



Davidians, outlawing “hate speech,” or bombing Belgrade.

Until his 76th year, no enemy could vanquish him. Many tried, including Gough Whitlam, who, when prime minister, dismissed Sir Joh as a “Bible-bashing bastard.” Bland rube to the hilt, Sir Joh let his adversaries curse and shriek. Then, with imperturbable politeness, he would clean up their corpses. His entourage, known as the “White Shoe Brigade”—it included Rabelaisian property developers such as Michael Gore, once credited by an admirer (himself) with being “as slick as snot on a door handle”—lacked his own fortitude and personal austerity. Yet the White Shoe Brigade’s crimes, examined and recounted in prurient detail by a governmental commission after Sir Joh left office, should hardly in themselves have scandalized even Jane Austen’s maiden aunts. They were all pretty Runyonesque: a banknote-filled brown paper bag here; a rigged tender there. Sir Joh’s gamier underlings observed, without knowing it, Gladstone’s distinction between an aristocratic and a democratic leadership: The former bribes individuals, whereas the latter bribes whole classes. The White Shoe Brigade operated strictly at the individual level. To this extent, and this alone, it can be called aristocratic.

Sir Joh’s reign ended dramatically in 1987, when his disgust at the ineptitude of federal right wingers—led (if “led” is not too violent a word) by the young John Howard—goaded him into running a third-party campaign for the prime ministry during that year’s national election. Already Howard had perfected the talent which has served him so well ever since: being too weak and cynical to advocate

genuine conservatism, but eminently strong enough to make sure that no rival can get away with advocating it either. The “Joh for P.M.” drive failed, launching an entire literature of neocon mythology—which flourishes still—about how Sir Joh selfishly “split the conservatives” (*what conservatives?*). For the first time, he had overreached himself, and his own *quondam* party loyalists toppled him from the premiership before the year finished. Thereafter, except when he occasionally emerged to praise Pauline Hanson’s movement before and during its late-1990’s apex, he retired from public life as completely as any latter-day Emperor Charles V. No more did the airwaves resound to his much-mocked all-purpose slogan: “Don’t you worry about that.” No more did the airwaves resound to him at all. His innate dignity prevented him from whining. To the therapeutic state, he scorned to pay danegeld. (A less than appropriate metaphor, on reflection, since his father had come from Denmark.)

*Canberra Times* journalist Ian Warden (in a 1980 book of columns which boasts the title *Do Polar Bears Experience Religious Ecstasy?*) furnished as moderate a portrayal of Sir Joh as we may reasonably expect the Fourth Estate to give us. Shortly before the 1977 Queensland election, Warden met Sir Joh, the latter being on the campaign trail to aid a charming 82-year-old millionaire named Sir Bruce Small. (“Think big, vote Small,” screamed Sir Bruce’s fluorescent red-and-orange posters.) Expecting a flamboyant ogre, Warden found himself unexpectedly impressed by Sir Joh’s plainness:

I was struck [Warden wrote], not for the first time that day, by how dull, forgettable, and unobtrusive he becomes in a room full of others. Laurie [Sir Joh’s police escort] had twice the presence and charisma of his charge. We are, I think, missing the point that he is a very, very ordinary man, albeit a man with extraordinary energies which enable him to express his ordinariness in political ways. . . . The more arts degrees you have and the longer you remain a perplexed agnostic, the harder it becomes to plumb the shallow depths of the man.

But “shallow depths” is unfair, a mere repetition of the same patronizing mis-

take that doomed so many of Sir Joh’s antagonists. Rather, when we contemplate Sir Joh’s long heyday and abrupt decline, let us recall Churchill’s assessment of Lord Curzon’s career: “The morning had been golden, the noontide was bronze, and the evening lead. But all were solid, and each was polished till it shone after its fashion.”

R.J. Stove, who writes from Melbourne, Australia, is the author of *The Unsleping Eye: Secret Police and Their Victims*.

## Letter From Alabama

by J. Michael Hill

### Whose Security?



Several years ago, when the summer blockbuster *Independence Day* came out, I was told that audiences cheered the part where alien spacecraft destroyed such Washington, D.C., landmarks as the U.S. Capitol and the White House. At least some Americans know who the real enemy is and are willing to cheer publicly at cinematic depictions of their demise (at least in the dark of a theater), despite the threat of being labeled a “domestic terrorist.”

The recent circus caused by the innocent mistake of a Cessna pilot violating the airspace of official Washington, along with one of Jorge Bush’s many hypocritical utterances, made me realize just how wide the gulf is between the Official Ruling Class and the rest of us and why a healthy suspicion of the current regime and its motives is a good thing.

