

by *Samuel Francis*

Paths of Glory

As I write this column (in late January), the United States has deployed 30,000 troops in Somalia, has just launched new bombing strikes against Iraq, has announced a naval blockade of Haiti, and is debating whether it should send combat forces into the Balkans. By the time you read this column (in late March), there is literally no telling where our military forces will be engaged, though any number of locations are entirely possible: South Africa, where the “transition from apartheid” may or may not proceed at a pace and in a fashion that suits the friends of global egalitarianism; Sudan, which endures famine and chaos no less severe than Somalia; Germany, where riots against immigrants have taken a number of lives in the last few months and suggest the incipient revival of a militant counterrevolutionary nationalism; or any of several other countries and regions where internal disorders, unsavory political conditions, or social and economic problems that Americans find disgusting may sound the bugles for the cavalry to mount and administer mercy at the point of American bayonets. But what droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven these days is less likely to be mercy than the payloads of American bombers.

There is no way to tell where American troops will be sent a few months from now because, quite simply, virtually no one in the policymaking positions in our government nor in the opinion-making classes of American society any longer considers “national interest” to be the operative principle by which foreign military intervention should be determined. When President-elect Clinton announced just before his inauguration that he would retain President Bush’s policy of turning back boatloads of Haitian immigrants, his stated reason for violating his own campaign promise and not welcoming an armada of unskilled, illiterate, and disease-ridden invaders to our shores had nothing to do with our national interest, nor even with enforcing long-standing and popularly supported laws against illegal immigration. His decision, he proclaimed, was

based on the welfare of the Haitians themselves. Reversing the policy, you see, would encourage the pilgrims to embark on the high seas in quest of the happy harbors of Miami, and many of them might drown or expire from exhaustion and exposure before the Coast Guard could save them from the consequences of their ill-conceived expedition. Presumably, if Genghis Khan and the Golden Horde returned to life and headed across the Bering Straits for Seattle, any resistance they met from the United States government would be predicated on the need to spare the Mongols the risk of catching pneumonia in their journey through Alaska’s arctic wilderness.

The extinction of the concept of “national interest” as the governing guideline of our foreign policy betrays the coming extinction of the nation-state itself, or what our governing elite would like to be its extinction. Hardly any discussion of “post-Cold War foreign policy,” from high-school commencement addresses to highly classified memoranda exchanged among the munchkins of the national security labyrinth, fails to rehearse all the clichés of a “global economy,” the “meaninglessness” of national borders, and the evolution of the planet toward political, cultural, economic, and demographic “interdependence.” Such platitudes are not simply rhetorical commonplaces replacing salutations of the Founding Fathers and biblical allusions as staples of public oratory. They establish and are intended to establish the conceptual framework within which actual policies are designed and by which the choice of actions available to policymakers is delimited. The general consequence of such language is not merely neglect of the national interest but its obliteration and the removal from the national consciousness of any inkling that there are some things that are important, and others that are unimportant or actually harmful, for the nation to do. The more specific result will be the eventual evaporation of any concept of the nation itself as a distinct political and cultural unit. An institution that has no interests of its own to pursue or that perennially fails to pursue them and whose leaders and members are pro-

foundly oblivious to such interests cannot be said to exist in any but the most vacuous and abstruse sense.

The disappearance of the concept of “national interest” is not, then, an accident, nor the result of sloppy thinking and careless expression. It corresponds to and reflects one of the major social trends of our times, the formation of a genuinely supranational apparatus of global management administered and governed by an emerging supranational elite. Given the global reach of modern organizations and the homogenization that their operations demand, a unified global government able to enforce such homogeneity is consistent with the interests of the groups that manage these organizations, and the building of a global government necessarily involves the erosion of national units as politically sovereign and culturally distinctive organisms. Nor is it an accident that the elaboration of the basic concepts and institutions of this “New World Order” is now more or less explicitly voiced by the hired mouthpieces of the emerging regime.

