

Conspiracy Theories

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Americans are now forced to do what they find hardest in life: consider that the world does not revolve around them, that they are secondary players on the global stage. The fate of the United States is in the hands of other peoples, in other nations, whose strategies of resistance to the Bush men's transparent grab for planetary hegemony will determine the general character of the Pirate's inevitable failure. Blacks, other threatened ethnicities, the poor, and political progressives of all backgrounds will have a difficult enough time keeping heads above water and bodies out of prison as the Bush men thrash about in a world they cannot master, and chickens come home to roost.

The United States is about to be redlined by the international community, and there is nothing that Americans, pro- or anti-war, can do about it.

The good news is, American life as we know it is about to come to an end.
The bad news is . . . American life as we know it is about to come to an end.

The forces propelling the decline of American power and the necessary reorganization of U.S. society have been in motion for some time. The world in general has gotten much richer since the U.S. assumed its temporary position as guardian of capitalism and producer of 29 percent of world output, after World War II. (The glaring exception is Africa.) Now accounting for 21 percent of world output, and with no Soviet Union to keep the other capitalists cowering under a U.S. umbrella that was carefully crafted to further U.S. business interests, the American rulers face the prospect of head-on competition from their former allies and a developing world that demands full rights as planetary citizens.

Most importantly, the globalism that U.S. corporations envisioned as a kind of net, ensnaring the earth in high-tech systems of trade and communications for the benefit of American capital, has had unintended consequences in the form of unexpected beneficiaries. Technology is even more portable than money, in the sense that people can lose money, but do not unlearn new methods of production, communication, organization, and thinking.

The Americans (and richer Europeans) also sought to encourage markets for their goods among First World-type sectors of the populations in developing countries -- places like Brazil, where possibly 40 percent of the population live like Europeans, while the rest reside in descending layers of Third World deprivation. India, for example, has a U.S.-style

consumer sector that will soon rival that of the U.S., although most of India's billion people live Third World existences.

The U.S. economy, already distorted by a military-industrial sector fueled by the demands of America's role as guardian of capitalism, became further deformed as U.S. corporations used the mighty U.S. machinery of state to create conditions in the developing world that allowed American industrial production and jobs to be exported. U.S. living standards began declining at roughly the same pace as offshore American industrial migration. Americans could no longer buy enough goods and services to keep the domestic economy humming. That part of American history has already slipped away. The great consumer credit bubble is its fragile legacy.

The national trade deficit is also grotesquely swollen. The U.S. buys \$500 billion more from the world than it sells, each year.

Hostile takeover

Something else was happening, as well, that would rearrange the seating at the banquets of the American rich. As the U.S. super-powered its way into everyone else's economies, stripping the American domestic manufacturing base of capital and downsizing the pockets of its own citizens, Big Finance won the final battle with Big Manufacturing. Politically, that meant the death of moderate Republicanism, based in Big Domestic Business, and the rise of the pure finance speculators, war profiteers (military industry) and their cousins, the oil extractors: The Pirate class.

These people have few direct connections to the American domestic economy, but owe everything to their control of the American state. They are, as **bc** has previously described them, not really capitalists, at all. For the Pirates, the U.S. is simply a platform, cash cow and military through which they can seize wealth by overwhelming advantage or, as in the case of Iraq, outright. But we are getting ahead of ourselves.

The American dollar's post-World War II dominance was natural -- all of Europe was either defeated or in debt to the U.S., which emerged from the war economically stronger than ever. The dollar was *the* international currency. Therefore, everyone (outside of the Soviet bloc) had an interest in the dollar. The price of the world's most valued resource, oil, was pegged to (denominated in) dollars. And the U.S. could print as many dollars as it liked, paying national debts with currency that was, in a critical although not absolute sense, backed by all the oil deposits of the world. With this advantage, the U.S. looms over all other nations, hefting far more weight than is justified by its 21 percent share of world output, and indebted condition.

