

A Dangerous Form of Altruism

ONCE DURING THE COLD WAR, as America was defying the Soviets with little help and less gratitude from those we were defending, I muttered to a friend about our

“ungrateful allies.” “What other kind are there?” he retorted.

Indeed. And speaking of ingratitude, imagine how the Mother Country must have regarded her colonial subjects circa 1778.

In the French and Indian War, she had invested British blood battling France to liberate North America. How did America show her gratitude? We refused to pay taxes for the war. We balked at quartering British troops. We cheered hot-heads who threw British tea into Boston harbor. We butchered a British battalion on Concord road. We rebelled. And in 1778, we entered an alliance with the King of France, from whom the British army had rescued us.

“What a pack of ingrates!” George III must have said to Lord North, “Run these traitors down and hang every last one of them!”

But what the king saw as treason, Washington and Jefferson saw as loyalty to country. The old bonds had been dissolved in the fire of war. And in making an alliance with the mortal enemy of our Mother Country, we were putting America’s interests first.

In every foreign war of the 19th century, U.S. presidents did the same. In 1812, we declared war on Britain when she was in a death struggle with Napoleon, in the hope of seizing Canada. In 1846, we declared war on Mexico to keep Texas and seized the Southwest. In 1898, McKinley was stampeded into war over Cuba but made the best of it by annexing Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Hawaii.

In lives lost, these were small wars with big gains. But in 1917, Wilson took us into the Great War “to make the world safe for democracy.” What vital interest was in peril? None. What did we get out of it? Bolshevism, fascism, Nazism, and World War II.

Whether the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires defeated the British, French, and Russian empires was not worth the 116,000 American-dead and 200,000 wounded it cost. World War I was but another imperial war on a blood-soaked continent toward which our Founding Fathers had wisely turned their backs.

What calls this history to mind is the latest crisis that could drag us into war: the revelation that North Korea lied when she said she would give up developing atomic weapons if we would provide the food and fuel to keep the brutal hermit kingdom in business.

Pyongyang has been caught producing enriched uranium. And as we seek to isolate North Korea, with her 11,000 artillery tubes a few miles from 37,000 U.S. troops, who stands by us? South Korea and Japan prefer appeasement. China refuses to condemn her ally. Whatever one may think of the ingratitude of South Korea and Japan, whom we have defended for half a century, they are acting in their national interests. Isolating North Korea until she shuts down all nuclear plants is, to them, not worth the risk of provoking a war with the armed, dangerous, and unpredictable regime of Kim Jong Il.

But this raises a question: Why is a nuclear weapon on a North Korean missile a greater threat to us than to Seoul or Tokyo? Why are we confronting Pyongyang alone? Why are we risking war? It is not our homeland that is threatened here.

South Korea, with twice the population of the North and thirty times her GDP, can defend herself. Japan is even more capable. Why then are we committed in perpetuity to risk war to defend both of these nations when neither is obligated to defend us?

How do our security treaties with Japan and Korea strengthen our security? Now that the Soviet threat no longer exists, are not these “entangling alliances” a dangerous form of altruism? Would it not serve U.S. interests to inform Tokyo and Seoul that we intend to dissolve the old security treaties, remove our troops from their territory, and let them deal with Pyongyang as they deem best?

South Korea and Japan could appease North Korea or build-up their forces, conventional or even nuclear, to contain her. While that might complicate life for Beijing, let the Chinese deal with it.

America should disengage from her Asian alliances and let the nuclear powers there—China, Russia, India, Pakistan, North Korea—and the potential nuclear powers—Japan, South Korea, Taiwan—establish their own balance of power. For there is nothing in all of Asia worth a nuclear war or another Vietnam. Or is there?

By playing Wyatt Earp to the world, throwing down every third-rate gunslinger, we are one day going to get shot by a rogue state. When we do, Wyatt will turn in his badge. Let’s do it now. ■

[IMMIGRANTS]

FITTING THE PROFILE

We've heard much about egg on the faces of the TV pundits who flooded the airwaves during the month of the sniper attacks with claims that the Washington area sniper was certainly a white male. Blacks too can be serial killers, we now learn, and the life of John Mohammad is undergoing great scrutiny.

We are hearing less about John Lee Malvo, the seventeen-year-old Jamaican immigrant who was Mohammad's partner in sniping. Malvo was an illegal alien, an "undocumented immigrant" according to the current euphemism.

Truth is, Malvo does fit a certain profile: save for his regrettable tendency to shoot people in gas stations and shopping malls, he is very much the kind of person the open borders crowd wants to bring into the United States. Appropriately multicultural (he is from Jamaica, land of reggae) he enhances America's diversity; lacking much education, he could be counted on—if he were one day to take a job—to further drive down the wages of America's less skilled workers. For the *Wall Street Journal* and its "there shall be open borders" philosophy, and the neonconservatives and multiculti liberals who yearn to turn America into a "universal" nation, Mr. Malvo fell just short of ideal.

[HISTORY]

DEATH OF THE WASP

In a recent *New York Times* review of David Rockefeller's autobiography, David Brooks touches on "one of the great mysteries of the 20th century: whatever happened to the Protestant Establishment?" For 200 years they occupied the commanding heights of American society and then, "sometime around in the 1960's...poof!...they were gone."

Brooks ascribes the collapse to that establishment's diffident and conflict-

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STEVE GREEN

"WE'VE ESTABLISHED A CLEAR LINK."

adverse demeanor. When they came under cultural assault in the 1960's, the WASPs "didn't even put up a fight." Sometimes, as Brooks rightly notes, the assault came from their own children; and WASP patricians found themselves struck dumb when their beliefs came under that kind of fire. In general, fighting back just didn't seem like good manners.

There is some truth in this. But the story of the fall of WASPdom cannot really be told without reference to the groups that challenged the WASPs and eventually superceded them. The tumultuous '60s were not in the main a generational civil war fought within the families of the old American establishment. As serious studies of the decade show (a good beginning is Stanley Rothman's and Robert Lichter's seminal *The Roots of Radicalism: Jews, Christians, and the New Left*) the Sixties revolution was in great part Jewish in its inception; the Jerry Rubin/Abbie Hoffman battle cry of "we're coming for your children" hit at the generation gap that had

opened in Christian and especially WASP families.

That gap hardly existed amongst the families of "liberal parents and radical children" that spawned the vanguard of the campus revolt. Mark Rudd's mother drove in from New Jersey to deliver hot meals to her son while he was spearheading the 1968 shutdown of Columbia University and told reporters how proud the boy made her. The lion's share of the early SDS membership comprised red diaper babies, the children who grew up in the orbit of an American Communist Party whose cadre was, to say the least, not especially WASPy. Their campaign against "the establishment" did not lead to the sort of wrenching intra-family splits, disinheritances, and even suicides that wracked the first families of WASPdom and left no emotional wreckage behind.

Brooks himself has written an often perceptive book about the new post-WASP American establishment—and coined a nice de-ethnicized neologism