

We, the Salt of the Earth, Take Precedence

By Paul Craig Roberts

01/07/08 "ICH" -- - - Which country is the rogue nation? Iraq? Iran? Or the United States? Syndicated columnist Charley Reese asks this question in a recently published article.

Reese notes that it is the US that routinely commits “acts of aggression around the globe.” The US government has no qualms about dropping bombs on civilians whether they be in Serbia, the Middle East, or Africa. It is all in a good cause--our cause.

This slaughtering of foreigners doesn't seem to bother the American public. Americans take it for granted that Americans are superior and that American purposes, whatever they be, take precedence over the rights of other people to life and to a political existence independent of American hegemony.

The Bush regime has come up with a preemption doctrine that justifies attacking a country in order to prevent the country from possibly becoming a future threat to the US. “Threat” is broadly defined. It appears to mean the ability to withstand the imposition of US hegemony. This insane doctrine justifies attacking China and Russia, a direction in which the Republican presidential candidate John McCain seems to lean.

The callousness of Americans toward the lives of other peoples is stunning. How many Christian churches ask God's forgiveness for having been rushed into an error that has killed, maimed, and displaced a quarter of the Iraqi population?

How many Christian churches ask God to give better guidance to our government so that it does not repeat the error and crime by attacking Iran?

The indifference of Americans to others flows from “American exceptionalism,” the belief that Americans are graced with a special mission to impose their virtue on the rest of the world. Like the French revolutionaries, Americans don't seem to care how many people they kill in the process of spreading their exceptionalism.

American exceptionalism has swelled Americans' heads, filling them with hubris and self-righteousness and making Americans believe that they are the salt of the earth.

Three recent books are good antidotes for this unjustified self-esteem. One is Patrick J. Buchanan's *Churchill, Hitler, and the Unnecessary War*. Another is *After the Reich: The Brutal History of the Allied Occupation* by Giles MacDonogh, and a third is John Pilger's *Freedom Next Time*.

Buchanan's latest book is by far his best. It is spell-binding from his opening sentence: "All about us we can see clearly now that the West is passing away." As the pages turn, the comfortable myths, produced by history written by the victors, are swept aside. The veil is lifted to reveal the true faces of British and American exceptionalism: stupidity and deceit.

Buchanan's strength is that he lets the story be told by Britain's greatest 20th century historians and the memoirs of the participants in the events that destroyed the West's dominance and moral character. Buchanan's contribution is to assemble the collective judgment of a hundred historians.

As I read the tale, it is a story of hubris destroying judgment and substituting in its place blunder and miscalculation. Both world wars began when England, for no sound or sensible reason, declared war on Germany. Winston Churchill was a prime instigator of both wars. He seems to have been a person who needed a war stage in order to be a "great man."

The American President Woodrow Wilson shares responsibility with Britain and France for the Versailles Treaty, which dismembered Germany, stripping her of territory and putting millions of Germans under foreign rule, and imposed reparations that Britain's greatest economist, John Maynard Keynes, correctly predicted to be unrealistic. All of this was done in violation of assurances given to Germany that there would be no reparations or boundary changes. Once Germany surrendered, the assurances were withdrawn, and a starvation blockade forced German submission to the new harsh terms.

Hitler's program was to put Germany back together. He was succeeding without war until Churchill provoked Chamberlain into an insane act. Danzig was 95 percent German. It had been given to Poland by the Versailles Treaty. Hitler was negotiating its return and offered in exchange a guarantee of Poland's frontiers. The Polish colonels, assessing the relative strengths of Poland and Germany, understood that a deal was better than a war. But suddenly, the British Prime Minister issued Poland a guarantee of its existing territory, including Danzig, whose inhabitants wished to return to Germany.

Buchanan produces one historian after another to testify that British miscalculations and blunders, culminating in Chamberlain's worthless and provocative "guarantee" to Poland, brought the West into a war that Hitler did not want, a war that destroyed the British Empire and left Britain a dependency of America, a war that delivered Poland, a chunk of Germany, all of Eastern Europe, and the Baltic states to Joseph Stalin, a war that left the Western allies with a 45-year cold war against the nuclear-armed Soviet

Union.

