

# Forgive Us Our Debts

Since it began to give credit ratings to nations in 1917, Moody's has rated the United States triple-A. U.S. Treasury bonds have been seen as the most secure

investment on earth. When crises erupt, nervous money seeks out the world's great safe harbor, the United States. That reputation is now in peril.

Last week, Moody's warned that if the United States fails to rein in the soaring cost of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, the nation's credit rating will be downgraded within a decade.

Our political parties seem oblivious. Republicans, save Ron Paul, are all promising to expand the U.S. military and maintain all of our worldwide commitments to defend scores of nations.

Democrats, with entitlement costs drowning the federal budget in red ink, are proposing a new entitlement — universal health coverage for the near 50 million who do not have it — another magnet for illegal aliens. Moody's is telling America it needs a time of austerity, while the U.S. government is behaving like the governments we used to bail out.

California has already hit the wall. With an economy as large as a G-8 nation, the Golden State is looking at a \$14-billion deficit in 2009 and a \$3-billion shortfall in 2008. Governor Schwarzenegger has called for slashing prison staff by 6,000, including 2,000 guards, early release of 22,000 inmates, closing four dozen state parks and a 10-percent across-the-board cut in all state agencies. The Democratic legislature is demanding tax hikes, which would drive more taxpayers back over the mountains whence their fathers came.

Meanwhile, Washington drifts mindlessly toward the maelstrom. With the dollar sinking, oil surging to \$100 a barrel,

the Dow having its worst January in memory, foreclosures mounting, credit-card debt going rotten, and consumers and businesses unable or unwilling to borrow, we appear headed into recession.

If so, tax revenue will fall and spending on unemployment will surge. The price of the stimulus packages both parties are preparing will further add to the deficit and further imperil the U.S. credit rating. This all comes in the year that the first of the baby boomers reach early retirement and eligibility for Social Security.

To stave off recession, the Fed appears anxious to slash interest rates another half-point, if not more. That will further weaken the dollar and raise the costs of the imports to which we have become addicted. While all this is bad news for the Republicans, it is worse news for the Republic. As we save nothing, we must borrow both to pay for the imported oil and foreign manufactures upon which we have become dependent.

We are thus in the position of having to borrow from Europe to defend Europe, of having to borrow from China and Japan to defend Chinese and Japanese access to Gulf oil, and of having to borrow from Arab emirs, sultans and monarchs to make Iraq safe for democracy.

We borrow from the nations we defend so that we may continue to defend them. To question this is an unpardonable heresy called "isolationism."

And the chickens of globalism are coming home to roost.

We let Europe get away with imposing value-added taxes averaging 15 percent on our exports to them, while they

rebate that value-added tax on their exports to us. Thus the euro has almost doubled in value against the dollar in the Bush years, as NATO Europe begins to bail out on Iraq and Afghanistan.

We sat still as Japan protected her markets and dumped high-quality goods into ours and China undervalued its currency to suck jobs, technology, and factories out of the United States. Now China and Japan have \$2 trillion in cash reserves. The Arabs have an equal amount of petrodollars. Both are heading here to spend their depreciating dollars snapping up U.S. assets — banks, ports, highways, defense contractors.

America, to pay her bills, has begun to sell herself to the world.

Its balance sheet gutted by the subprime mortgage crisis, Citicorp got a \$7.5-billion injection from Abu Dhabi and is now fishing for \$1 billion from Kuwait and \$9 billion from China. Beijing has put \$5 billion into Morgan Stanley and bought heavily into Barclays Bank.

Merrill Lynch, ravaged by subprime mortgage losses, sold part of itself to Singapore for \$7.5 billion and is seeking another \$3 billion to \$4 billion from the Arabs. Swiss-based UBS, taking a near \$15 billion write-down in subprime mortgages, has gotten an infusion of \$10 billion from Singapore.

Bain Capital is partnering with China's Huawei Technologies in a buyout of 3Com, the U.S. company that provides the technology that protects Pentagon computers from Chinese hackers.

