

by Srdja Trifkovic

Transatlantic Rifts

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, Europe was closer to America, politically and emotionally, than at any time since World War II. For a moment, the threat of Islamic terrorism had rekindled a dormant awareness on both sides of the Atlantic of just how much the Old Continent and the New World have in common. Only seven months later, however, as President Bush completed his four-nation European tour, transatlantic relations were more strained than at any time since the Cold War. The editorialist for the conservative German daily *Saarbruecker Zeitung* summed it up on May 23 by noting that, since the fall of the Wall, “the United States became more American, and Europe more European: differences of opinion came into the foreground that had always existed but have never played a prominent role.”

While a few thousand leftist demonstrators chanting abuse from the curbs of Berlin and Paris could be dismissed as irrelevant and unrepresentative, the sense of disenchantment with Washington felt by the members of Europe’s political and economic mainstream—including America’s friends and reliable fellow Cold Warriors of yore—cannot be disregarded.

U.S. Middle East policy, because of its pro-Israeli bias, is perceived throughout Europe as a hindrance to the quest for peace. President Bush’s unwillingness or, worse still, inability to put any real pressure on Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon is seen in European capitals as puzzling and counterproductive. According to Bronwen Maddox, the foreign affairs editor of the *Times* of London, such views prompt some Americans to respond by accusing Europe of being anti-semitic. Jonathan Steele noted in the *Guardian* (“New York is starting to feel like Brezhnev’s Moscow,” May 16) that the debate on such issues in America suffers from “a stifling conformity which muzzles public discourse on US foreign policy, the war on terrorism and Israel”:

“If people knew I held these views, I wouldn’t be able to stay in this job,” an old college friend confided as I passed through the city for a few days last week . . . His subver-

sive views on the Middle East, if uttered in Europe, would raise no eyebrows: Ariel Sharon has no vision or strategy; his tactics on the West Bank are counter-productive; the American media are failing to report adequately on the suffering of innocent Palestinians in cities ransacked by Israeli troops . . . Listening to these anguished but private complaints suddenly reminded me of the Soviet Union of the Brezhnev era when lower-level officials, journalists and other fringe members of the regime sat around their kitchen tables, expressing their true views only to family and close friends . . . To enforce this abandonment of reasoned argument in the name of a witch-hunt against terrorists, a strange alliance of evangelical Christians in Congress has come together with the leaders of American Jewish organizations who normally support the Democratic party . . . To judge from the east coast today, the middle-aged liberal intelligentsia is letting itself be intimidated into taking the wrong side.

In France, *Les Echos* commented that “Europe regrets that America’s pressure on Israel is not more forceful,” while *Le Figaro* noted that, “in the U.S., any criticism of Ariel Sharon is immediately equated with anti-Semitism.”

Regarding Iraq, America’s friends and allies—including the ever-pliant Tony Blair—simply do not agree that Saddam Hussein is a threat to the rest of the world. As Jean-Jacques Mevel pointed out in *Le Figaro* on May 24, European leaders remain “equally unconvinced about President Bush’s tie-in between the ‘axis of evil’ and the September 11 attacks.” Italy’s *Corriere della Sera* resentfully opined on May 23 that “the apostle of the war on terrorism is dumping on Europe America’s fears and his desire to attack Iraq.”

Some Europeans suspected—but did not say publicly—that the zeal in Washington for the random broadening of the “war against terrorism” beyond the verifiable culprits for September 11 has more



to do with America’s “passionate attachment” in the Middle East than with a sober assessment of Western security and political interests. Robert Fisk, writing in the *Independent* on May 25, was one of the few commentators to say so openly:

So now Osama bin Laden is Hitler. And Saddam Hussein is Hitler. And George Bush is fighting the Nazis. Not since Menachem Begin fantasised to President Reagan that he felt he was attacking Hitler in Berlin . . . have we had to listen to claptrap like this. But the fact that we Europeans had to do so in the Bundestag—and, for the most part, in respectful silence—was extraordinary . . . “He’s a dictator who gassed his own people,” Mr Bush reminded us for the two thousandth time, omitting as always to mention that the Kurds whom Saddam viciously gassed were fighting for Iran and that the United States, at the time, was on Saddam’s side . . . In the United States, the Bush administration is busy terrorising Americans. There will be nuclear attacks, bombs in high-rise apartment blocks, on the Brooklyn bridge, men with exploding belts—note how carefully the ruthless Palestinian war against Israeli colonisation of the West Bank is being strapped to America’s ever weirder “war on terror”—and yet more aircraft suiciders. If you read the words of President Bush, Vice-President Dick Cheney and the ridiculous national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice . . . you’ll find they’ve issued more threats against Americans than Mr bin Laden.

