

Power and Pork in Washington CounterPunch

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Pentagon Unleashes "The Marshall":

Ancient Pork-Seeking Missile Keeps Vital Role

In a recent classified Pentagon war game, the U.S. was pitted against a resurgent China in the year 2020. To the horror of Defense Department officials, Chinese troops pitilessly peppered U.S. forces with high-tech weaponry. Satellite-guided antiship missiles showered the U.S. fleet, naked and exposed to space-based Chinese surveillance sensors. By sundown the once-proud American armada had sunk beneath the waves of the South China Sea and the Middle Kingdom ruled once more.

This bizarre scenario was presented by Thomas Ricks in a July 15 *Wall Street Journal* profile of Andrew Marshall, head of the Defense Department's Office of Net Assessment (ONA) and a man said to be "struggling to save the U.S. armed forces from becoming paralyzed by their own successes in the Cold War and Desert Storm." According to the 72-year-old Marshall, technological advances have made U.S. defense strategy and hardware obsolete. The unstated but unmistakable conclusion is that immense sums of money must be set aside to purchase a new generation of "brilliant" weapons; otherwise, the U.S. will soon descend to the humiliating status of third-rate power.

In the glory days of the Cold War stories like this were two a penny. Decade after decade, Pentagon briefers would offload on the gullible or complicit journalist of choice some new threat engendered by the wizards in the Kremlin. Items planted in such trade periodicals as *Aviation Week* duly matured into the luxuriant foliage of a *New York Times Magazine* article. The purpose of all such exercises was the nourishing of the military budget, motor of U.S. prosperity.

Today, such Pentagon-inspired journalism is out of style. It will be another few years before the Russian empire comes onstream as a big budget-booster.

But the ceaseless work of budget-enhancement goes on. Clinton's proposed military spending for 1999, in real terms, is virtually unchanged from 1980, Reagan's first year in office. The Pentagon budget is scheduled to fall by 6 percent a year, with FY '94 (ending this month) at \$279.8 billion and FY '95 at \$270.7. However, a ground-up needs assessment conducted during the reign of Les Aspin, Clinton's first defense chief, called for an extra \$30 billion over five years.

In one of his innumerable accommodations with the darker forces Clinton agreed during the 1994 budget battle that if defense spending exceeded its allotted cap, the extra money would have to come out of domestic discretionary funds. More money for aerospace industry, less for waifs and toddlers.

The pre-election period is not a wise time to start bellowing for domestic cuts to save the Pentagon. But soon expect portentous speeches by Sen. Sam Nunn about crippled, defenseless America, followed by some shadow boxing, leading to inevitable surrender by the man from Hope. The *Journal's* puff piece about Marshall is an augury of others to follow.

Pentagon veterans tell us that the ludicrous ideas espoused by Marshall, and relayed by the credulous Ricks, reflect the thinking of Defense Secretary William Perry. Marshall, is merely fulfilling his long-standing mission of formulating bogus, *ex post facto* intellectual edifices to support decisions made by the top man

(Continued on page 4)

■ IN THIS ISSUE ■

The Pentagon's Coming Onslaught

- The Talleyrand of Threat-Inflation: "The Chinese are coming and we won't stand a chance"
- Reinventing the Persian Gulf War

"Flawless Blue-Eyed Blond Infants": The Dream Life of a Conservative Thinker

- Single Mothers, Sex and Chocolate Cake

Plus:

- Carville Revelations Cause Scandal in Brazil

Back from the Future

"The conventional wisdom in the Pentagon is that in purely military terms, the Russians are in far better position vis-a-vis the United States than Hitler was against Britain and France in 1939."

—Drew Middleton, *The New York Times*, Jan. 7, 1980, shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

Mad Thinkers of the Right

Charles Murray's Chocolate Cake

Lurid scenarios about America's decline are not the sole preserve of the Pentagon. Though the Chinese hi-tech missiles envisaged by Andrew Marshall (see front-page story) would force the U.S. militarily to its knees in 2020, the destruction of the country's moral fiber will by then have been achieved.

Charles Murray is a Thinker of the Right, a breed which leads a pleasant, well-paid life. Natural habitat ranges from the Hoover Institute at Stanford to Washington's American Enterprise Institute, with herd members frequently spotted churning up topsoil on the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*. Prominent Thinkers of the Right include Murray, James Q. Wilson, Thomas Sowell and Milton Friedman. A notch below are Pamphleteers of the Right such as the Kristols, father and son, and William Bennett.