El Presidenté Bush, who never met a Mexican immigrant he didn’t like, told the paranoid xenophobes in Red State Land who oppose his post-September 11, wide-open-borders policy that confident nations do not build fences to keep others out: Only fearful nations do that. Been near the White House lately? Talk about fences! But again, Jorge and his entourage are important people, and the normal rules do not apply to them. We don’t need no stinking fences from Brownsville to San Diego to keep out Al Qaeda, as long as official Washington is bomb proofed. To hell with the yokels! Let them fend for themselves—just as long

as they don't become gun-totin' vigilantes, like the Minutemen, in the process. Fill them with their daily ration of fear and instill in them dependence on government to "protect" them with the USA PATRIOT Act and such. But never mind the fact that government is really interested only in protecting its own.

George Washington reminded his countrymen that the essence of government is force. To go a bit further, the handmaid of force is fear. Government normally thrives on making its subjects fear the consequences of disobedience. But the current government in D.C. wants you to see it as your benevolent and brave Big Brother who stands between you and Islamic terrorists; between you and a steady diet of Alpo in your old age; between you and your demise from asteroids striking Planet Earth. Just think of Jorge Bush in his flight suit on the deck of the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln*, proclaiming "Mission Accomplished," and you'll get the picture. And of course, government says that it is the only savior available in the post-Christian era to thwart these external threats. Thus, many Americans think that it is meet and right and their patriotic duty to let government take care of them.

But how much love and respect—not to mention fear—can a government generate in its subjects when it is the living embodiment of the Cowardly Lion?

When my wife and I turned on the Fox News Channel the day that the single-engine Cessna strayed into restricted D.C. airspace, we thought, at first, that something really big had happened. Then the announcer—with proper gravitas, of course—informed us of the developing situation. Not to put too fine a point on it, but we laughed out loud at the spectacle of grown men running panic-stricken from their temples of power because of a little Cessna. Hell, we have mosquitoes nearly that big in Alabama. Perhaps my wife and I could do with some sensitivity training by the airport-security Nazis. But think about this: The nerve center of the most powerful empire in the history of the world was rendered absolutely incontinent by little more than a toy airplane. As Liam Neeson proclaimed of the British in the movie *Michael Collins*, "How did these people ever come to run an empire?"

Though I always enjoy laughing at those people, I take no pleasure in the fact that this regime exists, in large part, because of the gullibility or mistaken self-

interests of my Alabama neighbors. In fact, we might put much of the blame on Christian Southerners in general. One thing I learned about my fellow hillbillies, crackers, and rednecks when I was growing up in the 1950's and 1960's was that, though they may lack formal education, they did have plain old horse sense. And just a little bit of old-fashioned horse sense applied to the situation today should tell Southerners that they have been played for fools by Bush and his neocon buddies. How much longer will folks in Birmingham, Montgomery, Mobile, Huntsville, and Tuscaloosa cheerfully and patriotically send their boys off to die in prolonged wars for "democracy" and "national security" in the faraway deserts of Iraq and Afghanistan (and God only knows where else) while our border remains open to anyone who wishes to cross it? How much longer will they tolerate the unconstitutional lockdown of their society under the ministry of Homeland Security? How much longer will my good people allow themselves to be fooled into thinking that their own interests and security concerns are the same as those of the Ruling Class? A shutdown of Washington, D.C., for whatever reason, would mean more freedom for the rest of us. Humorist Will Rogers understood that when he proclaimed that we are never so secure as when Congress is out of session.

The only security at stake here is the security of the Ruling Class that has destroyed our republic and lied about it. Frankly, they don't give a damn about common folks like you and me. We are just cannon fodder, taxpayers, and consumers. We are interchangeable and expendable. People serious about preserv-



Elizabeth Wolf

ing their freedom would not hesitate to call them traitors and then take the appropriate action to be rid of them. But to prevent us from seeing the truth of their treason, they must keep us in constant fear of everything under the sun but themselves. Their constant fear is that we will finally awaken and see just how insecure and fearful they have become. Once that happens, the bloom is off the rose.

More and more of my fellow Alabamians (and all Southerners and other Americans) are, I pray, beginning to notice that the emperor is "nekkid." The Cessna incident and the barricading of official Washington should, if nothing else, demonstrate that our imperial rulers take their own security seriously. It also demonstrates that, if you say "Boo," they will jump like terrified children. At the very least, it is fun to watch.

*J. Michael Hill is president of the League of the South.*

#### "FREE" ADVICE FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

*"I've been happily married for 21 years. Ten years ago, my husband suffered a debilitating disease that keeps us from making love. Four years ago, I bumped into an ex-lover, himself married, and began a sexual relationship, reawakening my sexual feelings. Neither of us would ever divorce. I'm sure I can keep this relationship secret, so my husband will not get hurt. My devout Catholicism forbids such an affair, but does secular ethics?"*

—Anonymous . . .

