

licensed professionals who have no contact with their clients, even if those clients are mainly faceless corporations; law firms creating fewer and fewer equity partnerships.

For many young corporate attorneys, the firm is a sweatshop, and their own labor is merely legal-ruled piecework. "The law is crowded—interesting—and full of despair," wrote Archibald MacLeish to his parents after a few disappointing years as a lawyer. "It offers its own rewards, but none other." To his friend Dean Acheson he wrote, "If I correctly analyze my emotions, I am attracted to the law by considerations the most superficial imaginable." Lawyers suffer high rates of mental illness, job dissatisfaction, alcoholism and drug abuse, and divorce. Sandra Day O'Connor calls them "a profoundly unhappy lot."

Mitigating all this personal unhappiness, of course, are the fat paychecks lawyers receive each month—it is hard to feel too sorry for them. The real losers here are the millions of Americans who can't afford the legal representation they need. The incarcerated may receive a court-appointed attorney, but a person in a dispute with a landlord, or on the wrong end of a collections agent, will be lucky to find a law school clinic to assist him. In the end, such a person will always fall victim to rapacious interests that can afford a legion of intimidating legal shock-troopers. We are used to thinking that America has too many lawyers. The truth is, the lawyers we have are just the wrong kind. Litowitz refers to a survey of students from 117 law schools that "found that two-thirds of the respondents were so deeply in debt that they could not even consider a career in public service," and only 5 percent of law students actually follow through. Law schools are good at serving the interests of corporate America. But it's the rest of us who have to fight them off, usually alone. **Avi Klein**, an intern at *The Washington Monthly*, is licensed to practice law in Maryland. He never has.

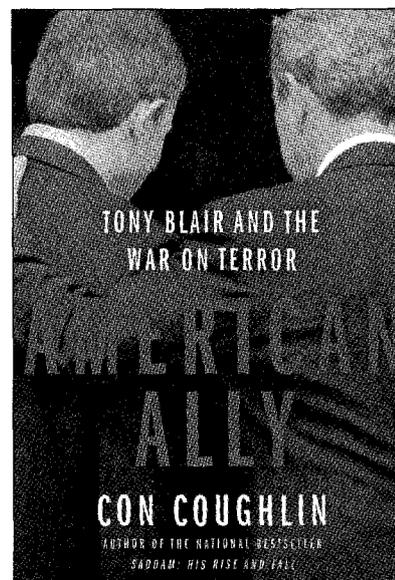
# Blair Hitch Project

The real reason Britain's prime minister stood by Bush on Iraq.

By Isaac Chotiner

In the spring of 1999, Tony Blair received a furious call from Bill Clinton. Policymakers in both London and Washington were concerned that the war in Kosovo was not proceeding smoothly. Disputes over ground troops and logistics had found their way, anonymously, into the British and American press. When Blair picked up the phone, Clinton lit into him, accusing the prime minister of not adequately controlling the leakers in his own administration. The episode rather surprised the new premier, who had been enjoying a rapport with the second-term president. But there was no mistaking the message from Clinton, according to the author of a new book on Blair and his relationship with America: "Washington was happy to have Britain as an ally, but only so long as Britain followed Washington's agenda." This would not be the last time Tony Blair was confronted with being the decidedly junior partner in his country's "special relationship."

Con Coughlin's *American Ally: Tony Blair and the War on Terror* is a useful guide to the way Great Britain has conducted its foreign policy since "New Labour" swept into power in 1997. A hawkish, conservative British journalist, Coughlin has written a brisk summary of the international crises of the Blair years. Unfortunately, Coughlin seems unwilling to state for the record what his own reporting suggests—that Blair went along with the Iraq war primarily out of pragmatism and a



**American Ally: Tony Blair and the White House**

By Con Coughlin

Ecco Press, \$26.95

desire to maintain Britain's historic closeness with America.

What does make Coughlin's book important, however, is that it highlights the inability of (mostly conservative) commentators to differentiate between liberal internationalists like Blair and the neoconservatives who led the charge for war in America. While liberal hawks are often willing to use force to prevent humanitarian violations and ethnic cleansing, neoconservatives are much more prone to acting unilaterally and without the consent of international institutions. By not adequately explaining this important distinction, Coughlin's analysis of Blair's motives comes up short.



