

Is Bush preparing a post-Thatcher era?

by Mark Burdman

As George Bush arrived in Great Britain May 31, there was much talk in the European press about "strains in the Anglo-American special relationship." More precisely, the strains are in the relations between the Bush White House and Margaret Thatcher's 10 Downing Street.

From numerous indications, the "Bush team" would be more than happy to have a "special relationship" with a post-Thatcher Britain, and the smiles and effusive mutual praise that followed the Thatcher-Bush meetings on June 1 do not alter that fundamentally. More and more visibly, the Bush administration is working with Buckingham Palace, City of London financial interests sharing Bush's vision of world-federalist global power-sharing arrangements with Moscow, and with the British "green" and peace movements, all of whom would be happy to see Thatcher out of office.

Whatever Thatcher's shortcomings may be, and she has many, she can be stubbornly uncompromising on certain issues, particularly when it comes to defending what she perceives to be threats to Britain's sovereignty, whether these threats come from the European Community's Brussels bureaucracy or from the Soviet KGB. In the latter case, she has hearkened to the warnings of the chiefs of British intelligence services, about the growing dangers of Gorbachov-authorized KGB subversion. These warnings have been persistent, beginning right after Mikhail Gorbachov left Britain on April 7 and continuing through May, and have precipitated expulsions from London of Soviet and Czech spies.

On June 1, aside from meeting Mrs. Thatcher, Bush lunched with Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen just returned to Britain from a May 27-30 visit to the state of Kentucky, supposedly to visit her stable of horses. Since 1984, her horse stable has been managed by one William Forrish, who happens to be the investment manager for President George Bush's personal money trust. Forrish was introduced to the Queen by Paul Mellon, scion of the Mellon banking family and a top promoter of "New Age" cults.

Bush's meeting with the Queen jibes with growing reports of tensions between 10 Downing Street and Buckingham Palace. Reportedly, the Queen was one of the few notables in the U.K. who did not send Thatcher a congratulatory telegram on the 10th anniversary of her coming to power May 4. The irreverent *Bild Zeitung* of West Germany May 29 bore the headline, "Two Women Who Can't Stand Each Other."

Meanwhile, the City of London is rife with rumors, emanating from those banks most intimately tied into East-West joint-venture deals, that a scandal is being cooked up against Thatcher so devastating that it will topple her from office. The scandal-mongering emanates from the circles of Midland Bank's Sir Michael Palliser, a senior figure in the Whitehall Foreign Office Establishment. Palliser is an impassioned true-believer in reaching world-federalist "common security" deals with the Russians. He oversaw a study, released by the Federal Trust in London in January 1989, entitled, "A Step Beyond Fear: Building a Common Security Community," the findings and recommendations of which are reflected in Bush's condominium overtures to the Russians.

One issue being seized upon by City of London influentials, is Thatcher's opposition to the "Europe 1992" plan for restructuring the European Community along corporatist lines. From May 11-14, at the annual Bilderberg Group meeting in Pontevedra, Spain, elites from the European continent, the U.K., and the U.S. mapped out a new campaign of pressure against Thatcher on this issue. Since that time, Thatcher has been subjected to a barrage of increasingly shrill attacks on her blocking of "Europe 1992," particularly from former Prime Minister Edward Heath. Although Heath is widely dismissed in Britain as a pompous clown, his assaults have promoted divisiveness inside the Conservative Party, in the weeks leading up to the mid-June elections for the European Parliament.

Catto, 'The Pilgrims,' and the Greens

One key figure in the restructuring of the Anglo-American relationship is U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James Henry Catto. In a little-noticed development, Catto was the guest of honor the night of May 18, at a dinner given by a group called "The Pilgrims." Headed today by Virginia lawyer Robert Sigmon, the group was created at the turn of this century, as a means of reinforcing relations between the British and American liberal establishments, to fortify what some call the "permanent Anglo-Saxon Establishment." "The Pilgrims" is regarded by many, as the group out of which such entities as the New York Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission were later spawned. At the May 18 dinner, guests included Sir Michael Palliser, Lord Carrington, Lord McFadzean of the Royal Dutch Shell interests, and Lord Greenhill of British Petroleum.

