

Is the establishment pulling the plug on George Bush?

by Kathleen Klenetsky

Ever since George Bush decided to go to war against Iraq, it has been apparent that some sections of the U.S. policy elite have been dissatisfied with the Bush administration's conduct of both domestic and foreign policy.

In the months leading up to the opening of hostilities in the Persian Gulf, numerous representatives of the U.S. establishment publicly questioned the wisdom of the administration's obvious desire to use military force against Saddam Hussein. In the months after the supposed U.S. victory over Iraq, establishment spokesmen castigated the President for fixating on his new world order at the expense of domestic concerns.

Now, the core of the U.S. establishment, the New York Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), has thrown down the gauntlet to the President, with a stinging indictment of his "new world order" as a "betrayal" of the founding principles of the American Republic.

Bush 'betrayal'

The CFR's indictment of Bush's policies is contained in a new council book, which was released at a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on April 22. Entitled *The Imperial Temptation: The New World Order and America's Purpose*, the volume represents one of the harshest public attacks in recent memory by the establishment on one of its own.

In opening the press conference, Alton Frye, head of the CFR's Washington office, went out of his way to emphasize that the "controversial" nature of the book was made even more so by the fact that it was being published during an election year. The volume's "pungent" views were "sure to provoke" an all-out debate within the elite, Frye said, a point that was borne out by the hostile questions asked at the event by such Bush partisans as Ken Adelman, former chairman

of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Michael Lind of the neo-conservative mouthpiece *The National Interest*, and Arnaud de Borchgrave, the former editor of the *Washington Times*, who accused the authors of advocating that the United States adopt a policy of neo-isolationism.

The CFR plans to add to the controversy. *The Imperial Temptation* is just the first public document to come out of a CFR project that was set up in late 1991 on "America's Task in a Changed World." Headed by James R. Schlesinger, the task force members include Adm. William Crowe, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Winston Lord, former U.S. ambassador to China, economist C. Fred Bergsten, Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and other leading establishmentarians.

The CFR project will be producing related statements in the coming months, as will a parallel "Commission on America and The New World" operating out of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which plans to publish a series of policy recommendations in June.

A pox on Bush's 'Pax Universalis'

Authored by Robert Tucker, a longstanding Washington insider affiliated with Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and David Hendrickson of Colorado, the CFR book, in the words of a promotional press release, accuses Bush of giving "military power an inflated and disproportionate position in American statecraft, a position that is both unnecessary for America's security and risks a betrayal of our national purpose." It further states that "the Bush administration, in its attempts to address the challenges posed by the new global realities, has betrayed the fundamental ideals on which this country was founded."

Tucker and Hendrickson maintain that Bush's attempt to create a *Pax Universalis*, which is "so often justified as a

vindication of American purpose,” actually “represents its betrayal.” It “prefigures, in fact, the end of American history,” they write, because to the extent the United States abandons the outlook of the Founding Fathers, “American history will come to an end,” just as all other imperial powers have.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, they write, there no longer exists a “great power” threat to U.S. national security, and thus the time is now ripe for a “renovation” of U.S. foreign policy.

Tucker and Hendrickson outline five basic principles which should guide this renovation, including: a “skeptical attitude toward the use of military force and the rejection of universal security commitments”; a “profound antipathy toward public debt”; and “a belief that the American contribution to ordered liberty in the world must be sought primarily through peaceful and constructive measures, as opposed to punitive and destructive ones.”

The volume sharply attacks Bush’s war against Iraq, taking it as a paradigm of the military excesses inherent in Bush’s concept of a new world order. The book argues that the United States should not have resorted to force, even to knock out Iraq’s nuclear weapons potential, but should instead have relied on a policy of “punitive containment” to accomplish an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and a rejection of weapons of mass destruction.

The war was not only “disproportionate” and “inhuman,” but led to terrible devastation of the Iraqi population and economy, as well as to a broader destabilization and an increase in anti-U.S. sentiment throughout the Arab world. The authors assert that Bush, by refusing to negotiate with Saddam Hussein and by insisting on his ouster, made war inevitable.

In the aftermath of the conflict, the authors write, “The United States, it came to be widely said, had won the war but lost the peace. And there were intimations that it had lost its soul.”

Tucker and Hendrickson used their press conference to draw out the book’s main points. They scored Bush’s new world order for placing far too much emphasis on military force and military interventionism, and by wrongly presuming that “a world the United States no longer presides over, is a much more dangerous world.”

“The United States has come to like the role of using massive military power, and not that of a pacifier,” said Hendrickson, who added that the tremendous “disparity between how much resources the United States is prepared to put into aggressive measures, such as trade sanctions and military interventionism, and how little it is willing to put into philanthropic measures that could help expand the sphere of liberty, must be narrowed.”

Significantly, Tucker and Hendrickson both attacked Democratic front-runner Bill Clinton, agreeing with a question posed by an *EIR* representative that Clinton’s foreign policy was virtually indistinguishable from Bush’s, especial-

ly on the use of force against Iraq. Hendrickson, in fact, asserted that Clinton was even worse than Bush in urging aggressive interference in the affairs of other countries.

Fear stalks the establishment

The fact that Clinton came in for a drubbing just as harsh as that meted out to Bush raises some very interesting questions. The publication of the CFR book coincides with the unleashing of a host of scandals against both Bush and Clinton—ranging from the April 27 *Time* magazine cover story implying that the Bush administration suppressed evidence pointing to a Syrian involvement in the bombing of Pan American Flight 103, to the Mena, Arkansas drugs-for-guns scandal, which implicates both Bush and Clinton, and which has recently been featured on two nationally syndicated television broadcasts.

Does the establishment want to pull the plug on both Bush and Clinton? Does it simply want to slap Bush around sufficiently so that he will act in accord with its wishes in his next term? Are plans afoot for a “third option”—a new Democratic candidate coming out of a brokered convention this July, or an independent such as H. Ross Perot?

Whatever the answer, it is certainly the case that large chunks of the policy elite are worried sick that Bush’s antics have been so egregious that they threaten to destroy the already crumbling foundation of Anglo-American power.

It is important to stress that while CFR authors Tucker and Hendrickson took Bush to task for his military excesses and failure to address domestic concerns, they had no argument with the core of Bush economic policy: free trade. Indeed, Hendrickson told the April 22 press conference that the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was a prime example of the way in which the United States “can contribute to world order, without reliance on military force.” Tucker, in a private conversation with *EIR*, emphasized the central importance to U.S. strategy of finalizing the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The CFR’s key concern is how to preserve the heart of Anglo-American power, the system of international usury, during an extraordinarily explosive and perilous period.

The CFR attack on Bush reflects the fact that more “realistic” factions of the establishment know full well that a revolutionary situation is rapidly developing in Ibero-America, and could soon be replicated in other parts of the developing sector; and that U.S. relations with Europe and Japan are uneasy, to say the least.

It also reflects the understanding that the maintenance of Anglo-American power is fundamentally threatened by having a bull in a China shop as President of the United States. A far more cunning and delicate approach is required, one that relies less on the use of military intervention and other overtly provocative measures which could provoke a massive revolt against establishment policies in the developing sector and an irrevocable break with Europe and Japan.