

The UMC Council of Bishops was meeting during the week that the court issued its rulings and quickly gave its own unanimous response. "While pastors have the responsibility to discern readiness for membership, homosexuality is not a barrier," it said, sidestepping the issue of the *practice* of homosexuality as it applies to membership.

Not surprisingly, Methodist liberals responded with rage to the Johnson ruling, warning of an impending inquisition against homosexual church members. "The ruling . . . is chilling in its implications," warned the Methodist Federation for Social Action, which absurdly raised the possibility of "racial preferences" by bigoted clergy.

The denomination's chief Capitol Hill lobbyist, responding with equal indignation, wondered if the church might now remove the membership of fellow United Methodists George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, who "started a war," of which he said the church also disapproves.

Most of the shrill complainants know better. But their real fear is that the Judicial Council rulings confirm growing conservative influence within the denomination. There are more United Methodists in the state of Georgia alone than in all of the West Coast and Rocky Mountain states together. The bishop of the Congo estimates that there are more United Methodists at church in his country on a typical Sunday than in the entire United States.

So liberal United Methodists are upset, fretting that conservatives are trying to keep some people out of the church. But they do not seem to appreciate the irony. The liberal congregations are increasingly empty, and the conservative

ones are just about the only congregations that are growing.

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## AMERICAN EMPIRE

### The Neo-Ottoman Empire

by Joseph E. Fallon

Contrary to Washington's official rhetoric, the U.S. government is an ally, not an opponent, of Islamic extremism—a foe, not a defender, of Western civilization.

Not since the Turkish siege of Vienna (1526) has Europe faced the threat of a Muslim occupation of significant portions of the continent; it does so now because of the foreign policy pursued by the United States under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

Like a contagion, U.S. foreign policy, beginning with the Clinton presidency but culminating in George W. Bush and his neoconservative administration, sought to infect the rest of the world with nothing less than absolute and permanent nihilism. Neocon ideologue Michael Ledeen spells it out plainly:

Creative destruction is our middle name, both within our own society and abroad. We tear down the old order every day, from business to science, literature, art, architecture, and cinema to politics and the law. Our enemies have always hated this whirlwind of energy and creativity, which menaces their traditions (whatever they may be) and shames them for their inability to keep pace. Seeing America undo traditional societies, they fear us, for they do not wish to be undone. They cannot feel secure so long as we are there, for our very existence—our existence, not our politics—threatens their legitimacy. They must attack us in order to survive, just as we must destroy them to advance our historic mission.

Over the past half-century, as the vitality of Christianity and the nation-state

waned in Catholic and Protestant Europe, Eastern Europe, with the fall of communism, saw a revitalization. Having triumphed over the Ottoman Empire and the Soviet Union, Orthodox Christianity has the potential to rescue the rest of Europe.

Christianity and national identity, in general, and their rebirth in Eastern Europe, in particular, represent an obstacle to Washington's drive for "benevolent global hegemony" and a threat to its ideological legitimacy. Like Carthage, Europe must be "destroyed" if the United States is to advance her "historic mission."

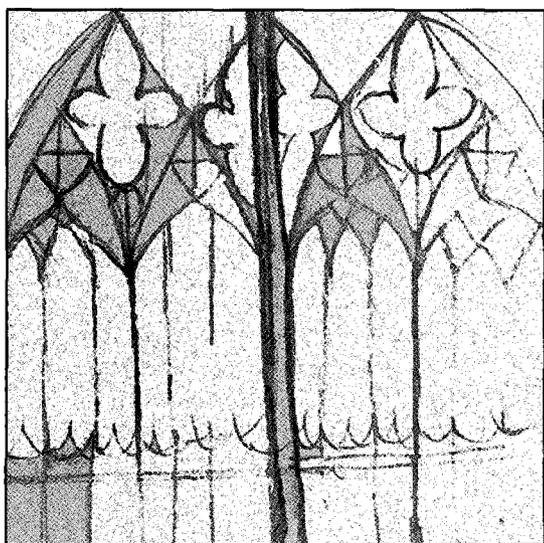
By encouraging the European Union to admit Turkey, a nation of Muslims, into its ranks, U.S. foreign policy denies the reality that Europe is historically Christian. In a 1999 trip to Turkey, President Clinton announced:

The United States is not a member of the European Union but I have constantly urged European integration to move further and faster, and that includes Turkey. There are still those who see Europe in narrower terms. Their Europe might stop at this mountain range or that body of water or, worse yet, where people start to worship God in a different way. But there is a growing and encouraging consensus that understands Europe as an idea as much as a place.

In a 2004 trip to Turkey, President George W. Bush declared that "Including Turkey in the EU would prove that Europe is not the exclusive club of a single religion, and it would expose the 'clash of civilizations' as a passing myth of history."

In supporting E.U. membership for Turkey, Washington emphasizes Turkey's history of secularism. That secularism is weak, however. The Turkish military, the source of the country's secularism, has staged a coup once every ten years to overthrow elected Islamic governments and repeatedly purges its own ranks of suspected Islamic fundamentalists and sympathizers. A secularism that can only be maintained at the point of the bayonet will eventually crumble.

Turkey has a population of 70 million (only Germany and Russia have larger populations); 50 percent live below the international standards of poverty; 27 percent are younger than 15; and the combined unemployment-underemployment rate exceeds 16 percent.



Elizabeth Wolf

Since the European Union allows the free and unlimited movement of peoples among member states, the admission of Turkey would be a disaster for Europe. Millions of Turks, including Islamic extremists who would use Turkey as a conduit, could then move freely into any of the 25 European member-states. Under E.U. law, Europeans would be unable to stop this invasion of their homelands.

