

[TERROR]

WHO LOST SPAIN?

After the 9/11 attacks, for one brief, brilliant moment, the United States enjoyed enormous global support. The French newspaper *Le Monde* spoke on behalf of people of goodwill all around the world when, the day after the destruction of the World Trade Center, it ran a lead editorial proclaiming “We Are All Americans.” There were, to be sure, malcontents who chose to pervert the moment by criticizing America in her hour of mourning, but such petulance was the exception to the rule. After 9/11, the world rallied around America.

So how did Americans react when an ally, Spain, suffered a devastating terror bombing that left some 200 dead? The reaction among the partisan press that supported the Iraq War was not to express solidarity with the Spanish people but to blame them for voting the wrong way in the elections the week after the atrocity. The weblog of one hawkish American publication carried remarks like “Appeasement and shame, thy name is Spain,” and “[the election] shows that Europeans are willing to be cowed by terror into voting for appeasers.”

Before the bombings, Spanish polls had the Popular Party, which had supported the Iraq War, ahead of the Socialists who had opposed it. The terrorist attack was widely perceived, in Spain and around the world, as affecting the course of the election. It is worth remembering, however, that Prime Minister Aznar’s support for the Iraq War was enormously unpopular with the electorate at the time. The bombings did not change the Spanish people’s mind about the war; they only brought the issue back to the fore. Moreover, who could have imagined that after such an atrocity the course of the election would remain the same? Whether the attack had helped the Popular Party or, as it did in fact, the opposition Socialists, it would



have been a tremendous influence.

From casting doubts upon the loyalty of their fellow citizens, America’s hawks have now decided to define what proper Spanish patriotism should be, and have labeled the electoral choice of the plurality of the Spanish people as “appeasers.” Is it any wonder that America has lost so many friends in so short a time?

[BELTWAY]

VETTING THE VEEP

A striking element of Errol Morris’s “Fog of War” is the taped conversations between Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and various cabinet members, unrehearsed and seemingly unconscious of the world beyond, an intimate window into history at the top: a reluctant McNamara, in exquisite boardroom language, telling Johnson (in 1964!) that the Vietnam War couldn’t be won and yet acceding to Johnson’s wishes for escalation; Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson, whose deferentially phrased “I don’t agree, Mr. President” may have saved us and the Russians from mutual annihilation during the Cuban missile crisis.

The tapes made us wonder how history will record the conversations of CIA chief George Tenet, tasked with correcting President Bush and Vice President Cheney for their many false statements about Iraq and its weapons capabilities. Tenet told a Senate committee last week that he had to correct Cheney on several occasions—the vice president suffers from a seemingly irrepressible impulse to assert things in public that are unsupported by intelligence data. Still high on Tenet’s to-do list was calling Cheney’s attention to yet another “misstatement,” made about two months ago, concerning Saddam’s purported ties to al-Qaeda. Apparently this is one CIA-director duty that screams for procrastination. “Mr. Vice President, what you said last January about Saddam and al-Qaeda, well sir, that simply isn’t true, according to our best estimates.” Cheney: “I’ll say what I damn well want to say about Iraq—you know what you can do with your intelligence estimates.” Watergate and all, there probably are not accurate records of these conversations. Too bad.

[POLITICS]

DELAY REACTION

Slowly but surely signs of discontent are starting to surface in conservative ranks. First, syndicated columnist Robert Novak reported that some unnamed Republicans were buzzing that it would not necessarily be a bad thing for the conservative agenda if John Kerry defeated President Bush.

Then House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, in an unprecedented move, announced his own legislative goals for the year and beyond, independent both of the Bush administration and the GOP congressional leadership of which he is a part. Although he consulted House Speaker Dennis Hastert, the Texas congressman had “no intention” of running his plans by the White House. DeLay outlined his “Conservative Blueprint for Success” in a meeting of the House Republican Conference.

DeLay’s blueprint is broken up into the broad categories of “family, prosperity and security.” Much of it contains familiar Washington conservative items—a proposal to double economic output in 15 years through tax cuts, and increased tolerance for religious symbols in the public square. Neglected items like curtailing immigration and reining in reckless interventionism were conspicuous by their absence.

This much is evident from DeLay’s latest gambit: conservatives are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with what they are getting from the Bush administration.

[CULTURE]

NEWSPEAK 2004

“Grandfather clause” is sexist. “Master bedroom” is racist. “Landlord” is elitist. So say the cultural commissars who with astonishing speed have scrubbed Scripture (Son of Man is retranslated Holy One), purged curricula (penmanship contains the dread male referent),

and rewritten pop culture. A new college text on human development reads, “As a folksinger once sang, how many roads must an individual walk down before you can call them an adult.” Few would connect that ungrammatical nonsense with Bob Dylan’s signature, “How many roads must a man walk down before you call him a man?”