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If Wilson's quarter-century mission has been to argue that crime is best dealt with by imprisonment (thus leading to the highest incarceration rate in the world, with scant impact on crime), Murray's role is to attack subsidies to the poor, particularly welfare. This small program — federally, some \$20 billion a year, the price of 10 B-2 bombers — is

"End all economic support for single mothers"

widely acknowledged to be the cheapest possible way to prevent an afflicted section of the population, mostly single mothers with a couple of children, from starving to death on the streets.

Republicans have flailed away at welfare down the years but it took Bill Clinton and the Progressive Policy Institute to present them with a truly alluring target. Throughout the 1992 campaign Clinton flourished the handy mantra of New Democratic Thought, "End welfare as we know it." Single mothers would have to get a job, or take one in the public sector. Since there are no jobs, this turned out to be a muffled pledge for a public employment program. When the press, months after the election, noticed this, the public employment option swiftly died.

The New Democratic Thinkers began to discover that there really is no way, short of costly imprisonment, to maintain single mothers more cheaply. Instead Clinton and Co. encouraged the states to deny extra support to mothers having children while receiving public assistance (though the birth rate of mothers on welfare is less than among the general population).

Irked at having the issue stolen from them by New Democratic Thinkers, the Thinkers of the Right struck back. In an article in the *Journal*, Murray rushed to new ground. Discarding the usual lamen-

tations about black illegitimacy, he announced that the true issue was a growing white illegitimacy crisis. Murray (two marriages, four children; well within his carrying capacity) drew a lurid picture of an America sapped by cohort after cohort of antinomian bastards.

Murray's answer: End welfare. Denied hand-outs from the state, young women would restrain their lusts, firmly enjoin their mates to the dignity of the married state, and thus acquire the moral stature, income and job to become responsible, productive members of the polity. Meanwhile, take such children as single mothers on welfare now have and lock them up in orphanages.

This malevolent drivel was treated with the utmost respect by New Democratic Thinkers and by the press at large, always timid before the Thinkers. Murray became a prophet and his lecture fees grew fat and multiplied.

In late summer, Murray's "New White Underclass" (a doppelganger to Irving Kristol's whiskered New Class) met reality in the form of some irate congressmembers on the subcommittee on human resources of the House Ways and Means Committee. Murray trolled forth his standard text — "if the proportion of fatherless boys in a given community were to reach such levels, surely the culture must be 'Lord of the Flies' writ large...in the calculus of illegitimacy, the constants are that boys like to sleep with girls and that girls think babies are endearing."

As for taking children away from mothers on welfare, Murray confidently predicted there would be takers for not only "flawless blue-eyed blond infants" but for "babies of all colors and conditions." For the unwanted residue, "the government should spend lavishly on orphanages" which would provide a "warm, nurturing environment." And of course: "End all economic support for single mothers."

Murray's astounding remarks were largely omitted from the scanty press reports of the subcommittee hearing, though reporters did note the vigorous attacks on Murray (and on aspects of the Clinton administration's proposals) by such Democrats as Robert Matsui of California, Nydia Valazquez of New York, Sander Levin of Michigan and Michael Kopetski of Oregon.

Reviewing the actual transcript, we found that Murray was finally reduced to outright lying. Rep. Levin confronted him with a sentence from an article he had written for the London *Sunday Times*, to the effect that men had as much responsibility toward their out-of-wedlock offspring as "a piece of chocolate cake has in determining whether a woman gains weight." Murray claimed he was simply criticizing laws that denied men a say in decisions about adoption and abortion.

Levin then read out a lengthy section of the article, which shows that Murray was indeed arguing that (a) a male does have a mere "chocolate cake" responsibility for his illegitimate children, but (b) yearns to be "a man," manhood being defined by marriage, and that if (c) women, denied welfare, demand marriage as predicate for sex/children (d) men will marry to have sex/children and America, rid of welfare, will survive the present "epidemic" of illegitimacy, and flourish.

Appalled by such ravings, Rep. Kopetski finally lost patience and vehemently denounced Murray. Saying that he had personally witnessed the horrors of disease and poverty in Bombay shantytowns, he accused Murray of wanting the same for America.

