

Opposing Points of View

Written by Nick Sanders
Thursday, 11 June 2015 00:00



This blog site has become famous in some circles—and infamous in others—for expressing a point of view. That seems to be a rarity these days—especially in the worlds of government contracting and/or management consulting. But that’s what we do here.

We don’t just link to stories; instead, we explore them and discuss what we like (or don’t like) about them. We employ sarcasm and snark. We name names. We attempt to point a finger of blame where we think it should be pointed. We aim for accountability. We opine.

From time to time, some people have a problem with that.

So here’s the deal. This is a blog, not a newspaper. This is a blog, not an academic journal. We don’t hold ourselves to the higher standards of official news sources or academia, and we hope you won’t hold us to those standards either.

We don’t get paid for this. Accordingly, we are not professional writers. We don’t have editors or fact-checkers or typists. These articles aren’t peer-reviewed. It’s just us. (Or me, really. But we told you about that bit [here](#).) We do our best, but we don’t expect perfection. Neither should you. If you find a typo, drop us an email. If you find a grammatical mistake, do the same thing. We’ll correct the errors as time permits.

But we sincerely hope that you don’t judge the value-added by this blog solely by those superficial criteria. Instead, we hope you’ll judge it by the content. Even though occasionally our

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content may be wrong as well.

We get our content from many sources. We use legal decisions from judicial sites and articles from newspaper sites. We use regulatory filings and DoJ press releases, and we use Google searches and auto-notifications of certain keywords. We use other blogs that cover subjects that interest us. We get input from many sources and we wait to see what sparks our interest or curiosity. That spark becomes a blog article.

We strive for accuracy but we don't always achieve that goal. We normally don't just take the input from one source; instead, we run searches and see what other sources have to say about the same event. But news sources are fallible, and most of the stuff on the internet is written down to a middle-school grade level, and most of the stuff is written in one or two sentence paragraphs, with only the most superficial facts being reported. And sometimes those facts are wrong.

So despite our best efforts, from time to time we get the story wrong ourselves. We get our dander up about a thing that is not really a thing, or we get upset for the wrong reasons. Or we name the wrong names or point the finger of blame at the wrong person. We opine, but our opinion is based on a flawed understanding.

From time to time, we screw up.

But that's in the nature of a blog. More importantly, when we screw up, we admit it. We post [follow-up](#) stories or out-and-out [corrections](#)

. We do our best to get it right the first time, but sometimes we get it wrong and then we try to fix it. We don't hold ourselves to journalistic standards but we do try to operate with integrity and honesty. We do our best, knowing that sometimes we'll screw up.

But that's not good enough for some people.

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Every so often we get an email or phone call from somebody who feels wronged by one of our blog articles. They hold us accountable for getting it wrong, even though in almost every one of those instances we based our reporting on publicly available sources. Somehow they hold us responsible for the reporting errors of major newspapers or other similar sources. As if we were supposed to fact-check those sources before we based a blog article on them.

Recently we received an email about an article we wrote more than a year ago, telling us we were unfair to the employees of a certain company, that if we knew all the facts, we would have never opined as we did, or pointed the finger of blame as we did. The email provided additional facts, facts never reported by the newspapers or magazines or the DoJ press release. Twice we have received a phone call from the same soldier, telling us we unfairly characterized certain soldiers (and this soldier in particular) in an article written nearly three years ago. The soldier made certain allegations, allegations not substantiated by any independent source. The soldier expected us to see his side of the story and change our blog article as a result. In fact, he wanted us to delete that allegedly inaccurate blog article.

People who feel wronged by our blog articles want us to fix it in a manner we are not prepared to perform. They want us to delete the offending article altogether. They want us to make it disappear. (Well in fairness the email about the employees didn't ask for that, but the wronged soldier definitely did.) In the case of the wronged soldier, he demanded we remove the offending article and threatened legal action if we did not accede to his demands.

That ain't happening.

There are many limitations associated with a weblog, but one of its virtues is that it provides a chronological record. You can use this site to search out articles from 2009, and see what we thought and said about events at the time. There's no revisionism here. Right or wrong, the articles stand as written.

What we offer, instead, is to post a rebuttal article. If somebody feels upset enough to email or to call us, we believe they ought to be willing to lay out their opposing point of view for us to publish. We won't edit it; we'll just publish it and link to the original article that caused the offense. That's what we offer and we mean it.

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Nobody has ever taken us up on our offer.

In particular, the soldier who was so upset he called us twice and threatened legal action never accepted our offer to post his rebuttal article.

But the offer remains open and this article memorializes it. If you are upset or offended by one of our articles, if we got it wrong and you want to correct the record, you know how to do it. Type up your own article and send it in for publication. We'll take it from there.

We are not perfect. We'll get it wrong from time to time. If we need to correct the record we will do so. But the record will stand as written. If you think we should do more, you are welcome to submit your own article. In the meantime, if you don't like the way we operate this blog, you are welcome to start your own, and to see how easy it is to crank out 3,000 to 5,000 words a week—every week—and to try to add some value while doing it.