So reports Diane Ravitch, author of *The Language Police*, in a recent *Wall Street Journal* essay. “[What] began with the hope of encouraging diversity ... has evolved into a bureaucratic system that removes all evidence of diversity and reduces everyone to interchangeable beings whose differences we must not learn about...”

She singles out the New York school system for particular ridicule. The state guidelines ask, “Is it necessary to make reference to a person’s age, ancestry, disability, ethnicity, nationality, physical appearance, race, religion, sex, sexuality?” Most often the answer is no—so history and literature are stripped, and their characters are left lacking motivation, context, and intrigue. On the New York State Education Department’s hit list: illegal alien (undocumented worker); American (citizen of the United States or North America); elderly (older person); handyman and hostess, illegitimate and ghetto (avoid altogether). The result is no Third World—at least in print—but no masterpieces either.

[DIPLOMACY]

RANDOM REPRISAL

“It is starting to look more and more like the terrorist attack in Spain was the work of al-Qaeda. Today President Bush called the Prime Minister of Spain to offer his condolences and said, ‘If it makes you feel any better, we will be happy to attack a country that had nothing to do with it.’”

—Bill Maher, “Real Time,” HBO, 3/12/04

[CULTURE]

RED LIGHT GREEN

When Bill Gates’s bride visited Kolkata, India recently, she headed for a place few would expect: the city’s largest red-light district. She spent three hours there—and \$200 million.

The recipient of the Gates Foundation’s largesse is a sex-workers union well known to local authorities. On Jan. 13, when policemen raided a brothel on a tip that a 14-year-old child prostitute was being held against her will, hundreds of sex workers besieged them. Six policemen were injured before the girl was rescued and her captor was arrested. Now Melinda Gates is taking the side of the mob.

The Foundation’s concern about the spread of HIV/AIDS is legitimate—4.5 million Indians are infected. But some other numbers might also interest Mr. and Mrs. Microsoft: India has 2.3 million prostitutes, 30 percent of whom are children. Girls between 9 and 15 are most desirable. They are bought in their villages for between \$50-\$90 and brought to the cities where they turn an average of six tricks per day. A dozen may live in a windowless 10x10 room; by some perverse blessing, few live long.

Aid workers, relief organizations, and the Indian government are working to end this travesty. But the sex-workers union, the Durbar Mahila Samanway Committee, resists every effort—and now has considerable resources at its disposal.

Benevolence is admirable, but myopia is not. The guild Bill and Melinda Gates are subsidizing has no problem taking money to give condoms to children. Slowing the spread of AIDS protects its investment. But health concerns can’t be compartmentalized from the union’s human trade. The Gateses should realize this—and wonder just who they have gotten into bed with.

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[IMMIGRATION]

DISCRIMINATION WORSE THAN WAR

On the morning of the Madrid horror, Robert Leiken of the Nixon Center was introducing his new monograph on immigration and national security. Al-Qaeda does have an “immigration strategy” he told us, and its members use every possible immigration category to infiltrate Western countries, especially the U.S.

Al-Qaeda has shown a preference for securing proper documents for immigrating legally—which makes the visa process of great strategic importance. One particular case of American vulnerability is terrorists from “visa waiver” countries, like Zacharias Moussaoui (who came from France) and shoe bomber Richard Reid (from Britain), which do not require a visa for travel to the United States. American officials have no right to interview such travelers or to perform background checks prior to their getting on a plane.

Leiken was asked why the U.S. could not simply say that the “visa waiver” system is not working as far as Europe’s Muslims are concerned and that background checks and interviews will henceforth be required. Certainly after 9/11, no one from an Arab country is automatically granted a visa. Well, he replied, it would be discriminatory. The Europeans would object, American liberals would object, and you can’t fight the War on Terror without broad support.

Here was the upside-down world of official Washington in its purest form: it is considered perfectly rational to attack and occupy foreign countries with hardly a glance at international law. But it is somehow recklessly extremist to suggest an immigration regulation whose most disagreeable consequence might be that travelers have to wait a few days for a visa. Apparently that would infringe upon the civil liberties of

Muslim tourists and insult the Europeans—a violation of everything America stands for.

[MEDIA]

JAYSON BLAIR, CALL YOUR OFFICE

The *Wall Street Journal’s* commitment to open borders is well known—as is the paper’s refusal to tolerate real debate on immigration issues in its opinion pages. But last week, the *Journal’s* editorial page reached for and arrived at a new low.