This self-indulgent generation has borrowed itself into unpayable debt. Now the folks from whom we borrowed to buy all that oil and all those cars, electronics, and clothes are coming to buy the country we inherited. We are prodigal sons, and the day of reckoning approaches. ■

# Found in Translation

FBI whistleblower Sibel Edmonds spills her secrets.

By Philip Giraldi

MOST AMERICANS have never heard of Sibel Edmonds, and if the U.S. government has its way, they never will. The former FBI translator turned whistleblower tells a chilling story of corruption at Washington's highest levels—sale of nuclear secrets, shielding of terrorist suspects, illegal arms transfers, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, espionage. She may be a first-rate fabulist, but Edmonds's account is full of dates, places, and names. And if she is to be believed, a treasonous plot to embed moles in American military and nuclear installations and pass sensitive intelligence to Israeli, Pakistani, and Turkish sources was facilitated by figures in the upper echelons of the State and Defense Departments. Her charges could be easily confirmed or dismissed if classified government documents were made available to investigators.

But Congress has refused to act, and the Justice Department has shrouded Edmonds's case in the state-secrets privilege, a rarely used measure so sweeping that it precludes even a closed hearing attended only by officials with top-secret security clearances. According to the Department of Justice, such an investigation "could reasonably be expected to cause serious damage to the foreign policy and national security of the United States."

After five years of thwarted legal challenges and fruitless attempts to launch a congressional investigation, Sibel Edmonds is telling her story, though her defiance could land her in jail. After reading its November piece about Louai al-Sakka, an al-Qaeda terrorist who trained

9/11 hijackers in Turkey, Edmonds approached the *Sunday Times* of London. On Jan. 6, the *Times*, a Murdoch-owned paper that does not normally encourage exposés damaging to the Bush administration, featured a long article. The news quickly spread around the world, with follow-ups appearing in Israel, Europe, India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Japan—but not in the United States.

Edmonds is an ethnic Azerbaijani, born in Iran. She lived there and in Turkey until 1988, when she emigrated to the United States, where she received degrees in criminal justice and psychology from George Washington University. Nine days after 9/11, Edmonds took a job at the FBI as a Turkish and Farsi translator. She worked in the 400-person translations section of the Washington office, reviewing a backlog of material dating back to 1997 and participating in operations directed against several Turkish front groups, most notably the American Turkish Council.

The ATC, founded in 1994 and modeled on the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, was intended to promote Turkish interests in Congress and in other public forums. Edmonds refers to ATC and AIPAC as "sister organizations." The group's founders include a number of prominent Americans involved in the Israel-Turkey relationship, notably Henry Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft, Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, and former congressman Stephen Solarz. Perle and Feith had earlier been registered lobbyists for Turkey through Feith's company, International Advisors Inc. The FBI was interested in ATC

because it suspected that the group derived at least some of its income from drug trafficking, Turkey being the source of 90 percent of the heroin that reaches Europe, and because of reports that it had given congressmen illegal contributions or bribes. Moreover, as Edmonds told the *Times*, the Turks have "often acted as a conduit for the Inter-Services Intelligence, Pakistan's spy agency, because they were less likely to attract attention."

Over nearly six months, Edmonds listened with increasing unease to hundreds of intercepted phone calls between Turkish, Pakistani, Israeli, and American officials. When she voiced concerns about the processing of this intelligence—among other irregularities, one of the other translators maintained a friendship with one of the FBI's "high value" targets—she was threatened. After exhausting all appeals through her own chain of command, Edmonds approached the two Department of Justice agencies with oversight of the FBI and sent faxes to Sens. Chuck Grassley and Patrick Leahy on the Judiciary Committee. The next day, she was called in for a polygraph. According to a DOJ inspector general's report, the test found that "she was not deceptive in her answers."

But two weeks later, Edmonds was fired; her home computer was seized; her family in Turkey was visited by police and threatened with arrest if they did not submit to questioning about an unspecified "intelligence matter."

When Edmonds's attorney filed suit to obtain the documents related to her