However, the Pirates found that they could not impose their will on the world, despite American advantages. The communications revolution that helped money movers achieve dominion over old-style capitalists also empowered the First World-like sectors of developing countries, which could now compete with New York and London over the same electronic infrastructures. These sectors gained increasing influence over their governments, previously clients of the U.S. or Europe, creating conditions for further growth and political expression. In Latin America, military dictatorships became untenable in the face of an

aggressive civil society that yearned to break out of the constrictions of the generals and the Americans who sponsored them.

Throughout the developing world the period of U.S. corporate penetration saw the growth of mega-cities, as rural people were forced off the land or gravitated to low wage jobs that used to be performed at living wages in Ohio, New York and South Carolina. These huge concentrations of the poor radically altered the relationships of power in their countries. Their presence in the cities created demands that became important considerations in trade negotiations with the U.S. and other developed countries. The elite had to take the poor into account in confronting American power. They also wanted the freedom to act out their own ambitions.

Finally, Europe had taken a very different course than the U.S. in the postwar years. With Germany and France at the center, the European Union nurtured and protected its home economies while methodically creating the connective structures that would allow the EU to rival the continental-size United States. The euro currency represents a combined gross domestic product and population larger than the U.S. Europe dominates trade with the Middle East and other parts of the world.

The speculative "money movers" of the American Pirate class understand the ways of capital, if nothing else. It had become clear by the late Nineties that America's artificial advantages were in danger of collapsing, and with them, the sources of nonproductive Pirate wealth. Eventually, the euro would emerge as an alternative world currency, to which developing nations would flock when bullied by the United States. The Pirate's worst nightmare is that oil producing countries switch to the euro, unhitching oil prices from the dollar and causing the U.S. currency to fall to its natural, debt-burdened value.

New American Century

The Dick Cheney-Paul Wolfowitz-Richard Perle Pirate cabal put forward a plan to pre-empt the nightmare scenario. It is not a conspiracy, but a very public and detailed plan for global American hegemony, the creation of a world in which the U.S. will hold all of its current advantages, and any others it chooses to create. The opening act in their battle against a world order that no longer serves Pirate purposes was the invasion of Iraq. No euro scare, there -- as long as the occupation holds.

Much of the world (and all international commerce) is aware of the United States' intentions, a subject alien only to mass American audiences. An article from the *Hindu Times*, of India, shows the depth of thought that is being brought to bear on the subject:

At some immediate cost to itself, Iraq has, since November 2000, insisted on being paid in euros. Iran has recently displayed interest in following suit. Venezuela, a similar victim of American intimidation, is a good candidate, and Russia is being wooed by the European Union to make the switch. The dollar's fall is prompting even those with good relations with the U.S. to reconsider. A major oil economy in euros is in the offing. As the demand for euros grows rapidly, demand for the dollar would drop equally rapidly, threatening the American economy with devastating consequences.

In the last five or six years, an important change has taken place in the international oil scene. In the late 1990s, several large oil producers such as Iraq, Iran and Venezuela opened up

development of their oil resources to foreign investment. Even Saudi Arabia invited bids for development of its natural gas. The contracts that Iraq signed with the French, Russian, Chinese and Italian firms were stalled, thanks to the sanctions regime. Iran, however, concluded deals with the French, Russian and Malaysian firms even as American firms -- barred by U.S. sanctions against that country -- gnashed their teeth. Venezuela's increasing assertiveness and consequent alienation from the U.S. did not bode well for the future of American firms there. The sanctions kept the American firms out of Libya and Sudan as well, and Chinese firms have been negotiating huge deals for Indonesian oil.

The United States roars like a divinely inspired conqueror, but the Pirates are essentially acting in defense of a U.S. primacy that cannot be maintained under the current rules of the game. They are brandishing American military power to destroy the game board -- but nobody wrote the playbook for that move.

