

tified one.”

Even when AID talks about the salubrious effects of its programs, which address everything from Third World overpopulation to AIDS, an American beneficiary lurks in the shadows to pick up the booty. Along with the directory listing American companies that benefit from AID contracts, AID released a report documenting the global harm that would follow a cut in its budget. “A 30 percent budget cut would result in an estimated 600,000 more unintended pregnancies . . . 420,000 additional births, 180,000 more unsafe abortions, and 4,000 maternal deaths,” AID fretted, as well as “180 million fewer condoms distributed by USAID, and thus more than two million new HIV infections.”

The condoms are supplied by a manufacturer in Dothan, Alabama, that was receiving 80 percent of its revenue from its \$55.3 million contract with AID.

R. Cort Kirkwood writes from Arlington, Virginia.

Democracy and Declarations of War

by Gregory D. Foster

The winter Balkan lull has let Congress off the hook for rolling over and playing dead in response to President Clinton’s dispatch of troops to Bosnia. It is cruel irony that the fewer casualties American troops sustain, the more likely we are to continue permitting further such devaluations of democracy. That will accentuate the eternal verity Congress has reaffirmed: Those who can, do; those who can’t do, teach; those who can’t do or teach, preach.

Preaching is what the United States does best. We sermonize, evangelize, proselytize, and moralize, incessantly enjoining the rest of the world to do as we say, not as we do. But it is this very hypocrisy—the failure to practice at home what we preach abroad—that threatens to become America’s strategic undoing. The ultimate culprits for this looming strategic castration—the preachiest of us all—are the members of this country’s self-ordained ruling class,

whose obsession with the tactics of low politics has so sullied the conduct of statesmanship and statecraft.

Strategy has always been about the effective exercise of power. In this post-modern era, strategy is no less about the effective management of perceptions—the creation and projection of images, the manipulation of symbols, the construction (and deconstruction) of reality. The case with which we are able to wield power depends, in the main, on the credibility we have established—on the correspondence between our actions and our words, on the quality of our performance when we do act, on how consistently we adhere to the principles and values we espouse.

By advocating peace but spending lavish sums to maintain a massive military establishment armed with the world’s most lethal weaponry, by endorsing arms control but engaging in the promiscuous development and sale of the most sophisticated armaments, by unabashedly proclaiming ourselves the world’s only superpower but refusing to accept responsibility for providing visionary global leadership, by extolling principle but repeatedly bowing to expediency, we undermine our credibility and thereby produce our own progressive strategic debilitation.

Our most flagrant hypocrisy, though, is reflected in our facile preachments on democracy: holding ourselves up as paragons of democratic virtue and pressing others to emulate us in the interest of democratic “enlargement,” even as our domestic politics betray a penchant for autocratic methods.

The importance of such tendencies lies in the fact that in all matters strategic, the effective exercise of power depends on something more than just the wherewithal at our disposal—more, that is, than on superior wealth or force, diplomatic acumen, technological advantage, or cultural appeal. Especially where the stakes or threats are ambiguous, it depends on the collective will of the populace to act—a function of social cohesion and the broad-based consensus that only public trust and confidence in government can produce. Such trust and confidence are so vital to this country precisely because we do not practice true democracy. Rhetoric to the contrary, we never have.

America’s Founding Fathers, in seeking to counter the tyranny they considered the inevitable outgrowth of

concentrated power, predicated our government on the rule of law, the supremacy of the Constitution, the checks and balances of divided power and, most importantly, popular sovereignty. “The people who own the country,” said John Jay, “ought to govern it.” Bowing, however, to the dictates of order and efficiency, the Founders ensured that the “turbulent and changing” masses were only nominally in charge. The people, Hamilton opined, “seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore to the [rich and well-born] a distinct, permanent share in government [to] check the unsteadiness of the [masses].” And so our lesser forebears—the little people from whom most of us are descended—relinquished their fate and ours to a purportedly representative governing “elite,” whose exercise of circumscribed and

Accidents

by Harold McCurdy

For accidents of every sort I’m glad:
As, for example, that John Donne was
sad
When his Ann died, thus mingling in
the life
Of my own Ann—a daughter, not a wife
As his was. And I draw a most absurd
Comfort from knowing (as has been
inferred)
That Dante shared the thirtieth of May
With later and lesser me as his birthday;
For on that date the Convent of St.
Clare
Observed the feastday of St. Lucy there
Just outside Florence, and it’s Lucy who
From hell to heaven steadily kept in view
His welfare, as befits a patron saint.
Besides, she’s Light; and maybe what I
meant
At sixteen, on Black Mountain, praying
for light
Was that St. Lucy, as for Dante, might
Accept an ignorant boy’s unconscious
praise
And glimmer through the Dark Wood
on my days.

countervailing powers was to be held accountable by the consent of the governed, and whose right to rule over us we would be socialized over time to accept without question.

