

NORTH COAST

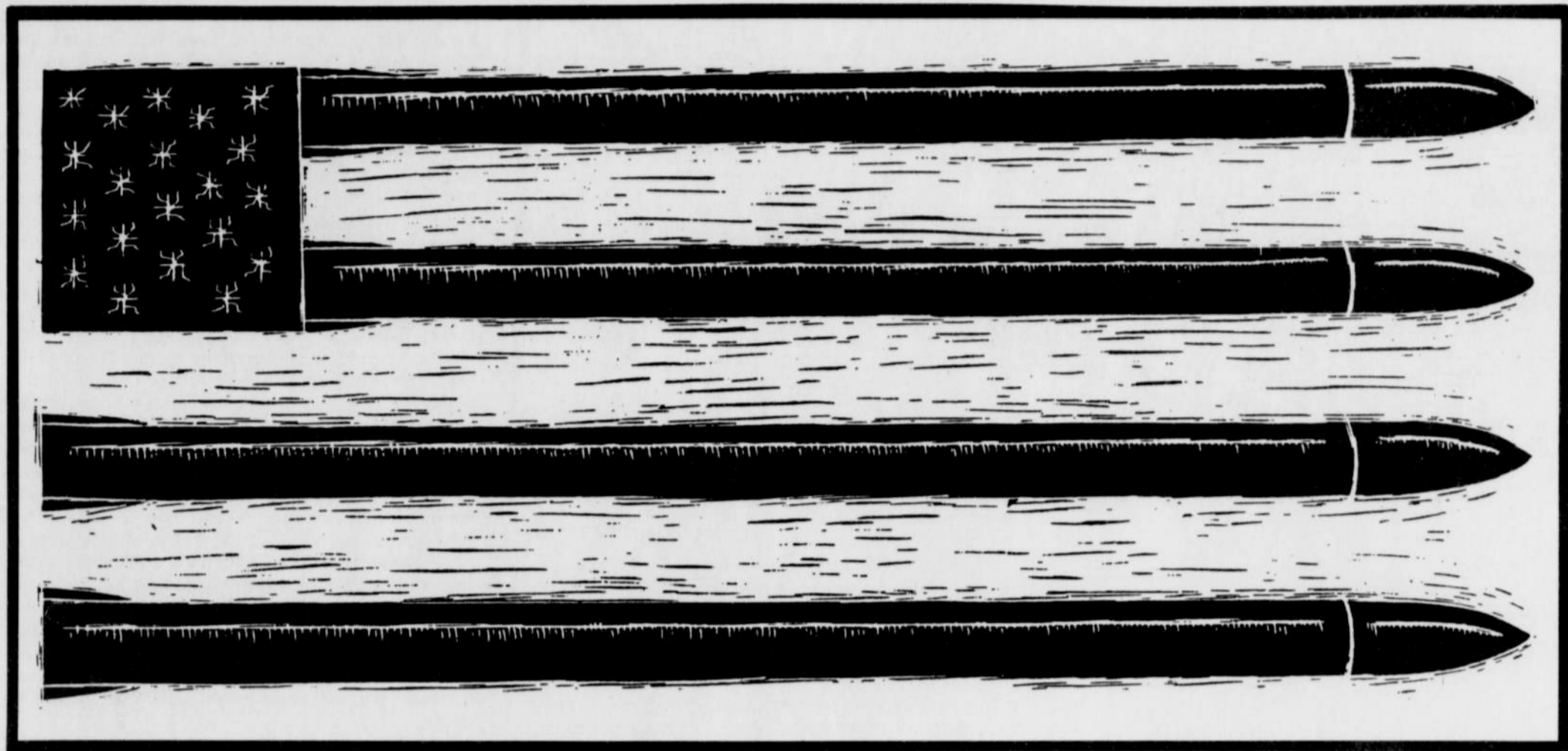


TIMES EAGLE

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In a dark time the eye begins to see
~Theodore Roethke

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ROXANNA VILLA

THE PATRIOTS' GAME

BY MICHAEL PAUL McCUSKER

"War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, war is always evil."

~JIMMY CARTER

War is never necessary, and there has never been a 'good war', only bad wars that compel a tribe, a city, a nation to defend itself against the ruthless ambitions of an eager enemy.

The possibility of war in Iraq, the cradle of civilization, is an ironic symbol that humanity is threatening the future by never getting past the conflicts of its earliest superstitions — which originated from the most elemental questions pertaining to life and purpose but have been frozen in mutually savage dogmas like fossils in ice.

Usually the tempest before a war is the most dangerous and intense period of international relations. The world is again at that point, a critical moment of history that will determine if for once mechanisms designed to prevent war will this time work as they were intended despite almost reckless pressure to make war.

The people who want war in Iraq are the ideological conservatives in the White House whose inspired historical vision is that perpetual warfare (a Christian-type jihad) is the means to expand and protect the American neo-empire which is being called the "New World Order", a term Hitler used for his Nazi nightmare of world dominance (the also-called 'Thousand Year Reich') back in the 20th century.

President George Bush seems to be a religious zealot while Saddam Hussein, portrayed as Hitler reincarnate, simply wants to hang on to power as an old fashioned dictator. Bush is considered to be engaged in a "messianic mission" with a "faith-based foreign policy of the most explosive kind." Once he proclaimed Hussein as evil the assumption became self-fulfilling that any attempt to oust him would be a *just war*. In accordance with his intent on a crusade against terrorism in the Middle East, Bush announced a policy of pre-emptive war (which alternates with the term "preventive war") in a speech at West Point last June.