- See:
- The president's real goal in Iraq, by Jay Bookman, *Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, 9/29/02
 - Origins of Regime Change in Iraq, Proliferation Brief, Vol.6, No.5, Non-Proliferation Project, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 19, 2003
 - PDF, 90 pages: Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century, by Thomas Donnelly, co-chaired by Donald Kagan and Gary Schmitt, A Report of The Project for the New American Century, September 2000
 - The Real Reasons for the Upcoming War in Iraq: A Macroeconomic and Geostrategic Analysis of the Unspoken Truth, by W. Clark, *indymedia*, 26 Jan 2003, (last revised 6 March)

Giving credit where none is due

And now to explain the title of this piece: Conspiracy Theories. First, we note that American Blacks and progressives have begun reading subtexts and plots into every horror of the Bush men's Iraq adventure. For example, that the Americans wanted Baghdad to burn. This is preposterous. The U.S military allowed Baghdad to descend into chaos because it doesn't give a damn about Iraqi lives, period. The Bush men would rather have had different pictures on the world's TV screens. They are inept in nearly every respect except the arts of their particular style of war, and in their mastery at manipulation of their fellow white Americans' delusional minds. They have not a clue as to how to occupy Iraq, for the simple reason that they are racists who cannot assess the motivations of Iraqis. This cognitive black hole -- the mental disability associated with racism -- swallows up and disappears facts that do not conform with the prefabricated version of reality on which the Pirate's plans are based.

The Pirates are particularly ill-suited for foreign intervention -- aside from mass marketing to Americans, the social sciences escape them, leaving pure prejudice to dominate their discourse. The world they seek to tame exists in their heads. Crash courses do not help -- they reject the advice of the CIA when it conflicts with their own prejudices and immediate objectives. They truly believe that what Iraqis (and Yemenis, Syrians, Iranians, etc.) really want in life is to move to Houston -- a very convenient delusion since the Pirates plan to create something like Houston or Dallas in Iraq, at great profit.

Their racist arrogance is without bounds, and will foil them at every juncture. It is clear, for example, that they handled the secular, Europe-oriented Turkish military badly. Despite a \$30 billion bribe offer, the U.S. failed to convince Turkey's generals to lean hard enough on the governing Islamic party to muster a bare parliamentary majority in favor of granting U.S. access to northern Iraq. The northern front was left to the Kurds, U.S. Special Forces, and the

late arrival of portions of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. This unexpected reliance on the Kurds as the third force in the Anglo-American "coalition" will have profound effects on the occupiers' ability to control events in Kurdistan, where about half the oil is. Yet it is obvious from the English language Turkish press that the Turkish military, which reserves the right to intervene in civil government whenever it chooses and badly wants to maintain a presence in northern Iraq, could not abide the imperious Americans. U.S. ships and planes unloaded thousands of vehicles on Turkish soil without bothering to ask the permission of a NATO ally -- just one of the most obvious slights to the honor of people the Americans consider not quite white.

Indeed, the *modus operandi* of the corporate pirates dishonors everyone they touch. Shamelessly, the Bush men rely on monetary rewards to corral foreign supporters, simultaneously attracting the most persuasive con men and brazen criminals. The stench of national betrayal fills the Pirate's vestibules. Their choice for occupation front man, Ahmed Chalabi, is a banker who left the country as a child in 1956 and found his way around the shadows of Middle East finance -- a Third World, aspiring Pirate. Rumsfeld and Chalabi speak the same language, and have shaken hands on the deal. Chalabi's 700-man exile force are nothing more than mercenaries, unconnected with Iraqi civil society. Yet they are to be the nucleus of a new, national army, upon which the U.S. will rely to ease the burdens of occupation.

A quiet, cowed Iraq would quickly become unmanageable under such stewardship and circumstances, but the nation promises daily to be anything but quiet. The Pirates are stuck in their oil field of dreams, a most flammable environment.

We could predict with confidence a series of general developments that must flow from Iraqi conditions -- all of them disastrous to the Pirate's delusional schemes. In fact, there is no set of plausible circumstances that would lead to a compliant Iraq secured by a politically acceptable level of American troops.

What is certain is that the Pirates will misjudge their surroundings at virtually every turn (as with the chaos in Baghdad), then compound the mistake in insane, unexpected, or woefully stupid ways (the failure to post troops even after the museum was looted and the world cried out). To follow the logic of delusionals, one must attempt to "see" what they "see" -- a maddening but necessary exercise.