On the whole, Coughlin's discussion of Blair does not offer much beyond that of his fellow countrymen, Peter Riddell and Peter Stothard, who have both recently published helpful books on the prime minister and his foreign policy. Additionally, these two works were on the whole more engaging to read, if for no other reason than that the writers had an ear for interesting anecdotes and personality quirks among the major players. The closest Coughlin gets to anything resembling gossip is a paragraph mentioning the decision by Cherie Blair, the prime minister's wife, to confront George W. Bush about his robust support for the death penalty. Unfortunately, we do not get to read how the president responded, and the chapter ends with a quote from Mr. Blair about "private conversations." Coughlin seems to delight in the secrecy of it all, but the reader may find himself a little disappointed.

When it comes to his country's relationship with America, Blair has always argued that England must remain close with its powerful ally. He has often said that "we are all internationalists," and his firm belief in the increasing intercon-

nectedness of the world has led him to state time and again that British ties to the United States are vital to its economic prosperity and global security. The fact that the two most successful British prime ministers of the last 65 years—Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher—shared strong bonds with their respective opposite numbers across the Atlantic must also factor into every premier's thinking.

Though Blair lacked foreign policy experience before becoming prime minister, he has always held a confident belief that he could occupy a central role in world affairs. Upon entering office, he quickly set out to establish himself as someone who was willing to use force for what he saw as progressive ends. This led, most notably, to his strong backing of the NATO bombing campaign to stop ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, and to a willingness to intervene in Sierra Leone and East Timor.

The prime minister's thinking is probably best captured by a 1999 speech in Chicago about international affairs, whose importance is aptly noted by Coughlin: "If NATO were able to stop Milosevic in Kosovo, it would send a

warning shot to other dictators—such as Saddam Hussein. So far as Blair was concerned, the international community could no longer regard 'acts of genocide' as a 'purely internal matter.'" Blair's support of Clinton's Kosovo actions had the added benefit of keeping Britain closely allied with the United States. Coughlin's insightful descriptions of the sometimes contentious diplomatic relationship between the two leaders (Blair was always much more willing than Clinton use ground troops against Serbian forces) serve to remind the reader that Blair's hawkishness is not simply a (relatively recent) result of wanting to please Bush.

Most Americans remember Blair's visit to America soon after the attacks of 9/11, and the warm reception that accompanied it. Around the time that Blair received a huge ovation from Congress, polls showed that he was viewed positively by an astounding 75 percent of Americans. Despite the outward solidarity, however, Blair and his advisers were acutely aware that dealing with Washington—always a delicate balancing act—was about to become more difficult now that the country was feeling particularly vulnerable. One British official tells Coughlin, "We had learned the lesson that you needed to be very careful dealing with a superpower. They always want to give the impression that they are leading the way." And as Blair had learned with Clinton, the public airing of disputes would not go over well with any American administration.

Blair's impassioned rhetorical attacks on Saddam, as well as his no-holds-barred defense of Bush before and after the Iraq invasion, certainly gave the appearance that the prime minister himself shared the president's belief that the security of a post 9/11 world demanded the removal of Saddam from power. This is certainly the foundation of Coughlin's own argument about Blair. He is right to note that from the time Blair took office, the prime minister spoke about the threat Iraq posed, and supported limited bombing campaigns against no-fly-zone violations by the dictator throughout the 1990s. And it's true that Saddam's record of tyrannical rule and human-rights violations was of

great concern to someone who cared about these things as much as Blair.

But Coughlin's explanations for why Blair ultimately decided to go along with the Bush administration do not add up. On one page, he writes that "[Blair's] view was that unless there was clear evidence of Iraqi complicity in 9/11, there was no justification for an attack on Baghdad." Yet on the next page, Coughlin approvingly quotes a Blair adviser who explains that the prime minister's decision to get involved with tackling Saddam's flagrant violations of international law came about because he had been profoundly affected and changed by 9/11.

