

On day two of "Desert Fox" last December, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright declared that she was "gratified" by the "solid" support that the U.S. action against Iraq had received from statesmen around the globe, including those in the Arab world. Her counterpart at the British Foreign Office, Robin Cook, suggested that most Arab regimes supported the bombardment.

In subsequent days and weeks, the impression planted into the minds of educated and presumably well-informed Americans—*New York Times* readers, NPR listeners, and CNN watchers—was of a quietly supportive world letting the United States deal with Saddam as it deemed fit. In fact, a rising chorus of criticism of the American action—ranging from sorrow to anger, and transcending national and cultural boundaries—swept the world, but it was not deemed newsworthy in New York, Washington, or Atlanta.

In the Middle East, Palestinian youths had waved American flags for President Clinton two weeks before Christmas; a week later, they were burning them. In Egypt, during demonstrations at Cairo's al-Azhar mosque, the imam told his people that the Americans would be "struck by God's damnation." No less, perhaps, was to be expected from an Islamic cleric. But in Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, the ruler of the eminently "moderate" and "pro-Western" United Arab Emirates, described the bombing as a "terrible operation" which was "beyond comprehension and unacceptable."

Jordan, another leading moderate nation in the Arab world, has taken an even more critical line. The day after the first wave of air raids, the popular Amman daily *Al-Ray* described the United States and Britain as "warmongers." The pro-government *Al-Dustur*, which reflects the thinking of King Hussein, denounced America's "bullying" of Iraq, which it contrasted with Washington's "subservience" toward Israel.

Syria, never much of a friend to Saddam, joined the chorus. *Tishrin* (December 18) accused the United States of by-

passing the U.N. Security Council,

ignoring international legitimacy and practicing the law of the jungle in the same way that Israel is doing, in violation of international principles and charters.

On the same day, another Damascus daily, *Al-Thawrah*, called the attacks an act of "premeditated aggression" that created a "dangerous precedent." Abdulkader Qaddoura, speaker of the Syrian parliament, stated: "We condemn and denounce this attack and call on the international community to halt it."

In Qatar, the only Persian Gulf state to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel, the daily newspaper *Asharq* said that American missiles were

targeting unarmed Iraqi civilians, showing that human conscience is dead. The missiles, loaded with hatred, are ruthlessly bringing death and devastation to an Arab nation.

On December 19, the London-based *Al-Hayah*, a Saudi-owned publication, presented a spectrum of condemnatory comments, including that of the Egyptian "Jihad Movement-Islamic Vanguard of Conquest" which vowed that U.S. "crimes" would not go unpunished. The paper noted that even the Iraqi opposition condemned the air strikes as "brutal aggression motivated by Zionist grudges."

Another London-based newspaper, *Al Quds Al-Arabi*, declared that Arab nations should be "embarrassed" by their "comparatively weak" response to the strikes, compared to Russia's withdrawal of its ambassadors in London and Washington. The editorial page carried a scathing attack on the chief U.N. inspector, Richard Butler, under the headline, "Butler should face trial, not just resign."

The Arabs were not the only ones to criticize Butler for fine-tuning his reports to fit the political needs of the Clinton ad-

ministration. Scott Ritter, a high-profile member of the U.N. inspections team until he resigned in August, accused the United States of having maneuvered Butler into providing a pretext for the bombing campaign. As he told BBC radio on December 23,

I believe that this inspection was rushed through, and the sites weren't chosen for disarmament reasons, but rather to be provocative in nature so Iraq would respond in a predictable fashion. That response would be used as a justification for military action.

Much closer to home, an op-ed in the *Toronto Sun* (December 18) stated that Clinton had squandered a rare green light from Russia, China, France, and most of the Arab world to launch air strikes against Iraq in early November. That opportunity, however, was no longer available in December:

When Clinton suddenly conducted Tomahawk cruise missile diplomacy against Saddam Hussein in the wee hours of Thursday morning, that carefully crafted international consensus crumbled. The president now finds himself at odds with almost the entire international community.

The same paper, on the same day, carried an editorial that aptly summarized the tone of a hundred others all over the Western world:

If Iraq has weapons of mass destruction, then this limited aerial attack will not eliminate them, just as the far more intensive bombing during the Gulf war did not eliminate them. Nor will it topple Saddam Hussein or end

the suffering of the Iraqis, which Clinton absurdly boasts are his goals. . . . In another time, under a different president, we might have supported such an effort. But at *this* time, under *this* president, this liar, philanderer and draft-dodger? Please.

On December 24, the restrained voice of the Canadian establishment, the *Globe and Mail*, took the country's prime minister to task for supporting the air strikes:

It was startling to see Prime Minister Jean Chrétien hop on board so quickly—one of the first, and the few, world leaders to support the use of force.

M. Chrétien's problems were minor, however, compared to those faced by Clinton's closest ally in the latest Baghdad episode. According to the *Independent* of London (December 22), even before the raids were called off, Tony Blair was under fire from all sides for supporting Clinton without a clear set of objectives to be achieved by the bombing:

The "success" claimed by Mr. Blair when he announced the ending of the bombing was turning into a public relations fiasco as RAF pilots, a Labour peer, and the Tories criticised the campaign.

On December 20, the BBC's defense correspondent, Jonathan Marcus, reported that, contrary to the claims from the White House and 10 Downing Street,

Desert Fox has soured ties with Moscow, caused unease at the United Nations, and angered much of the Arab world. Iraq has already stated that it does not want to see UN weapons inspectors back. . . . President Clinton is left with little choice but to pursue the military containment of Iraq. . . . The Americans say that they intend to intensify their efforts to bolster the Iraqi opposition to Saddam Hussein. Many experts believe that this is an aspiration or hope, rather than a

viable policy.