The alternative is to read method into madness, a self-defeating syndrome that afflicts African Americans and leftists with great frequency and debilitating results. It is the back door to self-deception, interpreting every horrific result of the enemy's actions as purposeful, rather than as possible evidence of the antagonist's weaknesses. The enemy is perceived as always in control of events, larger than life, devilishly masterful. In the end, it is accepted that he is unbeatable -- and he wins for lack of opposition, despite his many shortcomings and mistakes.

"What are the white folks gonna do?"

A broad example from the civil rights movement: Rigid segregation made white people's actions seem, through African American eyes, to be coordinated, centrally controlled, as if

determined by overt agreements among the whites. "What are the white folks gonna do?" was a simple question, seriously asked. Optimists, especially the most hopeful integrationists, believed that some agreement could be reached with powerful whites that would have general effects on white conduct. Another camp among Blacks believed (and still do) that "white folks" conspire constantly and in detail on ways to frustrate and befuddle African Americans. This solid white block acts as one, impermeable organism. No wedge can alter its implacable structures of hostility.

Both of these (exaggerated) outlooks are actually conspiracy theories, or conspiracy paradigms. Both begin with assumptions that cloud objectivity, rendering the activist incapable of assessing her antagonist and fashioning effective strategies and contingencies. Opportunities are lost, unexpected and unobserved. Victories are misinterpreted, over- or under-valued.

What the civil rights movement actually discovered was that there was no White Folks Central Command, that different sectors of white society would yield to different pressures in different ways, resulting in the creation of greater social space for Black Americans, North and South.

Then the movement foundered on the real rock of institutional racism, the deeply embedded, shared worldview of whites toward Blacks that causes whites to behave in amazingly similar, generally predictable ways, to the detriment of African Americans. Institutional racism requires no agreement or conscious conspiracy among whites to work its social pathologies in housing, criminal justice, etc. It may look like and coexist with actual, transient conspiracies, but is much more intractable.

Many integrationist optimists despaired when the reality of institutional racism wrecked their rational models of civilized negotiation and good faith understandings. It is very difficult to forge agreements between people who perceive different realities.

To those Blacks who believed from the beginning that "white folks" constantly conspired against Blacks, institutional racism seemed to confirm their conspiracy theory -- an erroneous conclusion.

As it stands, we have developed precious little collective experience in combating or understanding institutional racism. (If it were not so, **bc** would not have to constantly hammer away at the "delusions" that govern American political behavior.)

Masking weakness

Conspiracy theory masks a fundamental weakness in the Pirate's offensive against world order: their inability to see the world as it is. (Colin Powell is superior to his fellow Bush men in this regard largely because he is a well-socialized Black man who does not share their full measure of delusions. Rather, Powell is a mercenary opportunist who strives to finesse the game as best he can, yet is devoted to the hegemonic mission.) It is wrong to assume that the Pirates' shifting objectives and improvisations are clever maneuvers scripted in advance or, as they will always claim, routine choices from a range of contingencies.

We have already mentioned Baghdad's descent into chaos -- a U.S.-inflicted outrage that revealed the American military's moral and material weaknesses *and* evoked worldwide revulsion at the invader, which cannot help but stiffen international resolve to resist the Pirates. If, to argue the point, there are elements among the Pirates and the military who believe that Baghdad's burning will serve the purposes of the United States, paralyzing potential adversaries in terror, then they are wrong, and will commit further grave errors in the future, hastening the unraveling of the offensive.

If the U.S. strikes against Syria in the near future, it will be a sign of weakness, not strength. There is no objective reason, military or political, for the U.S. to do anything but attempt to consolidate its position within Iraq. However, the Pirates are as likely as not to commit the blunder, driven by the momentum of their own rhetoric or, in the event of serious disruptions of their Iraqi operations, in an effort to demonstrate that they retain the initiative in shaping events in the region. The Bush men see themselves as waging psychological warfare on a world scale. In this, they are singularly incompetent, understanding only minds from their own culture. An early Syrian gambit brings them closer to the point at which they will exhaust their combined force options, and must give up the offensive or strike punitively with air power and special ops raids to little military purpose -- no way to construct new relationships that must ultimately result in advantageous commercial arrangements.