Consent stands, therefore, as the cardinal measure of democracy. In the words of John Adams, "As the happiness of the people is the sole end of government, so the consent of the people is the only foundation of it." In no area is this more valid than in the employment of military force. To the Founders, the commitment of troops to prospective hostilities was war; and war was to be accompanied, if not preceded, by a constitutionally prescribed congressional declaration representing the will of the people, whose blood and treasure were on the line.

Postmodern politicians realize, of course, what the Founders did not: war is war only if you call it that. If you call it a police action, a counterinsurgency, or a peace operation—and if, moreover, you replace citizen-soldiers with volunteer regulars and create standing "emergency" legislation to routinize the call-up of reservists—you can sacrifice the sons and daughters of the patriotic, trusting little people at will without their consent. And Congress and the Supreme Court will look the other way. Small wonder that *non-wars* have claimed more than 350,000 United States casualties since 1945.

We willfully sublimated our powers of consent during the Cold War to the cries of urgency and imminent danger. We were thereby complicit in institutionalizing and legitimizing the technocratic oligarchy that now reigns in this country, masquerading as the ideal democracy we pretend to have.

Absent the Cold War conditions that seemed then to rationalize such civic surrender, the only defensible justification now for consent to give way to more-or-less unchecked presidential unilateralism in matters of war and peace *might* be a President who holds a bona fide electoral mandate from the people—and has a demonstrated record of competence in international affairs. President Clinton, having ascended to office with only 43 percent of the popular vote—24 percent of the overall voting-age population and 18 percent of the total populace—commands nothing approaching such a mandate. A Congress, therefore, that would forsake its obligation to the people and to the Constitution by giving a free hand to

such a President—especially one whose administration's strategic maladroitness and military illiteracy have been so palpable—is complicit in perpetuating the imperialization of the presidency and thereby opening the way for the sort of executive tyranny our forebears sought to escape.

Faced with a continuation of this state of affairs—where our own government neither hears nor seeks our consent in the gravest of matters—we will be left to ask how literally we should interpret the injunction in our Declaration of Independence: "That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends [of securing the natural rights of the people through government based on the consent of the governed], it is the Right [and duty] of the People to alter or to abolish it." If we descend to that point, we will then realize just how pyrrhic—and, by contrast, meaningless—our Cold War victory was.

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Clinton and the Troops

by A.J. Bacevich

"I'm angry. I'd like to ask President Clinton why is my dad dead? And what are we doing fighting in Bosnia in the first place?" Coming from the 15-year-old son of Sergeant First Class Donald A. Dugan, the first operational fatality of the United States intervention in Bosnia, those questions command respect. But they are the last questions the Clinton White House wants to hear.

With Bill Clinton's much-hyped Bosnia trip earlier in the year, the President's relations with the military seemed to turn the corner. Although the trip came and went without consequence, it succeeded as a Kodak moment, producing as its chief legacy widely reprinted images of a grinning Commander-in-Chief enthusiastically embracing and being embraced by "the troops." To the extent that any public gesture by any politician can be considered genuine, the President in these photos appears to

be genuinely enjoying himself. Indeed, our journalists reported that for the first time in his presidency, Mr. Clinton seemed relaxed and comfortable when venturing onto the military's own turf.

But to attribute any significance to a skillfully staged photo-op would be an error. Indeed, more than is usually the case, the image of Clinton surrounded by excited young soldiers is misleading. It further obfuscates a civil-military relationship freighted with contradictions that most government officials, journalists, and scholars seem determined to ignore.

Clinton's Bosnia visit did not mark some great reconciliation between soldiers and the former antiwar protester who now issues their orders. Rather, it was an elaborate exercise in role-playing. Clinton slipped into the routine with which he is most comfortable: the ebullient campaigner. Pressing the flesh in Tuzla, he behaved precisely as he would have in Dubuque or Denver. The young Americans assembled for the occasion responded less as soldiers paying obeisance to their political chief than as fans reacting to the arrival of a celebrity visiting from afar. They would have done much the same for Tom Hanks or Tom Brokaw.

Yet if largely instinctive, such political theater is also profoundly ironic. Whereas the military that a draft-eligible Clinton once professed to "loathe" as alien to the nation's ideals was in fact composed largely of conscripts, "the troops" with whom Clinton now strives to identify himself are without exception volunteers, part of a force that self-consciously styles even its most junior members as "professionals" and that emphasizes a cultural identity that sets it apart from the rest of society.

No doubt the distinction is one to which Clinton would prefer to remain oblivious. But it deserves emphasis. Indeed, the gap between what this military professes to be and the imagery commonly employed to describe it lies at the heart of America's unacknowledged problem with civil-military relations.

The tradition of the citizen-soldier resonates powerfully among Americans. And with good reason: citizen-soldiers achieved victory in two world wars this century, stood the long watch against the Warsaw Pact, and endured the misery of Korea and Vietnam. At home, a military establishment based on the citizen-soldier helped bind together a racially and