People resist the shattering of their illusions, and many are angry with Buchanan for assembling the facts of the case that distinguished historians have provided.

Churchill admirers are outraged that their hero is revealed as the first war criminal of World War II. It was Churchill who initiated the policy of terror bombing civilians in non-combatant areas. Buchanan quotes B.H. Liddell Hart: "When Mr. Churchill came into power, one of the first decisions of his government was to extend bombing to the non-combatant area."

In holding Churchill to account, Buchanan makes no apologies for Hitler, but the ease with which Churchill set aside moral considerations is discomfoting.

Buchanan documents that Churchill's plan was to destroy 50% of German homes. Churchill also had plans for using chemical and biological warfare against German civilians. In 2001 the *Glasgow Sunday Herald* reported Churchill's plan to drop five million anthrax cakes onto German pastures in order to poison the cattle and through them the people. Churchill instructed the RAF to consider drenching "the cities of the Ruhr and many other cities in Germany" with poison gas "in such a way that most of the population would be requiring constant medical attention."

"It is absurd to consider morality on this topic," the great man declared.

Paul Johnson, a favorite historian of conservatives, notes that Churchill's policy of terror bombing civilians was "approved in cabinet, endorsed by parliament and, so far as can be judged, enthusiastically backed by the bulk of the British people." Thus, the terror bombing of civilians, which "marked a critical stage in the moral declension of humanity in our times," fulfilled "all the conditions of the process of consent in a democracy under law."

British historian F.J.P. Veale concluded that Churchill's policy of indiscriminate bombing of civilians caused an unprecedented "reversion to primary and total warfare" associated with "Sennacherib, Genghis Khan, and Tamerlane."

The Americans were quick to follow Churchill's lead. General Curtis LeMay boasted of his raid on Tokyo: "We scorched and boiled and baked to death more people in Tokyo that night of March 9-10 than went up in vapor in Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined."

MacDonogh's book, *After the Reich*, dispels the comfortable myth of generous allied treatment of defeated Germany. Having discarded all moral scruples, the allies fell upon the vanquished country with brutal occupation. Hundreds of thousands of women raped; hundreds of thousands of Germans died in deportations; a million German prisoners of war died in captivity.

MacDonogh calculates that 2.5 million Germans died between the liberation of Vienna and the Berlin airlift.

Nigel Jones writes in the conservative London Sunday Telegraph: “MacDonogh has told a very inconvenient truth,” a story long “cloaked in silence since telling it suited no one.”

The hypocrisy of the Nuremberg trials is that the victors were also guilty of crimes for which the vanquished were punished. The purpose of the trials was to demonize the defeated in order to divert attention from the allies’ own war crimes. The trials had little to do with justice.

In *Freedom Next Time*, Pilger shows the complete self-absorption of American, British and Israeli governments whose policies are unimpeded by any moral principle.

Pilger documents the demise of the inhabitants of Diego Garcia. The Americans wanted Diego Garcia for an air base, so the British packed up the 2,000 residents, people with British passports under British protection, and deported them to Mauritius, one thousand miles away.

To cover up its crime against humanity, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office created the fiction that the inhabitants, which had been living in the archipelago for two or three centuries, were “a floating population.” This fiction, wrote a legal adviser, bolsters “our arguments that the territory has no indigenous or settled population.”

Prime Minister Harold Wilson and Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart conspired to mislead the UN about the deported islanders by, in Stewart’s words, “presenting any move as a change of employment for contract workers--rather than as a population resettlement.”

Pilger interviewed some of the displaced persons, but emotional blocs will shield patriotic Americans and British from the uncomfortable facts. Rational skeptics can find a second documented account of the Anglo-American rape of Diego Garcia online at http://www.cooperativeresearch.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=diego_garcia An entire people were swept away.

Two thousand people were in the way of an American purpose--an air base--so we had our British dependency deport them.

Several million Palestinians are in Israel’s way. Pilger’s documented account of Israel’s crushing of the Palestinians shows that our “democratic ally” in the Middle East is capable of any evil and has no remorse or mercy. Israel is an apt student of the British and American empires’ attitudes toward lesser beings. They simply don’t count.

Those who are the salt of the earth take precedence over everything.