

## Editorial

# *A Republic If You Can Keep It . . .*

The year 2003 has been ushered in with a pair of major U.S. media promotions of the bad old idea of imperialism. On Jan. 5, the *New York Times Magazine* ran a red, white, and blue cover with the screaming five-inch headline, “American Empire (Get Used To It).” The accompanying article, by Canadian-born and formerly London-based Harvard professor Michael Ignatieff, was only a slight less histrionic screed for an American Imperium, starting with the military occupation of Iraq. It is of historical note that Professor Ignatieff is the great-grandson of the founder of the Russian Tsarist secret police, and that he spent ten years as the resident understudy and biographer of the British Fabian diplomat and Ox-Cam professor Isaiah Berlin, who, along with William Yandell Elliott, mentored Henry Kissinger at Harvard.

The second, more pedestrian call for a global *Pax Americana* appeared as the cover-story of the Jan. 13, 2003 issue of Mort Zuckerman’s *U.S. News & World Report*, under the title “The New American Empire?” by Jay Tolson. The article diagnosed the September 2002 Bush Administration National Security Strategy, which infamously promoted a new doctrine of pre-emptive war against any nation or combination of nations which threatens U.S. global military hegemony.

This latest effort to spark a public “debate” over the virtues of a benign American global empire is reminiscent of the Council on Foreign Relations’ 1993 spotlighting of Samuel P. Huntington’s borrowed (from Bernard Lewis) call for a worldwide “Clash of Civilizations,” pitting “the West against the rest,” particularly the world’s 1 billion Muslims and 1.2 billion Chinese.

The idea of imperialism, at the dawn of the 21st Century, is one that has been long overdue for permanent memorialization in the trashbin of history. It has absolutely no place in the political discourse of the United States of America, whether in the form of magazine-sparked popular debate or misguided Administration policy.

As Lyndon LaRouche has stated in numerous speeches and essays, the United States is unique in his-

tory, as the only modern nation-state to be established on the basis of universal republican principles. Both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution committed the United States to being an instrumentality for the common good—what the Founding Fathers described, in the Preamble to the Constitution, as the “general welfare.” In foreign policy, John Quincy Adams defined the American mission in the world as that of the leading promoter of the community of principle among perfectly sovereign nation-states.

The strategic mission of the United States was set in stark contrast to the very idea of imperialism, colonialism, and all forms of oligarchical oppression.

Unfortunately, the United States has also always faced an “enemy within,” in the form of what President Franklin Roosevelt called “the American Tories,” and their populist rabble. Today, the American Tories occupy positions of power inside the Bush Administration, particularly in the civilian apparatus of the Pentagon and in the Office of Vice President Dick Cheney. They occupy positions of prominence on Wall Street, and, as the *Times* and *U.S. News* pieces suggest, they also control a growing section of the American mass media and entertainment sector.

Nevertheless, the idea of imperialism, like the “American Tories” (call them utopians or neo-conservatives), represent an alien seed, planted early and now taken root in the American political soil. They are alien to the very principles upon which the American experiment in republican government was launched.

We are now entered into a period of weeks or months, when the fate of the United States and the world will be determined, for decades to come, by decisions on war and peace, and a long-overdue return to the American System of political economy, instead of the bankrupt imperial notion of free trade, globalization, and consumerism.

At the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin was asked to describe what the delegates had given to America. Franklin responded, “A republic—if you can keep it.” Franklin’s words echo in our ears today.