Not sure how much Joe Fan gives a shit about this, but it's important to me ... especially coming off the disaster in Greece in '04, and in the Worlds in '02.

No one should be beating this country in basketball, it's that simple. It's a slap in the face, and a biproduct of the new NBA, where many of the "star players" are fundamentally flawed and no longer motivated to take charges or compile floor burns after that 1st huge payday.

Teams are beating us with far inferior talent because they put in the blood, sweat, and tears practicing together. The US gets together for a couple weeks before the event starts. Other countries send their best, and desperately want that gold medal. The US would like the gold medal, as long as they don't get hurt, and they can still fly back to the states between games to film a commercial. Also, the process for how the US team is picked has been seriously flawed. We'll get back to that.

The world is laughing at us. It's time to return to the days of Chuck Barkley throwing life-threatening elbows at Angolan power forwards that don't weigh as much as his last bowel movement.

LeBron's gotta play. I understand the fears of him getting injured, or US athletes being the target of a terrorist attack. He's gotta play, it's that simple. He's one of the best players in the world. He's ours. He's as American as Rudy Giuliani eating a cheeseburger while driving a Ford truck. His presence on the team would make a HUGE difference, and lets hope Larry Brown didn't taint his Olympic experience too badly by improbably pining him in Greece. Lastly, him playing would set a big time precedent for years to come, the same way him not playing would help justify those who don't want to in future years.

Let’s not sugarcoat the fucking disaster that was ’02 and ’04.

2002, 1st time the Worlds are here at home (Indianapolis), and we lose 3 of our last 4 games to Argentina, Yugoslavia, and Spain ... and take 6th place. Roster was a joke as 80% of the big names stayed home.

2004, time for redemption, right? Bzzzzt.

Americans start out by losing an exhibition to the Italians. Yes, the Italians. And they didn’t just lose. They got smoked 95-78. Prelimnary round play starts, time to get serious, right? Wrong again. 92-73 loss to Puerto Fucking Rico.

Americans stumble to the finish line, losing twice more to Lithuiania and Argentina, before rallying late to beat Spain for the Bronze.

Larry Brown inexplciably gave all kinds of floor time to guys like Lamar Odom and Richard Jefferson, whose athletic slashing games don’t translate well to the international game. Iverson and Marbury bombing deep three after deep three with hands in their grills, while Dwayne Wade and LeBron are relegated to the bench. Amare Stoudamire and Carlos Boozer given roster spots over guys like Artest, Big Ben, and Elton Brand.

Jerry Colangelo has to get this right, and he made a great first step in doing so by hiring the best coach of any sport on the planet to lead this team. Coach K will have these fuckers ready, unlike Larry Brown’s 2 week practice session, that merely got in the way of these guys night lives.
I forget who made the quote, but one of the players were asked if they saw The Parthenon. Their answer? "I don’t remember the names of all the clubs we went to."

Could one sentence more perfectly define that clusterfuck?

Coach K immediately insisted all players must make a three year commitment. For the ’06 worlds, ’07 qualifying, and ’08 Olympics. Thank you K, that was the right move.

Moving on to this years team, I want every fucking member of the Detroit Pistons starting lineup on it. In the event the shit completely hits the fan once again, you trot those 5 out there, and let them pummel foes, and show the guys on the pine

how to play as a team.

Iverson, Kobe ... both want in. They obviously make the cut. LeBron and Dwayne Wade will also likely accept. That's four more there.

My last three ... I'm taking Shawn Marion, Michael Redd, and Elton Brand. My alternates are Chris Paul and JJ Redick, who may be the best shooter on the planet.

This is what I got ...

C - Ben Wallace
PF - Rasheed Wallace
SF - LeBron James
SG - Kobe Bryant
PG - Dwayne Wade

6th man - Allen Iverson
Chauncey Billups
Tayshaun Prince
Rip Hamilton
Michael Redd
Elton Brand
Shawn Marion

Alternates: Chris Paul, JJ Redick

Left out ...

Shaq - Aging poorly, heart not in it.

McGrady/Pierce - Play hard only when they want, primadonnas, below average defenders.

Jermaine O'Neal/Amare Stoudamire - Tough to omit, I go with Brand and Marion instead.

Richard Jefferson - Still have nightmares of him chucking 3s and getting lost on pick and rolls in '04.

Chris Bosh - Developing into an elite player, not quite ready for this team.

Duncan/KG/Vince Carter - Expressed lack of interest. Fuck you then.

Melo - No thanks.

Greg Oden - Tempting.