Catto's wife, the enormously wealthy Jessica Hobby Catto, is a leading funder of the U.S. environmentalist movement. She has recently purchased a 10,000-acre ranch, which she calls the Eagle Wildlife Reserve, where she is funding the creation of an Environmental Research Center. According to the May 31 *Daily Telegraph* of London, "She is hoping to bring the U.S. Environmental Defense Fund, of which she is a trustee, into contact with similar British organizations." The *Telegraph* notes that the Cattos are part of the "Texas aristocracy," particularly as a result of wife Jessica's wealthy parents, William Hobby and Oveta Culp Hobby. Henry Catto

is one of George Bush's closest friends. Two days after Bush was elected, the Cattsos visited the Bushes for a private meeting.

Also interesting, is that one of George Bush's first meetings with a foreign dignitary after he was elected President, was a mid-February meeting with Prince Charles. Charles is the patron saint of Britain's green movement. Not only has he been active on such questions as the Amazon, but on June 5, on the occasion of "World Environment Day," he will be giving a televised international address on environmental issues. In Britain, green groups are proliferating and expanding at an astonishing rate. In one week in April of this year, Greenpeace-U.K. received 6,000 members, and now has over a quarter of a million members.

Bush and Labour

The hypothesis must be entertained, too, that the Bush team is privately cultivating the Labour Party. When a Labour Party delegation came to Washington in the days following Bush's inauguration, it received a very warm reception from leading members of the Bush administration, in stark contrast to the cold shoulder it had always received during the Reagan era. The Bush administration, generally, favors working with Socialist International parties, whether they be in Britain, West Germany, France, Venezuela, Peru, or elsewhere.

U.S. National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, a former director of Kissinger Associates, told the delegation that Labour's ideas would be taken into account in the then-ongoing U.S. strategy and foreign policy review. As for Labour, it has recently moved away from its former commitments to unilateral disarmament, in order to present a less ideological facade to the public.

Could it only be coincidence, that on May 28, three days before Bush's arrival, polls taken in Britain showed the Labour Party leading Thatcher's Tories?

Another curious fact, is that on May 30, the day after Bush's arms-control proposal was made in Brussels, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's director Bruce Kent, speaking from outside NATO headquarters in Brussels, welcomed Bush's ideas, specifically because they would further isolate Thatcher inside Britain. The CND, which traces its existence to the "Ban the Bomb" campaigns of Lord Bertrand Russell and friends, placed a three-quarter page ad in the London *Independent* the same day, attacking Thatcher for blocking disarmament proposals. Among the several hundred signers, was Glenys Kinnock, wife of Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock, listed as representing the organization "One World." The ad was accompanied by a macabre picture of Thatcher dissolving.

Labour, meanwhile, is becoming more and more brazen in its assault on Thatcher. Labour parliamentarian Leo Abse has written a new book attacking Thatcher for imposing on the British population a "sado-masochistic" rage, deriving from her obsessive hatred for her mother! In a blurb written

for the pre-publication copy of the book, former Labour Party head Michael Foot commented that Abse's book would do "incalculable but highly necessary damage to the whole Thatcher face and image."

The Labourites smell blood. Thatcher is certainly more vulnerable, and in greater trouble, than the more smug among her advisers would admit. Her Achilles heel is the economy.

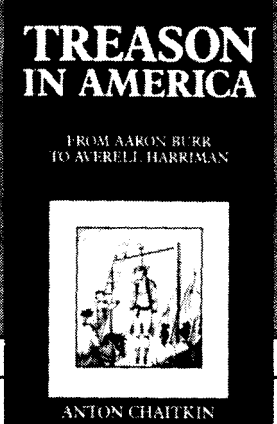
As George Bush arrived, the debate within the Thatcher cabinet, was whether to raise interest rates, perhaps as high as 15%, to stem the collapse of the pound-sterling, to reverse the effects of the soaring dollar, and to stem Britain's 8% inflation rate. But such "anti-inflation" measures, the *Times of London* warned June 1, are eroding Thatcher's carefully built-up base among "non-unionized, home-owning, working-class voters . . . who will be hardest hit by the effect of high interest rates on their mortgages and living standards."

Thatcher and the Tories have already received one warning, with the May 4 by-election in the district of Vale of Glamorgan in Wales. The Labourites gained 14% compared to the most recent election there, and this was the biggest Labour by-election victory in 50 years. The election was fought, and won, on one issue only: health, or more specifically, Thatcher's plans to reform the National Health Service. These plans, like her plans for "privatization" of water and other vital services, are being met with increasing opposition across the U.K.

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