

BOOKS

[*The West's Last Chance: Will We Win the Clash of Civilizations?*
Tony Blankley, Regnery, 256 pages]

The Struggle for Europe

By Patrick J. Buchanan

FIERCELY PROUD of his British heritage—his parents went through the Blitz—the most reliably hawkish of “The McLaughlin Group,” Tony Blankley is sometimes referred to by co-panelists as Colonel Blankley or Lord Blankley. In *The West's Last Chance*, Lord Blankley is in full-throated Churchillian roar.

“An existential threat ... hangs over our nation and civilization,” he writes, the threat of “radical Islam.” It is of the same order of magnitude as the Nazi threat and, unless we meet it with far greater awareness and resolution, our civilization and nation will be lost.

Radical Islam is already inside the gates, he writes, especially in Europe where 20 million Muslims reside, more and more alienated from the societies in which they were born. After the ritual slaughter of Theo van Gogh by a crazed Muslim on a Holland street and the London subway bombings, Blankley is likely to get a wider hearing over there—and over here. And his prognosis of Europe's condition is spot on.

As the native-born peoples of Europe age and die and their numbers shrink, Europe is being repopulated by Muslims from former colonies. As the Muslim young grow in numbers, many are not being assimilated into their national cultures. And just as in America many children of baby boomers are rejecting the secular values of their parents in search of a faith to live by and live for, many young Muslims are rejecting our values for a more demanding Islamic faith. Young Muslims are being converted to militant Islam because it gives a mean-

ing and purpose to their lives that they have not found in Western secularism and materialism.

But the message the radical imams preach to the deracinated young is a militant one. If you wish eternal life, pray five times a day to Mecca, fast during Ramadan, reject the alcohol, drugs, music, and immorality on offer from the satanic Western popular culture, and stand by the *umma*.

The political message is more toxic. Islam's eternal enemy is the Crusader West. The irreconcilable conflict has lasted for 1,400 years. While Islam was dominant in the first millennium, the West conquered in more recent times, and Islamic nations were colonized and their peoples oppressed. But today Islam is rising and the West retreating. America, Britain, and Israel still occupy Arab and Islamic lands, and they are all in transparent retreat.

To the militant young who would be soldiers of Islam, these imams preach: strike a blow at the enemy, become a hero, and attain paradise like Mohammad Atta and the “martyrs” of 9/11.

In a time when African-Americans believe Bush's torpor in rushing aid to New Orleans was because the victims of Katrina were black, and some believe Minister Farrakhan that the 17th St. levee

occupation of Iraq, overthrow of Arab despots beholden to the West, justice and a homeland for the Palestinian people.

The West's Last Chance opens with “A Nightmare Scenario.” Muslim radicals blow up malls in America, killing 1,500 and wounding 7,000. Enraged citizens demand curfews on all Muslims. The Democratic candidate, a woman, takes a hard line. Her Republican opponent, a Marine veteran of Vietnam but a social conservative disgusted with immorality in the culture and aware the Muslim vote could be decisive, blurts to a rally crowd, “It's time for sharia in America.” The GOP base bolts. The Democrat wins in a landslide.

But in Europe, following even more devastating terror attacks, the EU nations capitulate to Islamic militants and sign a concordat. America severs all security ties to Europe—and now stands alone.

Now this scenario calls for a suspension of disbelief. But the more convincing sections of *Last Chance* follow. From his reading of history and the literature of Islamism, Blankley argues that, just as Hitler indicated what he would do in *Mein Kampf*, radical Muslims are following the dictates of revered teachers and pursuing plans that culminate in the death of the West. Where the dissent will come is on the Blankley battle plan.

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was dynamited to drown black people, we should not be surprised a minority of Muslim young accept this depiction of the world. And though only a tiny minority are willing to act on this message, a desperate and determined few, as we saw in Madrid, London, and New York, can stun and shake a free society.

As Hitler and the Nazis made Germany's agenda—return of lands and peoples lost at Versailles—their agenda, bin Laden and the radical imams conflate their war on the West with the popular causes of Arab nationalism: an end to U.S.

He believes America must go to a war footing. To protect us from another 9/11, or worse, the U.S. government must be given the powers given FDR, when 110,000 Japanese could be sent to internment camps, as there were likely to be at least some disloyalists and traitors among them.