It published a piece by its senior editorial writer, Jason Riley, intended to defame an important voice of the immigration-reform movement. Riley’s target was, in his words, the “repugnant” Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), a Washington-based think tank to which he attributed the following views: support of China’s one-child policy; support of the abortion pill RU-486; support for a target U.S. population of 150 million.

Were such claims true, they would indeed say something about the politics of CIS. As it happens, they are fabrications, made up out of whole cloth. We know CIS well. The independent group publishes sober and well-researched studies on all aspects of immigration, while taking no position on matters extraneous to its field. It favors a moderate slow-down in legal immigration for reasons familiar to most of our readers.

The publication of Riley’s slander says one of two things about the *Journal*: either the paper finds its open-borders immigration position so beleaguered and difficult to defend by rational argument that its editors have decided they have no choice but to invent positions for their opponents. Or journalistic standards at the editorial page are so loose that fabrications can easily find their way into its pages, without rudimentary editing or fact-checking. ■

Suicide by Free Trade

They are calling it “the jobs issue.” For 43 straight months, manufacturing jobs have disappeared. One in six has vanished since Bush took his oath. Now Americans are

alarmed over reports of the outsourcing of white-collar jobs. It is an issue on which the presidential election could turn.

And what has been the response of the candidates? Kerry is denouncing executives who move plants overseas as “Benedict Arnold CEOs,” and Bush is echoing his father’s rants against “isolationism and protectionism.”

“Some politicians in Washington want to build a wall around the country and to isolate America from the rest of the world,” said Bush in Ohio. “The old policy of economic isolationism is a recipe for economic disaster. America has moved beyond that tired defeatist mindset ...”

Both candidates and both parties seem clueless about what is going on and what to do about it. For Bush Republicans and Kerry Democrats both backed NAFTA, GATT, the WTO, and MFN for China.

There is this difference, however. Republicans are principled free traders, while the Democratic Party, as a wag put it a while ago, is simply a gathering of warring tribes that have come together in the anticipation of common plunder.

Democrats worship power. They will do what they must to get it. Thus they have begun to drop the free-trade mantra and play to the populism of the people. And they have tapped into the public mood. *USA Today* cites a University of Maryland poll that reveals that, “among Americans making more than \$100,000 a year, support for actively promoting free trade collapsed from 57 percent to less than half that, 28 percent.”

This is the first time this has happened.

If President Bush is going to spend eight months as a traveling salesman for free trade and a crusader against “protectionism,” as his father did, he is inviting the same result his father got.

An opportunist is to be preferred to an ideologue who will not entertain the idea he may be wrong and that the philosophy in which he was schooled and devoutly believes may be irrelevant to the new era. Like companies that continue to make products no one wants to buy anymore, parties that persist in policies that are visibly failing—like LBJ in Vietnam—end up being abandoned.

If the GOP persists in this free-trade fanaticism, it is courting suicide. For the policy is not working in the eyes of the people. And if Republicans insist the returns from global free trade—a disintegrating dollar and a merchandise trade deficit of \$550 billion a year and rising—are good for America, folks are going to conclude that Republicans are too out of it to govern.

Given that the GOP today controls both Houses of Congress and the White House, this may sound alarmist. Yet GOP dominance today does not approach what it was in the 1920s under Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover, before the wipeout.

If the GOP does not offer ideas to halt the de-industrialization of America and the hemorrhaging of blue- and white-collar jobs, it is going to wind up on a landfill.

The problem with the columnists and think-tank scribblers who make up the

intelligentsia of the GOP is not that they believe in free markets but that they worship them. They believe that if NAFTA, GATT, the WTO, and MFN for China mean production goes overseas, the market is telling us where production ought to be. And the voice of the market is to be obeyed, because that is the voice of their god.

When Reagan, a devout free trader, saw the U.S. auto industry sinking, he did not let ideology interfere with a rescue. He imposed quotas on imported Japanese cars and saved Detroit, though he was denounced for apostasy and heresy.

Free-trade Republicans are like militant Christian Scientists who prefer to let patients die rather than call in a doctor—which is fine, as long as you’re not the patient.

Americans believe that the interests of U.S. workers and their families come ahead of what may be good or best for the Global Economy. For years they have seen industrial jobs disappear. Now white-collar jobs are being outsourced. They want to know what Bush and the Republicans are going to do about it.

If the president’s answer is to echo his father and denounce opponents as “isolationists and protectionists,” he risks ending up like his father, a one-term president.

Indeed, if the issue is jobs, Republicans ought to be thrown out. For not only are they not creating them, they have no idea how to stop exporting them. In their hearts, some of them think it a good thing. They are like the doctors of old who sincerely believed bleeding the patient was the way to get rid of the disease because that is what their textbooks and wise men told them. ■