But the key point, according to Fisk, is

the growing evidence that Israel's policies have become America's policies: Iran, Lebanon, and Syria, as well as Iraq, are all threatened by the United States. But Ariel Sharon, who Israel's own inquiry determined was personally responsible for the Sabra and Shatila massacre, is—according to President Bush—“a man of peace.” In the same vein,

America praises Pakistani President Musharraf for his support in the “war on terror,” but remains silent when he arranges a dictatorial “referendum” to keep him in power. America's enemies, remember, hate the US for its “democracy”. So is General Musharraf going to feel the heat? Forget it . . . If Pakistan and India go to war, I'll wager a lot that Washington will come down for undemocratic Pakistan against democratic India. Across the former Soviet southern Muslim republics, America is building air bases, helping to pursue the “war on terror” against any violent Muslim Islamist groups that dare to challenge the local dictators . . . In the meantime, Mr Bush goes on to do exactly what his enemies want; to provoke Muslims and Arabs, to praise their enemies and demonise their countries, to bomb and starve Iraq and give uncritical support to Israel and maintain his support for the dictators of the Middle East.

In Spain, the independent daily *El Mundo*, noting that U.S. policy in the Middle East is “unilaterally pro-Israeli,” suggested that President Bush should be thanked for coming to call for unity of action, “but it would be better to wait until he proves with actions the interest he expresses.” The Dutch daily *Algemeen Dagblad's* May 24 editorial said that Mr. Bush's speeches amounted to no more than an urgent repetition of the call for a war against terrorism, betraying his

misconception of the differences in a range of fields between the United States and Europe, which have emerged after the terrorist attacks in the United States . . . The looming contradictions between Washington and the European allies remain undiscussed.

The leading Greek daily *Kathimerini* concluded on May 23 that “the regular

use of the word ‘chasm’ regarding U.S.-European relations is a sign of the existing climate.”

An additional source of friction was the Bush administration's decision to withdraw the U.S. signature from the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC). That signature was deliberately and mischievously left behind by Bill Clinton in the final weeks of his presidency, in the full knowledge that it would never be ratified. Assorted European *bien-pensants*, mainly from the left, lambasted Bush's “unsigned” as “unprecedented” in the history of international law. There were a few dissenters, however. An editorial in the *Daily Telegraph* stated that the Bush team may have remembered the decision by the British government to allow the arrest of General Pinochet on its own soil under a Spanish judicial warrant:

That precedent can only have fueled Washington's fears that the proposed [ICC] might be used to promote politically motivated prosecutions against American servicemen, and even politicians . . . But there are plenty of persistent lawyers out there with a political axe to grind who would relish the prospect of dragging the mighty U.S. through the courts. The Americans can hardly be blamed for seeking to deny them the opportunity. Rather than trying to change Washington's mind over the ICC, as [British Foreign Secretary Jack] Straw indicated he would yesterday, the government should take these worries seriously . . . There is a tendency to try to use international systems to turn America into a pariah nation. Britain should have no part in this. There is no proven need for a permanent [ICC].

By contrast, Denmark's *Information* called the U.S. decision “a catastrophe for justice,” while the *Irish Times* bewailed “the fact that U.S. diplomats successfully watered down the text during talks leading to its adoption, and then walked away from it.” In Holland, *NRC Handelsblad* declared that

the rescinding of the American signature to the Statute of Rome is destructive of America's reputation as champion of international justice

. . . The most important victim, in the near future, of this, will be the international rule of law itself.

Thank goodness! The “international rule of law” is incompatible with the constitutional principle that only the 50 states and the federal government have the authority to prosecute and try individuals for crimes committed in the United States. Judicial power is “vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as Congress may, from time to time, ordain and establish.” No tribunal that is not established under the authority of the Constitution should ever be allowed to exercise jurisdiction over citizens of the United States for crimes committed on American soil.

Trade disputes may prove far more intractable in transatlantic relations than the ICC or even the rifts over the Middle East and terrorism. In addition, the President's Farm Bill, which will primarily help agribusiness rather than small farmers and which provoked remarkably little attention in the United States, is universally condemned by European analysts who think that the perceived hypocrisy of U.S. trade policy will have repercussions in other areas, including the war against terror. While preaching to others the gospel of open markets, President Bush, Europeans believe, is buying prairie votes with taxpayer-funded largesse.

Unilateralism in pursuit of rationally defined objectives in world affairs and protectionism as a means of leveling the trading field are not necessarily bad; but to practice them while preaching the virtues of multilateralism and free trade to the rest of the world is to invite ridicule and spite. The contradictions of the President's policies carry a price that may not have become fully obvious during his European tour but may yet cost him the presidency two years from now. <C>



THE OLD REPUBLIC

The Costs of War

by Clark Stooksbury

I first learned of the improbably named Smedley Darlington Butler while attending Marine Corps boot camp in South Carolina. At Parris Island, we were taught that Butler was, along with Dan Daly, one of two U.S. Marines to have been awarded the Medal of Honor twice. Along with five-time Navy Cross recipient Louis B. “Chesty” Puller, they served as heroic examples of the warrior ethos. Still, we never learned in any great detail about the lives or wartime experiences of any of them.