Last year, at a meeting of the Group of Seven in Paris, the big enchiladas of the “global economy” assigned some homework to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. They instructed him to design plans for a standing army of the United Nations able to undertake missions “for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peacekeeping.” By June, the secretary-general had completed his work and turned in his paper. What he proposed, and what his instructors wanted, is nothing less than an independent armed force that would empower the United Nations itself as a new global power in its own right.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali’s proposal is to “bring into being, through negotiations, the special agreements . . . whereby member states undertake to make armed forces, assistance and facilities available to the Security Council . . . not only on an ad hoc basis but on a permanent basis.” In the past, you see, U.N. “peacekeeping forces” were limited. They were sent into a region only after a ceasefire among the combatants had been worked out, not into combat situations, and their own combat was con-

fined to self-defense, unless they enjoyed special authorization for large-scale collective enforcement action, as in Korea in 1950 or Kuwait in 1990. Under the new proposal, the U.N. army would be virtually independent of the states whose troops actually composed its force and whose money financed it, and the Security Council itself would decide when and against whom the army under its exclusive control would strike.

The plan's rather alarming implications for the institution of national sovereignty, though muted in the secretary-general's report in June, are explicit in the ruminations of such professional munchkins of the supranational Lollipop guild as former U.N. apparatchik Sir Brian Urquhart, who intoned in the *New York Times* in 1991 that "the unraveling of national sovereignty seems to be a feature of the post-Cold War period" and who proposed plans remarkably similar to those later unbosomed by Mr. Boutros-Ghali.

In his report, the secretary-general was a bit cagey about sovereignty, professing that, well, of course, he believed in it, though we wouldn't want to overdo, would we? "Respect for . . . fundamental sovereignty and integrity are crucial to any common international progress," he assured us, but, so his very next sentence read, "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passed." Mr. Boutros-Ghali recapitulated his non sequiturs in a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, where he informed us that "while respect for the fundamental sovereignty and integrity of the state remains central, it is undeniable that the centuries-old doctrine of absolute and exclusive sovereignty no longer stands, and was in fact never so absolute as it was conceived to be in theory."

Sovereignty, however, is almost by definition a pretty absolute concept. Either you have it or you don't, and being a "little bit sovereign" is no more feasible than being a little bit pregnant. But however weaselly his words, Mr. Boutros-Ghali couldn't disguise his ultimate goals. "The world," he wrote, "is still in some ways in its 'Middle Ages' when it comes to international organizations and cooperation. Centuries were required before the struggle among monarchical and baronial forces was transformed into states capable of carrying out responsibilities in the fields of security, economy, and justice. There

is no doubt that the institutions of the U.N. system must travel such a path if chaos is to be avoided." The analogy he draws is pretty clear: sovereign nations today are analogous to the feudal barons of the Middle Ages, whose autonomy and power were eventually crushed by the emerging dynastic monarchies, which are analogous to the pharaonic world government that glitters in Mr. Boutros-Ghali's dark Egyptian eyes. What is a little bit pregnant turns out to be the United Nations itself, from the belly of which will eventually spring a now-embryonic planetary regime.

It may be imagined that, being an Egyptian, Mr. Boutros-Ghali is peripheral to the mainstream of what is actually thought and done in the West, but such is not the case. Nor is enthusiasm for a One World State under the United Nations confined to the eccentric corners of the political left, where One Worldism has long linked arms with the white-lipped advocates of Esperanto, Peace Toys, the Rehabilitation of Criminals, and the Metric System to mount the soapboxes at Marble Arch and similar locations every Sunday. Last December, popular historian Paul Johnson managed to take time off from his annual publication of a seemingly endless series of obese volumes that would take serious scholars a lifetime to complete and penned an article for *National Review* that demanded what he called a "New Imperialism." It is of no small interest that while those on the political left, like Mr. Boutros-Ghali, couch the New World Order in humanitarian terms calculated to appeal to the ideological confabulations of their comrades, those on the political right (or who have insinuated themselves into the right) like Mr. Johnson frame almost the same proposals in terms that will catch the fancy of the retired colonels who pine for the days of Kipling and King of the Khyber Rifles. Such convergence between right and left in the context of what the brahmins of each category propose is itself part of the cultural and political homogenization that the new global order demands.