Witnesses at the hearing also debunked Murray's absurd analysis and prescriptions. Greg Duncan, a professor at the University of Michigan, pointed out that since 1975 the rate of out-of-wedlock childbearing among teens has nearly doubled; at the same time, inflation-adjusted welfare benefits have dropped dramatically. States with the greatest decreases in welfare benefits have not witnessed the smallest increases in out-of-wedlock births. Western European countries have far more generous welfare benefits than the U.S., but far lower teen birth rates.

After the boisterous hearing, a government spokesman announced soothingly that there was common ground between Democrats and Republicans.

Outside the subcommittee there may well be a meeting of minds. The New Democratic Thinkers don't want to be outflanked by the Thinkers of the Right. Single mothers will have to pay the penalty, with further erosions of their meager subsidy. ■

■ IN BRIEF ■

Cardoso Campaign Tripped by Carville Disclosure

Our September 1 report that the White House political consultant James Carville is secretly advising Fernando Henrique Cardoso, international capital's choice in Brazil's upcoming presidential election, caused a political uproar. "No more intermediaries, Clinton for president!" said the Rio de Janeiro daily *Jornal do Brasil*. "Clinton-FHC connection confirmed," ran a front-page headline in *Estado de Minas* of Belo Horizonte.

The Cardoso camp tripped over its frantic denials and ended up on its face. As *Estado de Minas* said, "While denying they had signed a contract with American political consultants, the principal authorities [of Cardoso's

Greenberg and Mandy Grunwald, the latter whose firm is also working for the Cardoso campaign — to file financial disclosure statements. Wolf, distressed to hear that Carville had omitted his Brazilian client from the disclosure statement he filed with the White House, is demanding an explanation from Leon Panetta, Clinton's chief-of-staff. "Having White House inner circle advisors intimately involved in foreign elections seems to be a situation ripe for political problems and conflicts," Wolf wrote to Panetta on Sept. 8. "The American people at least have a right to know about these matters in an upfront and honest manner."

CounterPunch's revelations about Carville were knocked off the front

The Cardoso camp fell over its frantic denials and ended up on its face

political group] couldn't get their stories straight. In the space of ninety minutes, the report was confirmed and then denied." Janio de Freitas, a political columnist for *Folha de Sao Paulo*, pointed out that Cardoso's personal response to the press — "I'm not aware of this contract" — was "not a denial of the facts...but a well-known method of political escape."

We have since learned that Carville's principal assistant on the ground in Brazil is a Democratic consultant, Teresa Vilmain, who has previously worked for Geraldine Ferraro, Michael Dukakis, Ted Kennedy and Tom Harkin. She is reportedly earning \$10,000 a month to flack for Cardoso.

Demonstrating their usual mettle, few U.S. journalists in Brazil bothered to cover the Carville scandal. But the case is being pursued more aggressively by Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Virg.), who in June forced Carville and three other Clinton advisors with 24-hour White House passes — Paul Begala, Stanley

page of Brazilian newspapers only after a new scandal erupted. Finance Minister Rubens Ricupero, unaware that his remarks were being carried live, admitted off-camera to a TV reporter that the government was cooking the economic books to aid Cardoso's campaign. Speaking about economic data compiled after the introduction of the *Plano Real* — the farcical anti-inflation plan designed to secure the presidency for Cardoso, as discussed in our last issue — Ricupero said, "I have no scruples. What's good we take advantage of, what's bad we hide." Ricupero was soon forced to resign, the victim, he claimed, of an "electronic defect."

The two scandals have slowed Cardoso's momentum in the Oct. 3 presidential election, but he still holds a substantial lead over socialist Luis Inacio Lula da Silva. If Lula can prevent Cardoso from obtaining an absolute majority, a runoff vote will be held on Nov. 15. ■

(Continued from page 1)

at the Pentagon. Says one former DoD man, "Perry's a total shill for the electronics sector so Andy's now whipping up this bullshit about how the U.S. must prepare immediately for 21st century conflicts."

Marshall has been at the threat-inflation game so long he should be in the Smithsonian. One of the original nuclear intellectuals, he worked in the '50s with Herman Kahn at the RAND Corp., where he helped concoct the fraudulent "missile gap" with which Kennedy belabored Nixon in the 1960 election. In 1972 Marshall was brought in to head the newly created ONA. He specialized in rigging the conventional balance of forces.

