

Amerika: Safer, Stronger, Better?

Jim Fetzer (READER WEEKLY 15 July 2004)

The banners proclaimed, "America: Safer, Stronger, Better", to some 7,000 adoring fans, who had been carefully screened for their Republican credentials. This man not only snubs the NAACP but won't allow ordinary residents to attend his rally. He seems to forget that he is supposed to be the President of the United States, not the President of the Republican Party or the President of the Rich. His remark about the haves and the have-mores--"Some refer to you as the elite. I think of you as my base"--reflects a profound truth cloaked in black humor.

During his visit, Bush proclaimed that he would never allow the security of the United States to be decided by other nations. The throngs cheered wildly, blissfully ignorant of the painful lessons of the 20th Century that led to collective security arrangements such as NATO and the United Nations. Stability and security can be attained between nations when they have nothing to fear from other nations. By agreeing to go to war only with the support of the Security Council unless subject to imminent threat, the world discovered a mechanism for insuring the peace.

No one should misunderstand the gravity of the situation when the President plays to xenophobic attitudes and pseudo-patriotism. By subverting the United Nations as an instrument of world peace, the President has made America and the world vastly less safe. Conducting a war of aggression in Iraq not only violated international law and the UN Charter, but also violated the US Constitution, according to which treaties such as those we ratified in becoming a founding member of the UN, have the same status under the Constitution as the Constitution itself!

The banners proclaim, "Safer, Stronger, Better", but that slogan does not resonate well with more than 1,000 deaths on the side of the Coalition and more than 10,000 on the side of the Iraqi people. A recent poll showed that 2% of its citizens regard American forces as an army of liberation, while 98% regard it as an army of occupation. Bush said that we had brought democracy and freedom to Iraq. But Iraqis are fighting to liberate their country from foreign domination. They have fought against the Turks and against the British. Now they fight against the US.

Listening to Bush, I was struck by the profound irony of making security his most fundamental issue. Many readers may recall his statements--which have been said on more than one occasion--that his primary responsibility as our President is the security of the nation. But he took an oath to preserve, protect, and defend, not the nation, but the nation's Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic. He has confused the nation with the nation's Constitution. He can fulfill his oath of office only by defending the Constitution and thereby defending the nation.

Benito Mussolini defined "fascism" as corporatism, where the interests of corporations are merged with those of the government, attended by virulent forms of nationalism and militarism. The identity of the leader may be equated with the identity of the

nation itself, where any criticism of the leader becomes criticism of the nation and thus qualifies as anti-patriotic, even treasonous! Does this sound familiar? Since he entered office, this administration has been paving the way for a new fascist state, which might become known around the world as "Amerika".

If we are "safer, stronger, better", then why don't we feel safer, stronger and better? Indeed, polls show that the nation no longer believes in the war in Iraq and the lies that were sold to us to promote it. Packaging and marketing are their strong suits, regardless of the costs in truth and security. Republicans are shuddering over the prospect of battling for votes with Kerry and Edwards and are seeking other ways to insure their continued control of the White House. These include the traditional purchase of the election by a massive propaganda campaign.

A second is through the use of electronic voting machines that leave no paper trail. Since the absence of a paper trail precludes the prospect of any recount of the vote, close elections must be taken as matters of faith. The third is to manipulate voters through the use of fear, including strategically timed announcements of distant or immanent "terrorist threats", which may be real or imaginary: from the political point of view, it really doesn't matter. But the public is growing weary of hearing "Wolf!" cried with such predictable regularity.

A fourth plan has now emerged to postpone the election in the case of a terrorist attack. Precisely why this should be considered necessary has never been made clear. The election, after all, is a nation-wide event, while terrorist attacks, if any, would affect only a few locales. So why should it be necessary in the first place? The Constitution dictates a specific date for the election to be held, which means it would have to be overridden to be changed. They cynically manipulate fears over the absence of security while claiming that we are more secure!

If the election were postponed, it would have to be rescheduled for another date specific, which once again could be the occasion for another (real or imaginary) "terrorist attack". Moreover, if the election WERE postponed, then the terrorists would have SUCCEEDED in "disrupting the democratic process"! So the very idea of postponing the election is anti-democratic and plays into terrorist hands. Why then are Republican officials promoting such a scheme?

These are not traditional Republicans, who believe in Constitutional government, balanced budgets, a non-interventionist foreign policy, and keeping government out of our personal lives. They are better called "Republikans" and include Tom DeLay, Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Karl Rove. As Bush has observed, he doesn't plan to lose his job. These men are going to do everything in their power to make him President of Amerika for life.

Jim Fetzer, a professor of philosophy at UMD, considers the Bush administration to be the most corrupt in American history. He believes this is the scenario by which fascism, American style, will kill democracy.