Butler was a prominent public figure in the early decades of the 20th century, well known for being a soldier’s soldier disdainful of military bureaucrats, a highly decorated war hero, and an advocate and enforcer of Prohibition in the 1920’s as Philadelphia’s Director of Public Safety. From his position in the Marine Corps, Butler was an eyewitness to almost every imperial encounter of the United States in the first three decades of the 20th century—from the Philippines and China to Nicaragua, Mexico, and Haiti. America has produced other martial heroes, but Smedley Butler’s views on the wisdom and virtues of these adventures, and the forcefulness with which he expressed them, set him apart from the ordinary war hero.

One of the issues that drove Butler to anger was the misuse of the Marine Corps for the benefit of specific business interests. While intervening in Nicaragua in 1910, Butler wrote to his parents that

What makes me mad is that the whole revolution is inspired and financed by Americans who have wildcat investments down here and want to make them good by putting in a Government which will declare a monopoly in their favor. The whole business is rotten to the core and I am ashamed to think that a Republican [Taft] adminis-

tration is, if anything, assisting the revolution.

Similar issues motivated U.S. entry into Haiti in 1915, when that country was indebted to banks in the United States, France, and Germany. The Marine Corps occupied Haiti until 1934, three years after Butler retired. While Butler was there, he established a police force led by the Marine Corps. One of his duties was to assist the Haitians in drawing up a constitution acceptable to the U.S. government. When the Haitian legislature threatened to institute a constitution that the U.S. government disliked, Butler was ordered to dissolve that body. Robert Moskin set the scene for this incident in his *U.S. Marine Corps Story*:

[Butler] was greeted with loud hissing. The gendarmes on duty cocked their rifles. Butler ordered them to put down their weapons. He handed the decree to the presiding officer, who, instead of reading to the delegates, began a tirade against it. The hall was in an uproar. Tables and chairs were thrown over, deputies shouted and surged forward. The gendarmes again prepared to shoot. Finally, the presiding officer rang a bell for order and read the decree, declaring the Assembly dissolved and directed the hall cleared. The gendarmes locked the doors. Butler grabbed the decree and stuffed it in his pocket. He would use it later in a U.S. Senate hearing when his opponents charged that the president’s decree had never existed.

After a couple of decades of involvement in the folly of American intervention in places like Haiti, Butler spent most of the rest of his career in the United States at bases in Quantico, Virginia, and San Diego, California. His most memorable post in this era was outside of the Marine Corps, when he took a leave of absence to serve as Director of Public Safety in the city of Philadelphia. Although he ultimately failed to make Prohibition work, he did so with panache. His biographer, Hans Schmidt, reported in *Maverick Marine* that the “first forty-eight hour shock assault featured raids

on speakeasies, cabarets, candy stores, brothels, pool rooms, and cider saloons throughout the city.” Fearful police officials in New York City and Baltimore stepped up efforts to intercept a criminal exodus from the City of Brotherly Love.

The only lasting effect Butler had on alcohol consumption came in his decision to become a teetotaler after his Philadelphia experience. He made no progress in controlling another personal vice, as one Philadelphia mother complained to the secretary of the Navy.

I hope when Mr. Butler’s leave expires that you will try and teach him that a General should be a gentleman and a leader such as Pershing and Wood and not a common soldier. We teach our children it is low and vulgar to swear, and they listen to Butler over Radio and say, “Mother, General Butler swears all the time.” He should set an example in his own conduct.

Butler never learned such propriety, but his more than three decades in the Marine Corps taught him many lessons, one of which was never to give up or look back. He did not let a disastrous defeat in the 1932 Republican primary for a Pennsylvania Senate seat deter him. He adopted the cause of the Bonus Expeditionary Force, a group of World War I veterans who marched on Washington to petition Congress for payments that weren’t due until 1945. He briefly camped out with the group and told them, shortly before they were violently dispersed by the Army, that

you hear folks call you fellows tramps, but they didn’t call you that in ’17 and ’18. I never saw such fine soldiers. I never saw such discipline . . . You have as much right to lobby here as the United States Steel Corporation . . .

Though he often spoke out on economic issues, Smedley Butler devoted most of the remainder of his life to opposing war. He wasn’t a pacifist. He referred to himself as a “military isolationist” and favored a strong national defense. But his philosophy is alien to today’s political elites: Butler believed that national