He cites Learned Hand: “A society in which men recognize no check upon their freedom soon becomes a society where freedom is the possession of the few.” He quotes approvingly Mollie Panter-Downes's 1940 *New Yorker* piece

on the powers assumed by Churchill with the Defense of the Realm Act passed just before Dunkirk.

Nobody doubts that ... the Government will use its new powers, more complete than any government since Cromwell's time, to the utmost. The Englishman's home is no longer his castle but a place that can be commandeered at a moment's notice if the state needs it. Landowners must be prepared to give up their land; employers to close down their businesses or to carry on under government control, and perhaps at a loss; employees to change their jobs as they may be directed by the Ministry of Labour.

Among the measures Blankley believes we must take now: Formally declare war on radical Islam. Give Bush the same war powers FDR had. Should he need more, amend the Constitution. Permit wartime censorship. Give the

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government the right to inspect mail and e-mail to protect the national security. Secure our borders. Use ethnic profiling when checking airline passengers. Create a biometric national ID card. Deport all non-citizens who agitate for violence against our society or government. Expand the U.S. armed forces by hundreds of thousands of troops to deal with new Afghanistans and Iraqs.

The West's Last Chance is the work of a serious man alarmed at what he see as a mortal threat to his family, his country, his civilization. Where Blankley and this friend disagree is on the character of the threat and strategic response it commands.

Unlike Nazi Germany, Islamists cannot overrun Europe unless the Europeans become so few, so weak, so cowardly, they will let a Muslim minority rule them.

In which case, they are lost in any event.

Unlike the Soviet Union, no Islamic terrorists could inflict on us anything like the 50 million dead Moscow could have in 24 hours during the Cold War. They can kill some of us, and force us to take measures that disrupt our lives and reduce our freedoms, but they are not an existential threat to the United States. We must accept that the days of absolute security for anyone in this world are over.

The question to be addressed is the one in the subtitle of the Blankley book: "Will we win the clash of civilizations?"

That clash is religious, ideological, demographic. Militant Muslims hate us not just because of our perceived decadence and depraved culture but because we are seen as oppressors of Arab and Islamic peoples. What we need to do is to separate ourselves from those who hate us over here, and, consistent with our vital interests, lower our imperial profile in that part of the world.

With our invasion of Iraq, we inflamed and radicalized the entire Muslim world. The cancer of Islamic hatred metastasized. Our friends were put on the defensive, and we called into existence, as the Israelis did with the invasion of Lebanon, far more dangerous enemies than Saddam Hussein: a terrorist Sunni insurgency and Shia fundamentalism.

What is the formula for victory over Islamic jihadists? It is not the British way—to declare war on Hitler, sail for France, and fight to the death on the continent—but the way of Eisenhower and Reagan in the Cold War, the way of patience and perseverance.

Facing a Soviet Empire that controlled Central Europe, America did not send armies to roll back Communism. We drew a line across Europe, told Moscow not to cross it, built up our

allies economically and militarily, managed crises to avoid conflict, let the two systems compete, and, under Reagan, waged ideological war on the Soviet system. And the Communist world crashed in failure.

So will Islamism, for, like Communism, it does not work. It cannot give people what they want. Given time it will fail. These people can bomb and destroy, but we do that better than they—and, unlike us, they cannot build anything. In power, they always fail and ever will.

As we saw with Farouk in '52, Feisal in '58, Idris in '68, Haile Selassie in '74, and the Shah in '79, monarchy failed in the Islamic world. Nasser proved socialism doesn't work. Syria and Saddam proved Baathism doesn't work. Afghanistan, Sudan, and the Ayatollah's Iran prove Islamism doesn't work. Before Bush and our cakewalk crowd invaded Iraq, the Islamists in Iran had lost successive elections, 70-30, to moderates who wanted to rejoin the world.

We were winning. Then came the invasion of Iraq and the axis-of-evil bellicosity, and the mullahs got a new lease on power.

"We are going to do the worst thing we can to you Americans," Georgi Arbatov said at the end of the Cold War, "We are going to take away your enemy from you." To win the war against radical Islam we need to do the same, remove the causes that inflame and unite tens of millions of Muslims behind bin Laden and make them come face to face with their own problems, their own internal crises, with no Turks, Brits, or Americans to blame for their failures.