Mr. Johnson, however, doesn't much like Mr. Boutros-Ghali and suggests that he be fired (even after the secretary-general had so successfully completed his homework earlier in the year), but he at least appears to agree that "a new global structure of order" needs to be estab-

lished in which the U.N. Security Council will provide the keystone and the muscle. The creation of this new order will involve transforming "collective security from a reactive and negative force into a true watchdog, engaged in foreseeing and forestalling—crime prevention and disaster avoidance." "Like the traditional Great Powers and their general staffs," breathes Mr. Johnson, "the Security Council must learn to devise diplomatic, military, and logistical plans for all foreseeable disturbances," and "the Security Council and its agents will become the last, most altruistic and positive of the imperial powers, restoring to the word colonialism the 'good name' it once enjoyed—in Mediterranean antiquity no less than the 19th century." Like many Englishmen, Mr. Johnson appears not to have a clue as to just how despised the British Empire was in the 19th century, not only by those peoples whom it tried unsuccessfully and often brutally to civilize but even by those, like many Americans and Europeans, who always saw through the cant, greed, and tyranny that animated so much that lay in its heart. As for the "good name" that Mr. Johnson imagines colonialism enjoyed in ancient times, the Gauls, Greeks, Jews, and Egyptians whom the Romans slaughtered and enslaved might have had a name for it that was not so benign, though surely each of them had done pretty much the same sort of thing in their own day.

To be fair, of course, Mr. Johnson is proposing the "New Imperialism" as a means of taking care of Third World peoples and countries that obviously are incapable of taking care of themselves, though nowhere does he establish any good reason why we—the West, let alone the United States—should assume that burden. Nor do any of the pioneers of the new empire consider (at least in print) what may be the consequences for the sovereign nations of the West of a world run by the U.N. Security Council. We can already perceive one consequence through the fog of our adventure in Somalia this winter, an adventure begotten somewhere in the bowels of the White House and "authorized" by the United Nations, just as our earlier crusade against Iraq was similarly "authorized" by the same body. Since the United States had no compelling national interest to make war against Iraq or to invade Somalia and since national

interest has ceased to determine when, where, and why "we" decide to send troops, why shouldn't the United Nations, composed of delegates for whom no American ever voted, decide such affairs for us? For that matter, since the United Nations as yet has no soldiers under its own command nor any money of its own with which to recruit and arm them, why shouldn't American soldiers enforce whatever it is the court eunuchs of the new empire decree? And why shouldn't we get used to the idea that providing the military power for the "New Imperialism" will be our principal role in the future? Moreover, and this is another consequence of the New World Order and the empowerment of the United Nations in a form independent of the nation-states that created it, why shouldn't the Security Council someday deploy its own troops against us?

Warlords in Somalia may someday

look pretty tame compared to the warrior kings who lead the Crips and the Bloods in Los Angeles, and the chaos they may someday cause would provide at least as good a reason for the New World Army to show up in South-Central L. A. as we have for sending our own troops to Mogadishu. So, for that matter, would American "racism," mistreatment of women and children, standards of health not up to the snuff of the World Health Organization, environmental problems, or any of the scads of derelictions perennially invented by those of the managerial elite whose business it is to concoct "problems" that they can then "solve."