*"If your sex life with your husband has indeed ended, you may honorably consider other alternatives. A fulfilling erotic life is an important part of marriage, indeed of human happiness. Many religions enumerate conjugal duties. . . ."*

*"There remains the conflict between this path and your religion's strictures, but that is something millions of Catholics face each time they employ contraception, for example. Few practitioners of any faith adhere to each of its dictates."*

—from "Fair Affair?" by Randy Cohen, "The Ethicist" (July 31)

by Srdja Trifkovic

## European Disunion

In early 1980, the Soviet Union appeared to be more powerful than ever before. Its hold over Eastern Europe had been sealed in Helsinki five years previously. Its presence or influence in the Third World was rising, while that of the United States was diminishing. The notion of its eventual demise was dear to a few diehard Cold Warriors, but even they viewed it as a possibility distant in time and fraught with nuclear dangers. Within a few years, however, the war in Afghanistan, the challenge of Ronald Reagan, the unrest in Poland, and the inability of the Kremlin gerontocracy to find a viable successor to Brezhnev revealed many structural weaknesses of the empire of “real socialism.” Gorbachev’s ineptitude helped turn the crisis of the system into the crisis of the state. By 1991, the Soviet Union was dead and gone.

It is too early to tell whether the rejection of the proposed European Union constitution by the voters of France (May 29) and the Netherlands (June 1) heralds the beginning of a similar downward slide in Brussels, but the parallel appears apt. Only a year ago, in the aftermath of its expansion to 25 member countries, the European Union appeared poised to become a superstate of some half-billion people. The euro was strong, while Euro-skepticism appeared weak and confined to the union’s British fringe. A team of dedicated federalists had completed drafting its constitution, a document Jacobin in sentiment and in style: radical, secularist, progressivist, militantly humanist, and anti-Christian. A few commentators—myself included—warned that the edifice based in Brussels was fundamentally flawed because it was artificial and lacked the consent of the governed, but nobody could foresee that the unsoundness would become apparent so soon.

Today, the European Union is in crisis, and that crisis has three key aspects. The rejection of the constitution has marked a decisive defeat for the proponents of a single European superstate. The European Union’s latent budget crisis—not resolved at a rancorous summit in Brussels last June—is becoming acute. More important yet is the dispute over whether the European Union should reinvent it-

self as a dynamic, competitive common market in order to succeed in the global economy.

The fact that Great Britain assumed the presidency of the European Union on July 1 has great significance on all three issues, especially on the last one. Under Britain’s presidency, we shall see the ideological clash between the spirit of the “Old Europe” epitomized by France and Germany, which seek to uphold the 1960’s dirigiste “social model,” and the demand for a leaner, meaner, more flexible Europe. Prime Minister Tony Blair believes that the “reality check” initiated by the defeat of the constitution will help him prevail. The British presidency will be marked by the demand for reduced interference from Brussels and the insistence that increased competitiveness is the only way for the Old Continent to avoid being left behind in the global economy.

The pretense that the old show can be kept on the road was maintained somewhat uneasily by the federalists, who pledged to press ahead with the planned ratification process. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and President Jacques Chirac said they “were in agreement that the constitutional process must continue so that the views of each country are respected.” Carl Bildt, former prime minister of Sweden, declared that the lesson of the referendum was not that enlargement should be abandoned but that it should be anchored in a more open debate:

We cannot go further and faster than the citizens of Europe are prepared to tolerate—but we should recognize the fundamental difference in a capitulation to populism. It is leadership that is called for if abandonment of the soft power of Europe and a slide into instability are to be avoided.

Such hot air and desperate bombast notwithstanding, the proposed E.U. Constitution Treaty is dead. The implicit hope that Messrs. Bildt, Schröder, Chirac, and their ilk entertain—that the referendum in those two founding-member states can be repeated, and a different re-



sult obtained—reflects the arrogance and contempt for democracy of the Euro-federalist elite class. That class refused to accept Denmark’s rejection of the Maastricht Treaty *via* referendum in 1992 and repeated it the following year, when the “yes” vote prevailed thanks to an unprecedented media blitz by the proponents of the closer union. In 1991, the voters in Ireland caused another upset by rejecting the Nice Treaty in a referendum. This caused dismay in Brussels, but the Irish were also induced to reverse that decision a year later, in a virtual replay of the Danish scenario.

Admittedly, the motives of many French and Dutch “no” voters had little to do with the nature of the superstate project. Many of them simply wanted to punish unpopular governments for lackluster economic performance; others feared the winds of change *per se*, and, in France, the left accused the proponents of the E.U. constitution of seeking to dismantle the welfare state and undermine job security. But the rejection of further integration was nevertheless central to the voters’ decision. It was a bitter blow to the credibility and legitimacy of arguably the most ambitious political project the world has yet witnessed, and especially to the French governing elite, who had been both the architects and builders of the European Union ever since Jean Monnet conceived it over half a century ago. The “yes” camp could not mount a credible countercampaign, based on the argument that “Europe” should not be punished for the domestic shortcomings of President Chirac or Prime Minister Balkenende. For the first time ever, two of the original six members have rejected a major European treaty.

In the Netherlands, the issues of sovereignty, identity, and immigration were openly raised in the referendum debate,