Already, the Turkish military has returned to the Balkans, if only with a symbolic presence, for the first time since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. In 1994, as a result of pressure from the Clinton administration, the United Nations agreed to deploy 1,500 Turkish troops in Bosnia despite objections from Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia. Turkish troops have also been deployed to Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia.

Most revealing was the justification officially given by the "secular" government of Turkey for its interventions. Appealing to both irredentism and Islamic fundamentalism, it declared: "Turkey is [the] spiritual and cultural inheritor of the Ottoman Empire which had ruled the region for centuries." This neo-Ottomanism was institutionalized in the Southeastern European Cooperation Process, the Multinational Peace Force Southeastern Europe, the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe, and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative.

U.S. foreign policy seeks to deny the legitimacy of European nation-states. Gen. Wesley Clark, former commander of NATO, declared that "There is no place in modern Europe for ethnically pure states. That's a 19th century idea and we are trying to transition into the 21st century, and we are going to do it with multi-ethnic states."

Paraphrasing Marxist theory on the withering away of the state, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott decreed (in a speech delivered in 1999) that

The old Westphalian system of nation-states — each sovereign exercising supreme, absolute, and permanent national authority — is giving way to a new system in which nations feel secure enough in their identities and in their neighborhoods to make a virtue out of porous borders and intertwined economies and cultures.

Our foreign policy also acts to undermine European nation-states by creating a series of Muslim states in the Balkans, the

"Green Highway" linking Turkey to the heart of Europe. This has the further advantage of crippling Orthodox Christianity, an ideological threat to U.S. "benevolent global hegemony," by devastating and fragmenting the Balkans, an historic homeland of Orthodoxy, through wars, sanctions, and military occupation.

It started with Bosnia. Although Christian Croats and Serbs constitute 51 percent of the population of Bosnia, their right to national self-determination — for their areas to secede from Bosnia as Bosnia had seceded from Yugoslavia — was vehemently opposed by the Clinton administration. The U.S. government entered into *de facto* alliances with Islamic jihadists, Iran, Afghan *mujahideen*, and Lebanese Hezbollah to arm Bosnian Muslims, in violation of a U.N. arms embargo, to preserve a united and Muslim-dominated Bosnia in the heart of the Balkans.

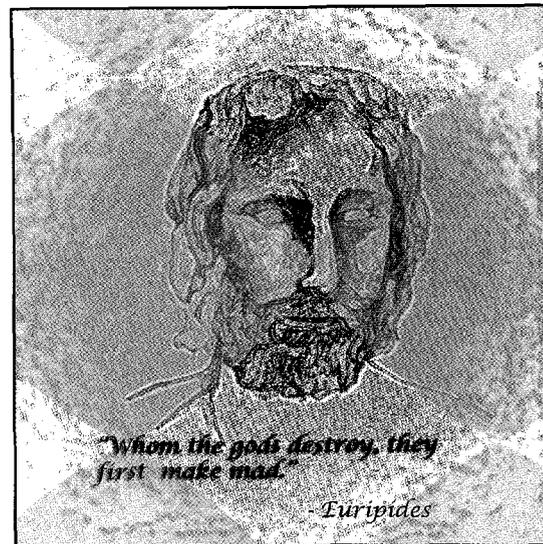
Next was Kosovo. Here, Washington reversed its position on political legitimacy: In Bosnia, it was multiethnic statehood; in Kosovo, it became national self-determination. The Clinton administration, in alliance with the KLA, an Albanian paramilitary listed by the State Department as a terrorist organization, engineered a war in Kosovo as well as the expulsion of 200,000 Serbs and the destruction of their homes, churches, convents, and monasteries.

The stage was set for Macedonia. Replicating their successful war in Kosovo, the U.S. government and the KLA won Albanian "autonomy" in Western Macedonia. Next on the list for "liberation" are southern Montenegro, southern Serbia, and northwestern Greece.

It does not end there. Turkey, asserting its neo-Ottoman prerogative, claims to be the protector of Turkish minorities in Bulgaria and Greece and, by implication, to have a right to intercede on their behalf. In pursuit of empire, Washington embraces neo-Ottomanism as it seeks to impose an Islamic ascendancy over parts of the Balkans.

Empires are expensive and ephemeral. It is madness to acquire them. Yet that is the objective of U.S. foreign policy. It is madness to punish allies and reward enemies, for that imperils our national security. Our foreign policy validates Euripides: "Whom the gods destroy, they first make mad."

Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.



Elizabeth Wolf

## Global Democracy, Ideology, Empire

by Joseph R. Stromberg

Today, as state-sponsored American corporatism is being extended around the globe, we are witnessing a gross overproduction of official ideology — the rhetoric of human rights, democracy, and free trade — which conceals some sordid realities. With the state replacing God as the source of all values, human rights and democracy have become key justifying themes for our overseas activities. There is a growing din of criticism regarding the human-rights shortcomings of other states, and many even suggest that the right to live in a democracy is universal and must be enforced.

Democracy as an item for political export is not entirely new. During World War I, following the lead of President Woodrow Wilson, the Cleveland Americanization Committee called for "carrying democracy . . . to all peoples . . . in order that the world may have a greater industrial, educational, economic, and political freedom."

For insights into global democracy, we may turn first to political scientist William I. Robinson, who crossbreeds world-system theory with Gramscian Marxism. Under globalization, he writes, "capitalist production relations are displacing . . . all residual pre-capitalist relations." How this is coming about is significant: The new order "is unfolding" under the aegis