So far, most Americans seem to be fairly passive about what One Worlders have in mind for them, and perhaps, as long as too many of us don't get killed, taxes don't increase too much, and it doesn't preempt the sit-coms too often, most of us will go along with it. But the

irony is that in most of the world, even as Mr. Boutros-Ghali, Sir Brian, Mr. Johnson, and their party announce the end of national sovereignty, nationalism is thriving and aspirations to national independence, political autonomy, and cultural identity are flourishing. It is the resurrection of just such assertions of nationality and group solidarity that is the real wave of history, and it is the conflict between those who exhibit them and the emerging global elite that seeks to suppress and supersede them that constitutes the real line of political and social struggle in the coming century. Those assertions and the conflicts they engender may be dormant in the United States today, but sooner or later they will awaken, and when they do, the nightmarish fantasy of a unified and homogeneous planet will scatter like the straw it is.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Trollopes in the Stacks

by Thomas Fleming

Nineteen ninety-two, if not quite an *annus mirabilis*, was a year “crowded with incident,” as Lady Bracknell would say. The repercussions of Gorbachev’s fall, the hot war in Bosnia that took the self-congratulatory edge out of the end of the Cold War, and the rise to power of Flem Snopes’ grandson illuminated American television sets during the dinner news hour.

For most of us, these incidents touched our lives, if at all, for only a few moments a day. They took place somewhere in the fairyland of images where heroes and antediluvian monsters still do battle for the principle of one man/one vote. Most Americans seemed more interested in the goings-on of the white-trash British royalty that get paid handsomely for misbehaving. In America, where we used to be, according to Fisher Ames, “too poor and too proud to acknowledge a king,” our own version of royalty was making even better money, posing for naughty pictures. People who had never been to a bookstore before were standing in line to buy their own copy of Madonna’s *Sex*. Some could not wait to get out of the store with their treasure and began tearing off the plastic wrap that sealed the contents against dampness, dirt, and free riders who wanted to look without buying.

America may be taking its time about coming out of a recession, but we still have more money than sense. Some felt cheated of the 50 dollars they paid. Pornography connoisseurs expressed disappointment with the all-too-predictable permutations of body parts, accessories, and animal acts. It is hard to shock us any more, and *Sex* represented a breakthrough only in the sense that the Clarence Thomas hearings were a breakthrough. The filth that used to be confined to the wrong side of town or the Playboy Channel can now appear on CNN and on the CBS *Evening News*, in Waldenbooks and in libraries started with grants from Andrew Carnegie.

Even Christian Americans are jaded, and the sale of a book portraying group sex and bestiality stirred little controversy. Libraries, however, are civic institutions that are generally

thought to reflect the values of the community. I do not know how many public libraries decided to purchase *Sex*. Here in Rockford, the director of the public library stirred up the predictable controversy by making the predictable decision to buy the book. The library received about 20 requests, offset by 400 letters in opposition. By the rules of American democracy, the ayes have it, even when they are outvoted 20 to one, so long as the ayes represent fashionable opinion.

There was a public hearing at which various people pointed out that the book was pornographic, offended local standards, and possessed no redeeming social value. No one, in fact, defended the book on its merits, but the head of the library (and his supporters) insisted it was a free speech/free press issue, even though what was at stake was not the right to publish or distribute or look at (somehow “read” is not the right verb) the book. The only significant question concerned the proper use of taxpayers’ funds. Some sort of compromise was reached—they bought the book but promised to restrict access—but the controversy illustrates certain features of the cultural battle that is being waged at the end of the millennium.

Put aside any consideration of the First Amendment, which was never meant to apply to local matters, and bracket, for the moment, the question of the book’s merits or demerits, because the same tired arguments are used everywhere in the battle of the books that is being waged in libraries across the country as concerned citizens debate the appropriateness of teenage sex manuals or the use of the word “nigger” in *Huckleberry Finn*. Both sides in these debates see the library as a powerful instrument that can be used for public enlightenment or abused for moral corruption. The outcome of these battles, so it is believed, determines which side will stamp its image on the community. Will this nation be a Christian America, whose reading is limited to *Heidi*, *Pollyanna*, and the confessions of Pat Boone, or will it be the open society that reads *Justine*, *Tropic of Cancer*, and *Last Exit to Brooklyn*?