us imagine for a moment that we could wave a magic wand and all atoms heavier than bismuth became nonexistent . . . the means by which men create atomic weapons would simply disappear. Of course, large segments of the planet would go dark and cold for we would also lose the ability to heat and light homes with atomic power. Many of our navy's ships would lie dead in the water.

What "bone" would replace the "bomb"? How about guns? Another wave of the wand can eliminate all machines that operate on pressures greater than 100 pounds per square inch. Presto-changeo, all weapons powered with gunpowder would be rendered useless and the world would be rid of the means to launch lethal projectiles with high pressure gasses. Of course automobiles and airplanes would stop, electricity generating plants would spin down . . .

What new "bone" then? How about a microbe for which only we have the antidote that would eliminate our adversaries. Whoops! Better wave the wand again and eliminate all forms of life below carpet mites. Now the means for making penicillin disappear. All of the symbiotic relationships between plants, animals and microbes are thrown in disarray . . . with catastrophic results. Further, the EPA would convulse in fits of apoplexy over the sheer numbers species just driven to extinction. New bones keep popping up? No problem. Wave the wand . . . spears, arrows, catapults, clubs, and yes . . . even dried old bones can be made to disappear.

What kind of protection may we expect by wrapping ourselves in the cloak of morality? None. The Christians may have been Rome's most moral inhabitants but the lions had bigger bones. History of man is replete with examples. When predators have the biggest bones both life and property of a victim are certain to become the predator's possessions. Had the ape victims in Kubrick's film gathered up a mess of bigger bones, the scene would have a different ending: The righteous victims might have restored the peace by wiping out the invading predators. At the very least, the predators would have retreated and society of the era would have settled into a kind of cold-war balance of power . . . with the economies of both sides artificially bolstered by a "bones race."

Daily news provides us with examples of the ugliest predatory tendencies on earth; all perpetrated by men. The world's predators don't read papers signed by honorable men. Amongst signers, there will always be those who chose not to honor what they signed. Attempts to control technology deemed "too terrible to possess" have unintended consequences. It's clear that China now possess modern data on fabrication of United State's bones. Nobody knows where all the Soviet Union's suitcase-size bones have gone. Our own Commerce Department has sanctioned sale of billions of little bones (a list of ugly pathogenic toxins as long as your arm!) to Iraq.

It is incumbent upon those who would call themselves honorable to possess the biggest and baddest bones in existence. No matter what bones men may agree to ban, other men will simply ignore the ban or devise equally effective if not more terrible tools of destruction. The only way to stop them from being used is to nullify the advantages for doing so. Laying down our bones may well be suicidal, not only for ourselves but those we claim to protect. Wishing, naive passivism and "can't we all just get along?" mentalities contribute nothing to the defense of a peaceful existence. Truly honorable men cannot lay down their bones until the wave of a magic wand renders all men incapable of disservice to other men.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Nuckolls, III". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert L. Nuckolls, III