

The flag won't protect you; it's in the wrong hands

By Luciana Bohne

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Across my lawn, I can see an American flag waving in my neighbor's backyard. Mr. Smith (not his name, of course) is a nice man but he's 95 years old, and I can't take issue with him. I can't tell him that the sporting of the flag, at this time, is tantamount to saying, "I am a fool. Traitors run the country in our name. They are taking our money from the treasury and spending it on a shortcut to world domination through war.

The one in Iraq costs something like \$200 million a day. Our troops come back in coffins no one is allowed to see. The president does not attend their funerals. He mocks their death with a jest, amusing the press by pretending to look for elusive weapons of mass destruction (WMD) under his Oval Office desk. The vice president is planning to nuke Iran should there be another 9/11. Meanwhile, Iraqis, living and dead, swim in a river of boiling blood. If I fly the flag, I'm saying all this is all right by me. Poor flag, to be raised in a time like this! Wouldn't it be more respectful to tuck it away for more honorable service in better times?

Better times? Time to stop fooling myself. The idiocy is contagious.

When were there better times? Since the birth of this nation, it has engaged in more than 200 armed interventions around the globe.

Since 1945, a conservative death count for US adventures abroad can easily tally up to 6 million. Easily! Circa 3 million in Vietnam alone; then there's Indonesia, Haiti, Panama, El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile, just off the top of my head. Plenty of torture, too: Argentina, Brazil, Egypt. Oh, you know the sad litany.

And not just abroad. There was slavery, reputed to have cost forty million lives and the bloodiest conflict in history up until then, although freeing slaves was merely the hypocritical pretext for one industrial power block to crush the inefficient slave-agrarian one. A different slave system was born—imitated throughout the world, and now in its imperialist, full-spectrum, warpath phase. There was one of the most brutal and cynical genocides in history—against the native population—to reckon with. There was the crime of being the first and only nation to have used the atomic bomb... TWICE—without many scruples or visible residual guilt. In fact, today 50 percent of Americans say they would have no trouble using it again.

And yet, these Americans are convinced they are the emissaries of peace and good will. Pretty staggering delusion all things considered—pathological, one might say. What is the cause of this megalomania? Perhaps it's that radical branch of Protestantism called Puritanism? A kind of Anglo equivalent of Wahabbism? I mean, that weird theology that grants Americans the status of Elect, All-Good, Ever-Just. Certainly the New England writers of the 19th century thought so.

And wasn't it that Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, who, 50 years after the American Revolution, thought the good pilgrims were infected with intolerable arrogance for starting the only or first—or however they put it—democracy in the world. Some

democracy. For the few, of course—mostly propertied, white, Anglo-Saxon males. A slave democracy! And it hasn't changed. Oh, there's a black Secretary of State, but she is only black on the outside. Her heart is white, male, and propertied. Besides, she rubber-stamps the fiction of racial equality. Very useful cookie, ideologically speaking, is Condi Rice. And, anyway, she is only a servant, merely the means by which the social order of the truly Elect—the rich folks—reproduces itself. Ditto for Colin Powell and that fool on the Supreme Court—that black judge with the ethics and sense of humor of a guttersnipe. But it's not like the white-skinned servants are any less revolting. Just look at the president's "advisors." Hypocrites.

"What have you got against Puritans?" says I to my newly-wed, American professor-of-literature husband some 30 years ago. "Hypocrites," says he, laconically. And cryptically, I thought until now. But he's gone. And I can't share his wisdom with a conspiratorial smile. This God of theirs is indeed a God of Hypocrisy, for He bestows on their remarkable aggression and love of war a unique affection. You could call Him Mars—but then we know we make our gods in our own image.

On this feeling of being this weird God's Elect trade those economic interests of the commercial oligarchy which represent 5 percent of the population who own 50 percent of the national wealth. Their names are hidden in the shadows behind the names we know so well—the Cheneys, the Rumsfelds, the Wolfowitzes, the Roves (the Bushes are both shadow and act, a special category at the moment, their interests hidden in plain sight). To these people, we are nothing. We are the people who will die in bogus terrorist attacks—in New York, in Madrid, in London. At 9 o'clock in the morning, when we are going to work. Or we are shoppers—indebted unto the third generation, as they like us to be. Or we live in those parts of the world where we can look forward to their exported democracy, which means exploitation of our natural resources and of our labor. It's a self-serving and highly technical definition of democracy—the abuse of people for profit. Democracy for them; slavery for us.

Is it so difficult to understand that the US wants to own the world, not to govern it but to exploit it? Is this why the political philosopher, Karl Marx, is so reviled in this land? Because he dared to name the unnameable? "Capitalism has no homeland." Imagine if we had to face the truth of that? Imagine if they taught us that proven truth in school?

But let me get to the point. My neighbor's flag is flying. Cheney is planning to nuke Iran (because it is too militarily strong to take in any other way), and Tony Blair has refused an investigation into how the London attacks could have been prevented. What connects these three points?

First, the flag. We are being duped. Period. Iran? Well, if we are to do Iran, we need to free up some troops, now bogged down in Iraq. NATO's would come in handy. But European constitutions mostly forbid aggressive wars, and the European populations positively abhor war. If you go back to the Madrid "terrorist" attacks, you will note that the Bush gang at that time was very eager to get NATO involved. The attacks on Madrid were supposed to scare Europeans into agreeing to NATO deployment. It didn't work.

Now Blair is supposed to be heading the EU for the next six months. It's an opportunity he means to exploit. He's been talking about NATO and threatening Iran. He's locked in a fierce conflict with French President Jacques Chirac. For who shall lead the EU, Britain or France, (the only two nations in the EU to be armed with nuclear weapons)? If Britain,

then the EU will be guided by US hands, and NATO will be brought under US command. If France, then EU policy will be guided by France, in competition against the US. Blair's task is to neutralize the "non" of the French referendum on the EU constitution—which, some say, Chirac covertly expected. For Chirac, either the European Union will be guided by France, or it will not happen at all.

In the midst of this conflict between Britain and France, there is an alleged terrorist attack in the London tubes. And Blair doesn't want an investigation. What he wants is to terrorize the EU members into compliance with Washington's fiction of "the war on terror"—a.k.a. as the Plan for the New American Century of World Domination.

So, cui prodest? Well, the Blair/Bush team bet it's going to be their "values," their "way of life." I believe they are sincere in this because without war for world domination and exploitation how can they hope to stave off the impending implosion of the US economy and the crash of Britain's credit economy which supports a personal debt per person of 110 percent? They are sincere: their backs are against the wall. It's just that they don't tell us that their values and way of life don't exactly coincide with ours. They let our naivete interpret those words: we see Western Civilization (those of us who are devoted to the Telebible) clashing with Islam! That's how they spin it after each convenient terror attack. Besides, it's not just the crisis of the moment that impels them. There's a lot at stake when you decide to take over the world: gold, diamonds, oil, water, uranium, copper, etc., etc.

The one entity certain not to benefit from the London "terror" attacks is first of all us, the world's people, and, second, Iran—as Afghanistan and Iraq didn't benefit after 9/11. In fact, quite the contrary. It didn't help that the Iranians voted in a leader the West didn't like; Rafshanjani could have been bought; he was their choice.

No, I wouldn't put out more flags. Because, Dick Cheney is planning a nuke attack on Iran if 9/11, Part Two, happens. What are the chances, do you think, for both happening? Do you see why I say this is no time to waste on flying flags? We live in dangerous times. And the danger is state-grown, here at home. Under the cover of our flag.

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