Why the change? Coughlin seems to argue that the more Blair looked at 9/11, the more he realized something had to be done about Saddam. Additionally, Coughlin claims that Blair became more bullish on attacking Iraq after witnessing the coalition's success in Afghanistan. "Blair was independently coming to a conclusion similar to Bush's on how to conduct the next phase in the war on terror," he writes. But it is rather convenient timing that Blair's epiphany came at exactly the moment that the Bush administration started to focus its attention on Iraq. A few pages later, Coughlin explores what is perhaps the more likely reason for Blair's change of opinion. He describes a British cabinet meeting on Iraq thusly: "Blair listened attentively to the discussion but 'he was very firm with us about where he saw that Britain's national interest lay,' said Cook [former Foreign Secretary and at that time leader of the House of Commons Robin Cook]. Blair told his cabinet colleagues, 'We must stay close to America.'"

During this time, as both Washington and London began to promote the idea of regime change, Blair began what Coughlin calls "a subtle but important realignment" in the way he addressed the threat Iraq posed, arguing that the rogue state might give weapons to terrorists, a danger that after 9/11 could not be ignored. Coughlin implies that Blair believed this danger to be real and therefore confidently based his case for the war on the threat of Iraqi-sponsored terrorism. In fact, however, Coughlin

notes in the very same paragraph that the intelligence reports Blair was receiving did not claim this, but were instead arguing that Saddam was likely to keep any and all weapons for himself. Why, then, would Blair push this new line? Coughlin reports that the Bush administration began making the same case at the same time, but again, the convenience of the timing does not strike the author as suspicious.

Coughlin compounds this credulity by failing to note the very significant differences between Blair's brand of liberal interventionism and the Bush administration's bare-knuckled neo-conservatism. He does show that Blair was more interested in confronting threats multilaterally, and that he kept pushing the president to focus on the Israeli-Palestinian problem. But the journalist never really makes the fundamental point that while the war in Iraq may have been supported by some liberal hawks on both sides of the Atlantic, it is extremely unlikely that they would have ever undertaken the invasion if they had been in control of the American and British governments. Few, after all, took up the cause of war with Iraq as speedily as their neoconservative counterparts, many of whom focused their sights on Saddam in the immediate weeks and months following 9/11.

There's no reason to doubt that at some level Blair honestly believed that invading Iraq was the right and just course. But like many hawkish Democrats in the United States who supported the invasion, it's also hard to believe that other political motivations were not at play. One of those, for Blair, was the belief that by openly supporting Bush the prime minister might garner some leverage to shape the course of events. And around the edges, he seems to have been able to alter America's actions. Along with Colin Powell, he convinced the administration to take the case against Iraq to the U.N. Security Council. And much to the consternation of Washington hawks, he ensured that the United States would go back to the U.N. for a second (and ultimately fruitless) time. But as Coughlin makes abundantly clear, America was, on the big issues, going to do what it want-

ed. Blair clearly understood this (memos from his office released after the war show that the prime minister knew the war was inevitable), and he made the calculation that staying close to the United States and using his influence in any way he could was the most responsible thing to do.

Was it, in the end, worth it? Should Blair have gone along with an invasion and occupation that has divided his party and enraged his country? If you believe, as some on the left do, that had Blair refused to support Bush's plans, the train of war might have been stopped in its tracks, then the answer is clearly no. But if you take the view, as I do, that the war was going to happen regardless of what Britain did, then the answer seems to be most certainly yes. Blair's efforts to moderate the Bush administration's bellicose rhetoric and stubbornness can only be seen as good. That being said, Blair still went along with a war that most of his country—and many in the United States—view as illegitimate and immoral. Indeed, there is no doubt that the prime minister's resolute support of the invasion will be a part of his legacy that many of his fellow countrymen will always despise.

Still, there is reason for progressives to be happy that Blair has maintained such close ties to the United States. By supporting the war when no other major world leader would, Blair became Bush's closest ally and enhanced his visibility as an important international figure. He has used that clout to take the lead on a number of issues, from debt relief and foreign aid to ending farm subsidies. In the case of assisting the world's poorest nations we have seen, thanks largely to his leadership, substantial—if incomplete—progress. Along the way, Blair has nudged his partners in Washington to support progressive causes they might otherwise have ignored. Ironically, then, Blair's decision to go along with a war he rightly saw as inevitable was in the end a boon to progressives, as the prime minister's leading role on the world stage has helped move forward many of the issues they care deeply about.