In an interview on BBC's Radio Five Live, Lord Healey, the former chancellor of the exchequer, argued that the diplomatic mission should have started before the bombing:

What they have done is very dangerous to the Western position in the Middle East because it strengthens all the extremist groups who want to overthrow all the regimes which have been friendly to us. We are seen very much as Mr. Clinton's poodle.

The same sense of embarrassment pervaded a commentary by Rachel Sylvester in the *Independent* on December 20:

There were no British forces involved in the first strikes against Iraq on Wednesday night—American cruise missiles were launched from US ships in the Persian Gulf. But it was Tony Blair, not Bill Clinton, who first went on television to announce that Saddam Hussein was under fire. . . . It was as if the American President, himself being showered with the missiles of potential impeachment, was giving the British Prime Minister a reward for his loyal and unswerving support. . . . During his Commons statement, [Blair] seemed strangely ambiguous about this role, one moment staring ahead in Churchill-like solemnity, the next stumbling over his words.

So much for our strongest ally in the proceedings. East of Calais, things only got worse. In the leading dailies in Paris, Athens, and Madrid, the link between the bombing and the impeachment proceedings was taken for granted. As a Bulgarian commentator asked in the Sofia daily *Duma* (December 19):

Naturally, the missiles did not hit Saddam and did not decrease his dictatorial power. Every sane thinking person understands that in eight years, the Americans and

their CIA could have removed Saddam any number of times.

On a lighter note, sometimes we need a foreign source to alert us to the noteworthy trends at home. On December 13, the *Sunday Times* of London breathlessly reported that "Hollywood celebrities and new age gurus" have become enamored of "an ancient Indian doctrine that promotes prolonged bouts of love-making." The erotic marathon advocated by Tantrism—an ancient branch of Hinduism and Buddhism that regards sex as a form of worship—may seem an unlikely pursuit for a society that prefers microwave dinners to the real, time-consuming thing. Yet, according to the British weekly, Tantrism

is fast becoming one of the chief attractions in America's multi-billion-dollar self-improvement industry. Until recently, "Tantric sex" in the West had been the preserve of a few initiates, among them Hollywood celebrities flirting with Buddhism in their search for a mystical bond with the universe. A form of sexual yoga meant to encourage sexual awakening, Tantrism is now catering to a mass market as people shed their inhibitions and begin treating their sex lives like golf—as something to be worked on with the help of professionals.

And so, in yet another sign of the times, centers are springing up all over the United States, offering courses, seminars, and "sacred sex weekends."

The doctrine has even entered the corporate realm with one guru claiming that his programme to improve the sex lives of executives is the best way of increasing their productivity. Among his tips is the transformation of the bed into a "sacred shrine" where "ecstatic music," incense and aromatic oils encourage erotic endurance.

It appears Bill Clinton was ahead of his time. And we thought he had simply been caught with his pants down.

The Flight of the Lone Eagle

by Justin Raimondo

"There is a hawk that is picking the birds out of our sky.

She killed the pigeons of peace and security,

She has taken honesty and confidence from nations and men,

She is hunting the lonely heron of liberty."

—Robinson Jeffers, "Shiva"

Lindbergh

by A. Scott Berg

New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons;

628 pp., \$30.00



The competition to be the first to traverse the Atlantic by air was fierce: At least three teams of aviators worked feverishly to claim the prize. The triumph of "Lucky Lindy" was due not to luck but to his insight that, as A. Scott Berg puts it, "success depended on simplicity—one set of wings, one engine, one pilot." Tangled up in complexities both technical and human, his rivals never made it off the ground. Lindbergh, the Lone Eagle, soared over them all.

By the time he took off on his historic flight in a little single-engine monoplane with a minimal dashboard, he had stripped his life to the barest essentials. Just as every bit of ballast had to be thrown overboard to ensure that the *Spirit of Saint Louis* would make it to Paris, so young Lindbergh, in order to reach that point, had reduced his life to a single element. Mere earthly pursuits never interested him; he lived and breathed aviation when the industry was in its infancy; his first aviation-related gig was as an un-

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paid assistant to barnstorming fliers, drumming up crowds big enough to sustain their aerial tour across the prairies. As the plane flew into town, Lindbergh stood on a wing. Possessed by the desire to buy a plane of his own, he was also exhilarated by the prospect of parachuting: After witnessing a flier fall off a wing 2,000 feet in the air, Lindbergh, Berg informs us, "decided that he had to experience that sensation." His mother and friends did their best to point out the obvious dangers, but after he made the jump, "life rose to a high level," as he later put it, "to a sort of exhilarated calm-

ness." College had bored him; the earth could not hold him, and he decided early on "that if I could fly for ten years before I was killed in a crash, it would be a worthwhile trade for an ordinary lifetime."

Lindbergh's life was so far from ordinary that the distance can only be measured in light-years. His celebrity was unprecedented in its scope and intensity, a fame which eventually reached the point of mass hysteria and threatened to imprison him, a phenomenon due only in part to the growth of mass communications. A secular saint idealized for his purity of purpose, he was venerated by millions not just for what he had done but for what he was: the first truly modern American hero.

From the moment he landed in Paris, on May 26, 1927, Lindbergh was confronted with what Berg describes as "a human tidal wave." "Before he had got the door of his plane open, the first great wave of humanity crashed over him." He was literally swept off his feet, the sheer power of the screaming mob "rendering him helpless as he floated over the sea of heads." He spent the rest of his life fleeing that mob, pursued by the media, hounded out of the country not only by the kidnapping and murder of his child but by the political climate in the United States that ushered in the New Deal.

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roo-