If they hate us, disengage, end our imperial presence in the Middle East, tell these peoples their form of government is their own business so long as they do not attack our interests. We need to tell them we will have whatever relationship they wish to have. And if none, fine. But warn them privately that if we trace an act of terror against our country to their country, then God have mercy on them because the United States will not. ■

[Phyllis Schlafly and *Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade*, Donald T. Critchlow, Princeton University Press, 422 pages]

Phyllis Schlafly: Conservatism's Founding Mother

By Gregory L. Schneider

IT IS AMAZING that academic historians, long interested in studying the impact of women on modern American life, have ignored arguably the most important woman in present-day American politics, Phyllis Schlafly. Then again, maybe it isn't so amazing, for Schlafly has fought valiantly over the course of a long career against feminism, and it is feminists who dominate academia and write women's history.

Donald Critchlow, a political historian at Saint Louis University, has shattered the historical barrier, providing a well written, impressively researched, and sympathetic study of the importance of grassroots activism in the formation of modern American conservatism. Critchlow shows how Schlafly, a dedicated Republican activist, used her talent to mobilize grassroots conservatives, the majority of them women, and how, in conjunction with intellectuals and politicians, she helped move the GOP to the Right. Those looking for a traditional biography of Schlafly will not find it here. Critchlow's book is mostly concerned with Schlafly's activist career. And it is a fascinating tale.

For younger readers, the name Phyllis Schlafly probably will not mean much, which is regrettable, for she is truly conservatism's founding mother. For those of us who grew up in the 1970s, she was everywhere, on talk shows, on the news, on William F. Buckley's *Firing Line*, in magazines. Most of what we saw or read about her was negative. She was standing in the way of progress, of the libera-

tion of women from patriarchal authority. She was traditional, believing that the Equal Rights Amendment portended a day when women could be drafted into the military, could serve in combat roles, and homosexuals could marry. Flash forward 30 years—was she wrong?

Her long career cannot be captured simply in a treatment of her opposition to the ERA, as famous as that made her. By the end of the ERA fight, Schlafly had been a conservative activist for close to 30 years, having run for Congress from her Alton, Illinois district, mobilized women against communism, headed up the National Federation of Republican Women (from which she was purged after 1964), served as a delegate to Republican national conventions, and written books like *A Choice, Not an Echo* and *The Gravediggers* (co-authored with Chester Ward), which combined sold three million copies in 1964. All the while, she remained a dedicated mother and spouse, bearing and rearing five children. During the ERA battle she would often anger her feminist opponents when she led off her talks saying, "I'd like to thank my husband for allowing me to speak here tonight."

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Critchlow's book is as much a history of the neglected grassroots activism that helped conservatives gain power in the 1980s as it is about Schlafly. Historians have turned their attention to conservatism in the past decade, and there are many valuable studies of specific organizations and biographies of individuals. Yet scholars still point to George H. Nash's magisterial 1976 work *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* as a model for the study of conservative history. Its portrait

of intellectuals shaping the movement has led historians to look for the rise of the Right among academics, journalists, and policy wonks.

Grassroots activism has remained an orphan in conservative history. There have been a few case studies of grassroots politics, such as Lisa McGirr's *Suburban Warriors*, about Orange County and the "little old women in tennis shoes" who made up the John Birch Society. But Critchlow's book, based on prodigious research in Schlafly's own papers, a huge collection kept in her Eagle Forum headquarters, as well as 60 additional archives, imparts a new dimension to our understanding of conservative politics—the long-term importance of grassroots organizing for the conservative revival. His book, while a study of one woman's fight for conservative causes, also offers an alternative approach to understanding the long sweep of conservative history.

Critchlow puts to rest a few myths about the development of the Right in postwar America. He challenges the arguments of liberal historians like Rick Perlstein and Dan T. Carter who view conservatism's development as a reaction to the civil-rights movement. Critchlow sets them straight. Anticom-

munist played the biggest role for the development of grassroots conservatism. "For anticommunist activists like Schlafly," Critchlow writes, "the struggle against communism dictated all aspects of political life from the local to the national level."

While there were certainly anti-Semites and racists on the Right, in the 1950s and 1960s when the civil-rights movement was at high tide, conservatives were more concerned about communism than race relations. "Southern anti-