Conspiracy of resistance

Conspiracies will abound in the world, however -- directed against the United States. Far from exhibiting devilish cleverness, the Pirates have launched an incredibly stupid war-against-all, telegraphing every move and undermining the stability of the few allies that might be useful to their project. They have totally misjudged or discounted the effects of public opinion on the foreign elites whom they hope to co-opt as subsidiaries to the New American Century. We believe the Bush men cannot conceive of political parties outside of the American model (an *absence* of parties), do not harbor actual feelings of belonging *to* a nation (their sense of nation is a set of ambitions and conceits) and therefore cannot perceive such feelings in others, and are contemptuous of all forms of power other than those in which they are superior. They are quite limited men who have reached too far.

The Pirates have served redundant notices on the world that they are intent on disrupting everyone's way of life, from the Swiss banker to the Indonesian imam. They have given the international community no option other than variations on the post-September 11 "either for us or against us" theme. It is now too late to rephrase the message, even if the Pirates wanted to.

The U.S. has placed a gun to the world's head, insisting it is crazy enough to pull the trigger. Sober people take the threat seriously -- conspiracies are appropriate responses. Noisy boycotts of American products serve to vent public displeasure, but a methodical determination to avoid entanglements with gangsters is best effected in innocuous meetings to which the gangsters are not invited. Boycotts need not be announced. Sales not initiated, deals not cut, trips not made, investments quietly rejected, agreements sidelined, initiatives reconsidered -- this will be the response of the global matrix that the Bush men foolishly seek to coerce with high-tech weapons and racist bombast.

Only a fool would not assume that last weekend's St. Petersburg summit of Germany, France and Russia was not consumed with the nuts and bolts of erecting defenses against American geopolitical aggression. And only foolish heads of state would admit it. Every actor in each emerging or mature economy is compelled to pursue alternatives to doing business with America, the rogue state that recognizes no rules but its own declarations. China has surpassed Japan as the country with which the U.S. has the largest trade deficit and remains a command system, able to move as a body to favor or disfavor the United States if her political will is tested.

The redlining of the U.S. has begun. Like the banker who smiles broadly as he denies that such a thing as redlining exists, then offers his card and his sincerest Good Luck, the world can simply pretend that nothing hostile to U.S. interests is occurring. The effect will be as devastating as redlining the ghetto, a place that is depressed because nothing good happens there.

As we discussed at the beginning of this piece, the U.S. position among nations has long been buttressed by artificial advantages. When these advantages were threatened, a Pirate class schemed to gut the world system in order to secure absolute advantage. But even the world's mightiest military cannot coerce trade and collaboration from an unwilling planet. As the world recoils from its grasping embrace, the U.S. will shrink.

The process will be punctuated with a great deal of drama. It is possible that the world will not survive the convulsions of mayhem precipitated by the would-be hegemon -- but that has been a possibility for the past half century or so. Certainly, many millions will perish less dramatically. TransAfrica Forum executive director Bill Fletcher said:

The military action against Iraq is not just about controlling oil and not even just about empire. It's about economic competition with other powers; about the Bush administration framing global capitalism in an image that it wants with its 'new international economic architecture' via the IMF and World Bank. . . . This will exacerbate the increasing economic polarization of the last 20 years, further impoverish much of the globe and send a message to all: displays of resistance will be met with force."

The possibility of real economic recovery in the United States becomes nil. It is difficult to imagine that a wounded, mostly delusional America will not resort to massive scapegoating of minorities, especially the Permanent Enemy, Black America. Someone will have to pay for the political choices of the pro-war supermajority. These will be interesting times.

But there will no longer be a material basis for rule of the Pirates, at least in their present, virulent form.

And, "the arc of history bends toward justice." -- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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