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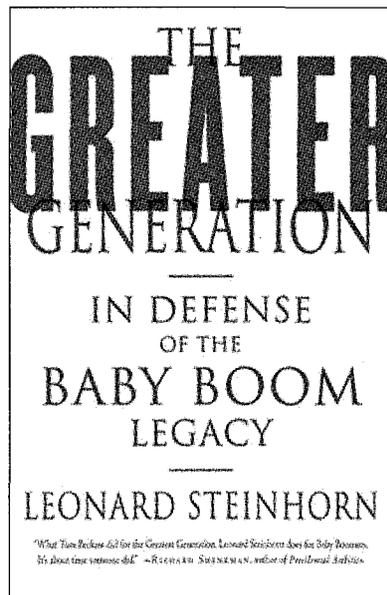
# The Aging of Aquarius

Boomers can take credit for the '60s if they accept blame for the '70s and '80s.

By Jamie Malanowski

With the oldest of the Baby Boom generation now starting to turn 60, it seems inevitable that we will soon be inundated with books and TV specials assessing the impact of this huge cohort on American society. *The Greater Generation*, by American University professor Leonard Steinhorn, can be considered a very sympathetic brief for the defense. No doubt some opportunistic right-wing scribe is energetically pitching Regnery Press on the merits of prosecuting Boomers for their various crimes against humanity, even as some third party is pounding out an even-handed assessment. Hopefully at some point, Friends of the Forests will step in and remind everyone that a generation is an awfully large category to make meaningful generalizations about, and perhaps we should spare the trees. But for now, back to Leonard Steinhorn.

Readers will recall that it was Tom Brokaw's great good luck as a journalist, as a reporter of news, to uncover that back in the 1930s and 1940s, a large mass of young Americans had to suffer, a) the trials and deprivations of the Great Depression, then b) fight a terrible war — a "world war" in the parlance of the



## The Greater Generation: In Defense of the Baby Boomer Legacy

By Leonard Steinhorn

Thomas Dunne Books, \$24.95

time—against countries bent on global domination. Not only did Brokaw have the courage to bring to light this virtually hidden chapter of our history, but he or an associate had the marketing savvy to title the book *The Greatest Generation*, an irresistibly flattering phrase which sustained the book through many printings and multiple sequels. I'm not sure, but I think Brokaw meant the phrase sincerely, if not exactly

scientifically. It's not like he sat down and assigned coefficients for hardships and accomplishments, or calculated what the ratio between opportunity and outcome should be, or figured out whether one should subtract for embarrassments and shortcomings, or actually divide by them, all in an effort to come up with an equation that would yield a Greatest Generation Coefficient by which we would rank Founders and Boomers, World War II troopers and Gilded Age inventors, Civil Warriors and Manifest Destineers. No, Brokaw just grabbed a pithy, vivid title, and skipped off to the best-seller list.

Nor has Leonard Steinhorn gone the scientific route, but he certainly wants to jump into this Greatest Generation discussion. However, it's not immediately clear where he means to land. He doesn't seem to argue that Boomers are greater than the Greatest Generation. After all, he didn't call his book "An Even Greater Generation," with the implication that we have superseded our elders. He called it "The Greater Generation," which implies that he might be satisfied coming in second to "The Greatest Generation," comfortably ahead of "The Great Generation," "The Good Generation," and "The Generation That Needed Improvement." He even starts off the book giving props to the World War II-sters. "No one should ever doubt the valor and sacrifice of the World War II generation... This was the generation that sacrificed their blood...suffered through the Great Depression...bravely answered the call...a horrid and heroic struggle...Normandy and Iwo Jima...they deserve every accolade they've been given."

However, if any of you thinks the next word could possibly be something other than "but," I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd like to sell you.

Steinhorn's "but" is a big one, and justly aimed. He points out that the Greatest Generation came home from World War II to an America