Yet former President Jimmy Carter says war in Iraq would be an unjust war and overturn two centuries of bipartisan participation in the United States in decisions about warfare. (Half a dozen members of Congress have attempted to sue the White House for bypassing the Constitution to make war, which Congress illegally ceded following 9/11 — a federal judge has denied the claim.) Pope John Paul II sent a missive to Bush in early March which warned that there is no moral justification for a preemptive war, which he said would disrupt relations between Christianity and Islam and would be "a defeat for humanity."

The most persistent opposition to war with Iraq is from fear that thousands of innocent civilians will be killed, injured and maimed. The war plan the Pentagon seems to have developed is that one day in March (or perhaps April) the U.S. Air Force and Navy will launch hundreds of cruise missiles at Iraq, more than were launched during the Persian Gulf War. Ditto the second day, which prompted a Pentagon official to say, "There will not be a safe place in Baghdad." He also said, reported by CBS, that the "sheer size of this has never been contemplated before." Which does not even begin to calculate the clouds of aircraft that will attack Iraq with bombs.

Millions throughout the world and the USA are against invading Iraq and prefer to continue UN weapons inspections however chancy and flimsy they are. Although Saddam Hussein is recognized as a brutal dictator whose reign has terrorized the Iraqi people, the prospect of killing Iraqis in order to free them is not popular.

Marches against the U.S. starting a war in the Middle East have drawn several million persons all over the world. In The U.S., Wednesday, February 26 was an all day national telethon to Congress organized by peace groups. February 12 was a national Poetry Against the War day with readings all over the country. *Lysistrata* readings were performed in 59 countries and every state in the USA on March 3, including a reading in Cannon Beach. March 5 was a moratorium-style 'don't go to work day'.

As peace activities have become more intense and populous as the velocity toward war accelerates, every act to prevent or forestall it is criticized, downplayed and ultimately ignored by the White House (Bush said he doesn't listen to "focus groups") with arrogant disregard for any other possibility than war.

Despite Bush's Disneyland vision of a post-Saddam Hussein Middle East, anti-American sentiment throughout the world is reported to be at a maximum because the USA has abandoned helping bring real peace to the Middle East and because of its intemperate support of Israel.

Germany and France oppose the United States as the world's only superpower and hope for the European Union to gain equity. They seek for the new world order to be pluralistic; Asian and Islamic as well the West. And they certainly don't support the Churchillian alliance of Britain and the USA as a world dominating unity of the "Anglo-Saxon speaking peoples."

The United Nations Security Council by insisting its protocol is superior to the U.S. unilateral insistence of the use of military power bodes far more hope for the future than eradi-

cating Saddam Hussein and his possible weapons of mass destruction. Even if war occurs, it should only be through UN auspices and not U.S. bombast and pontification.

Here is the real conflict: the test of the future as a world civilization loosely ruled by a confederation of United Nations or a U.S. mandated world (which might very well set precedent for China assuming ascendancy down the road). If indeed the U.S. uses its superpowerdom to recreate the world as an American clone as consummation of its true 'Manifest Destiny', which America are we thinking about — the America of the Revolution; the America of the Emancipation; the America of the Cold War; or the America that demands the imperial prerogatives of being the world's sole superpower?

The tug of war in the UN Security Council has been at least instructive as to how international politics might be handled in the future, especially in crises and prevention of war, which was its essential charter when the UN was organized at the end of World War 2. The Preamble to the UN Charter, adopted in June 1945, a month after Germany collapsed but while Japan was still at war, stressed a determination to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetimes has brought untold sorrow to mankind."

World War 2 is called the "Good War". The 20th century obviously proved there is no such war. Both world wars might have been prevented if nations and the humans they reflect were not so ready to commit violence for their aspirations. The Hitlers, Stalins and Mussolinis of the last century could never have so devastated the world if their populations had not blindly or fearfully followed them into the hell they made for humanity.

Eventually the large mass of common people will have to seize history from those who have usurped it and made it so tragic and bloody. A world government consisting of separate states will certainly be as fractious, messy and malevolently divisive and maliciously class competitive as the U.S. has been from its inception. All of our national woes will be magnified and compounded, as will those of every other nation, at least in the beginning — but as the European Union struggles to find a separate identity from its diverse identities, so eventually will world civilization that is at partition.

Although millions of Americans have publicly opposed war with Iraq, polls say most want to wait for UN approval before starting a war but will support Bush without it because they feel it is his right as commander-in-chief to make arbitrary decisions for war or peace, and also because in this instance Congress more or less gave him a blank check, abdicating its own responsibility. These polls also indicate many of those questioned do not wish to be thought "unpatriotic" by being critical or questioning of Presidential policy, particularly after 9/11.

If anyone remembers an old Humphrey Bogart movie, *The Black Legion* they might recognize the inflammatory rhetoric of 100% Americanism focused against "alien undesirables" which is rather familiar of late. "What this country needs," the Black Legion boss tells his blackrobed celluloid impersonations of the real life Ku Klux Klan, "is bigger and better patriots."

But the patriot game is changing in this new century-millennium. Bigger and better patriots think globally rather than nationally. They are world citizens rather than stiff-necked, bellicose nationalists. True patriots reject narcissistic nationalism and abhor war, whether *just* or *unjust* because it's all in the family.

MAKING MORE ENEMIES

Chauvinism blinds people to their own problems, and this is what has happened to America under President Bush. Instead of addressing legitimate grievances, Bush is making more enemies in his blind rush to attack Iraq.

No country has the right to attack another, especially the United States, which should lead by example. The war against terrorism is going to be made more terrible, not easier, by the war on Iraq.

It is the beginning of an unending battle patterned after the policies that are failing in Israel, where instead of addressing the problems and being fair to all, the ruling party has embarked on a policy of death to all.

Not until the Israel/Palestine problem is dealt with fairly will we have a chance at peace.

~ANCIL NANCE

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