

SUNDAY OPINION

TORIALS

in Yemen

ployed in Afghanistan (23,000 of whom will be withdrawn by the end of the summer). Troubling as they are for other reasons, including the possibility of civilian casualties, drone strikes against Al Qaeda insurgents are not labor-intensive. Moreover, the administration is adamant that the recent increase in U.S. activity in Yemen doesn't portend a major commitment of troops or resources. "That would not serve our long-term interests and runs counter to the desires of the Yemeni government and its people," a spokesman for the National Security Council told The Times.

Given the experience of the U.S. in Afghanistan, where a mission to dislodge Al Qaeda and the Taliban morphed into a decade-long exercise in counterinsurgency and nation-building, it is hardly alarmist to worry that similar mission creep might occur in Yemen, especially as the U.S. becomes more invested in the Hadi government. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula isn't the only threat to the new regime. Islamic militants have established an "emirate" in southern Yemen.

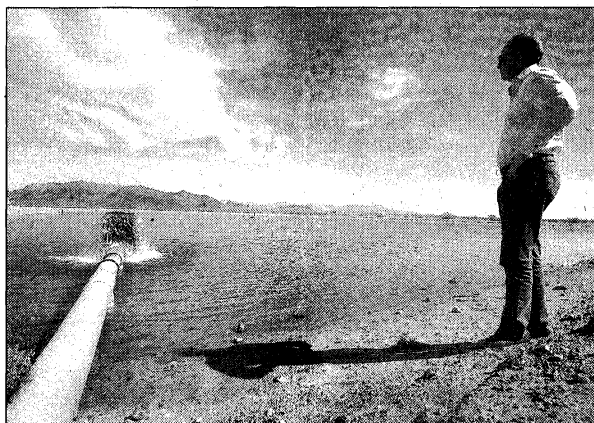
No one should belittle the danger posed by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. There is clearly a need for intelligence operations such as the one that thwarted a conspiracy to construct a potentially undetectable bomb in the month before the anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death. What President Obama — or Mitt Romney, if he is elected in November — must avoid is the sort of expansive intervention that has enmeshed this country in Afghanistan.

shopping carts

tendant, or some other way to ensure that carts don't end up on streets as a kind of portable urban blight. The Planning Department is under orders to study, as soon as any money turns up in city coffers, how to require existing stores to also keep their carts on the premises.

Like a broken window that goes unrepaired, abandoned shopping carts are a problem and lend a depressing, transient air to a street. Any ideas about wrangling them ought to be considered. But really, a law mandating that stores erect barriers or pro-

LETTERS



AL SEIB Los Angeles Times

CADIZ INC. President Scott Slater; his firm wants to tap water reserves in the Mojave Desert.

Desert water rights

Re "Firm wants to tap liquid gold in the Mojave Desert," May 16

The Cadiz Inc. project will drain an aquifer in the eastern Mojave Desert and pipe it to the lawns of Orange County, reaping billions for the company.

Conspicuously absent from the debate is the government of San Bernardino County, which was required to produce an environmental review but punted it to a water district nearly 200 miles away. Now it has moved to exempt the Cadiz project from the local groundwater law, signing away its enforcement authority for the laughably weak provisions of the exemption agreement, which, among other things, waits an entire decade before even calculating harm to the aquifer.

Our groundwater is a public resource, being squandered here to make a few people rich and destroying the environment in the process. The government has a responsibility to stop this dirty water grab.

LEENE ANDERSON
Los Angeles

The writer is the desert lands program director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

Were one to sell topsoil or sand from public lands to benefit a private seller, what would one think? Absurd? Not at all, in the context of the water thieves who have researched the regulations and concluded that their theft of public property is legitimate.

We must certainly take whatever action is neces-

would ascertain if the stockholder had renounced his citizenship. If the person had, then the dividends would be taxed at 90%. Income earned from selling stock, homes or a business should all be taxed heavily.

Of course, this will not happen. However, we now understand precisely what right-wingers mean when

took only six years for public opinion to sharply change after the court's historic decision in 1958. Public opinion on marriage is changing even more rapidly now, but opinions should never determine when the time is right to do the right thing.

Equal marriage rights will eventually be supported by all three branches of government; we can thank the executive for being the first.

KATHY HARTY
Arcadia

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Segall compares giving rights to gay couples to the school integration fight of the 20th century. I think this is absurd.

Parents of small children balked at sending their children on school buses to distant schools, often in bad neighborhoods. Giving marriage rights to gay couples has no impact on anybody else.

JULIA DUNPHY
Harbor City

Saving the state

Re "Blazing a trail for tax hike," Column, May 16

I applaud Gov. Jerry Brown and civil rights attorney Molly Munger for their spirit in pushing tax initiatives to close the budget gap. However, the problem of spending more than we take in may be systemic.

Either tax proposal on the ballot may have unintended consequences. High-income earners are mobile, and companies will ultimately seek the cheapest place to do business. More jobs and those that create them may move, further exacerbating the revenue problem.

We should consider less volatile sources of revenue.