Ricks's article — so fawning that it embarrassed even Marshall's friends — portrays its subject ("a legend within the Pentagon") as a man always one step ahead of the competition. "Well ahead of most Sovietologists, Mr. Marshall noticed weaknesses of Soviet society," wrote Ricks. "In 1977...he focused on the environmental and demographic crises that were undermining the Soviet system."

Associates have no recollection of Marshall expressing such views. "Until the very end he was a major promoter of the line that 'The Russians are coming

and they're 10 feet tall," says one ex-Pentagon man. Eternally vigilant, Marshall in November of 1989 — after the fall of the Berlin Wall and shortly before Gorbachev's ouster — was insisting that high levels of defense spending were as urgently needed as ever. "It's going to take us several years of careful watching and monitoring to see how much change takes place," he said at the time. "I don't think I've ever seen so much uncertainty about the future as there is today."

Marshall's *raison d'être* collapsed with the USSR. He now justifies his pay check by advancing the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), a doctrine which holds that today's "platforms" — tanks,

Stealth: "The biggest fraud ever perpetrated on the American public"

aircraft carriers and manned bombers — are hopelessly outdated and must be replaced with 21st century hardware. The arms systems Marshall proposes as solutions are virtually identical to the "super-weapons" Perry promoted when the latter oversaw military research in the Carter administration. Those efforts failed abysmally and at hideous expense.

Highlights of the Ricks article include:

- The best way to halt an Iraqi tank attack may be with "a submarine launching from 100 miles away 'brilliant' missiles that zero in on the sound of Russian-built tank engines."

Acoustic homing has been contemplated — and rejected as being too easy to fool — since WW II. One former weapons designer told CounterPunch that a missile like the one envisioned by Marshall could be tricked with a pair of \$100 speakers playing the taped sound of a Russian tank engine. While Pentagon porkers might be able to get such a weapon to work with the pristine background offered under laboratory conditions, battlefield noises — artillery barrages, rocket blasts, gunfire — make acoustic homing completely impractical.

- Marshall's ideas "are helping reshape the defense industry," Northrop Corp's recent purchase of Grumman, which produces surveillance technology, "was driven in part by the idea of a military revolution."

There is another explanation for Northrop's acquisition: The bankrupt Grumman was available for a song. Furthermore, while Northrop has always had difficulty selling to the Navy, Grumman had much success thanks to its policy of hiring retired admirals as soon as they come on the market. "The Grumman deal had absolutely nothing to do with Andy," one informant said with disgust. "The defense industry is simply changing to meet budgets."

- Stealth aircraft — like the B-2 bomber and the F-117 fighter, which the Pentagon claims are invisible to enemy radar — are fearsome components of the U.S. arsenal.

One informant, who reviewed classified material, calls Stealth "the biggest fraud ever perpetrated on the American public." During the Gulf War, British destroyers picked up Stealth crafts from 40 miles away. U.S. radar identified them from five times that distance.

The B-2 bomber — 20 have been produced at a cost of \$40 billion — weighs a staggering 360,000 pounds. "There's no way to hide something like that," says one expert. The F-117's jet engines put out ionized gas, which makes it an excellent target for radar. The only reason the plane can be flown into combat is that it's heavily equipped with jammers.

(When Perry was hired back in January, journalists lauded him as the creator of Stealth, which was claimed to have played a central role in the Gulf War. In fact, Stealth was completely irrelevant. The key to the Allied victory was that the Iraqi army suffered the largest mass desertions in history; up to 175,000 soldiers fled the front before ground combat began. The desertions resulted from Saddam Hussein's having stuffed the front with segregated units of Shiite and Kurd troops. Realizing they were merely cannon fodder, huge numbers returned to their villages. That left some 25,000 troops to confront 400,000 U.S.-led soldiers—who could have walked in with swords.)

Given his usefulness, Marshall is likely to remain at the Pentagon for many more years, regardless of who occupies the White House. "There's no one better than Andy at executing 180 degree turns of beliefs and principles," says an ex-Pentagon staffer who savored Marshall's gyrations down the years. "He's the winner of the Talleyrand award. With the change of regime, he changes his ideas." ■

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