

Anglo-Americans Boast Of 'New Empire' Drive

by Mark Burdman

As 2003 began, leading circles in both the American and British establishments were aggressively promoting a solution worse than the global economic disease: a "new imperialism," with an "American Empire" taking over the role formerly played by Great Britain and other doomed empires of the past. The Iraq war is intended to be the "consolidation point" for this imperial design.

The "new American Empire" is not only being promoted behind closed doors of elite policy institutions in Washington—where, *EIR* sources report, there is animated discussion about the "E-word," Empire—but also flouted in leading daily newspapers, on television and the Internet.

As much as the propagandists may dream of Washington as "the new Rome," *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche has pointed to the absurdity of the whole enterprise. The Roman Empire was, at least, launched at a high point of Rome's economic power. By contrast, the "American Empire" is being promoted at the moment that the American economy, and a world economy based on the so-called "Washington Consensus" of free trade, deregulation, and globalization, is in a systemic breakdown.

The Legacy of Russell and Wells

The imperial propaganda offensive was publicly launched with the Jan. 5, Sunday *New York Times Magazine* feature by Harvard University's Michael Ignatieff (see *EIR*, Jan. 24), the descendant of a Russian imperial family, whose influential father, George Ignatieff, was a Canadian diplomat prominent in the one-worldist Pugwash Conference movement of the late Lord Bertrand Russell. Ignatieff is of the so-called "limp," or "liberal imperialist" camp, rather than the ostensibly more arrogant neo-conservative camp. The "limps" dress up their imperial designs in reluctance: Ignatieff headlines his diatribe, "The Burden," recalling British Empire propagandist Rudyard Kipling's "White Man's Burden." Their position had been enunciated, in the Spring of 2002, by British writer Sebastian Mallaby's article in the March-April issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the house organ of the highly influential New York Council on Foreign Relations. In Mallaby's "The Reluctant Imperialist," he proclaimed, "A new imperial moment has arrived. . . . America is bound to play the leading role."

Mallaby's argument had originated in Great Britain itself,

right after the Sept. 11, 2001 New York and Washington atrocities. The October 2001 edition of Britain's *Prospect* magazine published a hallmark called "The Next Empire," by Prime Minister Tony Blair's foreign policy guru Robert Cooper" (see *EIR*, Nov. 9, 2001, "Blair Launches 'New Empire' Offensive").

In the last century, the "limp" argument was put forward by the ghastly duo of Lord Bertrand Russell and H.G. Wells. Their view, as most brazenly enunciated by Wells in his 1928 *The Open Conspiracy*, was that the sovereign nation-state must be eliminated, and a world government created, in order to carry out centrally mandated policies of population-reduction, eugenics, and social engineering. Russell also promoted, as a second option, a world government run by an "American Empire," as long as the United States was run by financier and Anglophile interests, and the republicans, whom he despised, were purged.

Even Russell's post-World War II calls for a pre-emptive strike against the Soviet Union are now being invoked to justify an immediate American-British strike on Iraq. This was the theme of the lead commentary in the Jan. 10 London *Times*, "Why the U.S. and U.K. Are Right To Target Iraq." Author Phillip Bobbitt, a former Director of Strategic Planning at the U.S. National Security Council, has become one of the more influential "utopian" military strategists in the Anglo-American camp, during the past months.

'Few Will Dare Resist'

Not only the insidious "limps," but also the neo-conservative camp is busy pouring forth neo-imperial filth. Their banner had been raised, during the Summer of 2002, by Robert Kagan, the close partner-in-crimes of William Kristol, editor of *The Weekly Standard* and guru of the neo-conservatives. Kagan authored a much-discussed article for the Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review* magazine, "Power and Weakness," in which he boasted that the United States was a "hegemon," acting on the basis of the might-makes-right theories of 17th-Century British bestialist philosopher Thomas Hobbes. He contrasted this "hegemon" to the ostensibly cringing, weak-kneed European nations.

In the first days of 2003, the brutal variant of the imperial view was put forward by the widely read *Stratfor* military-strategic think-tank, under the headline, "The American Empire." One European figure familiar with U.S. political developments was convinced that this piece was inspired or instigated by Vice President Dick Cheney, who together with Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and a powerful clique of fellow "Chicken-hawks," is at the center of the "War Party."

Stratfor emphasized that the provocations of al-Qaeda terrorists are helping "generate . . . the creation of an American empire." Noting the pre-Sept. 11, 2001 reluctance of leading U.S. circles to take on a global imperial role, the piece went on: "Nothing is more dangerous than power without

appetite or fear. Appetite and fear focus power, make it predictable and make it possible for other nations to craft policies that accommodate, avoid or resist that power. Where there is neither appetite nor fear, power is unfocused and therefore inherently unpredictable. That unpredictability was the mark of U.S. policy between the fall of the Berlin Wall and Sept. 11. . . . Sept. 11 redefined the world for the United States. . . . Sept. 11 created an unintended momentum in U.S. foreign policy that has led directly to empire-building.

"Few will dare resist. The United States is enormously powerful and has been transformed from a vaguely disinterested gorilla into a brutally focused and deadly viper, ready to strike anywhere. Given U.S. power and the American mood, few nations are prepared to risk U.S. displeasure by refusing to cooperate in the fight against al Qaeda. . . . The United States is becoming an integral part of the domestic policy process and implementation in virtually all countries around the globe. Those that resist are potential targets for American attack. . . .

"The United States has been a democratic republic, an anti-imperial power. Now it is an imperial power. . . . The United States is taking control of countries throughout the world. . . . The issue is not whether this should happen. It is happening. The real issue, apart from how all this plays out, is what effect it will have on the United States as a whole."

The widespread discussion of empire was featured in the cover-story of the Jan. 13 edition of *U.S. News & World Report* magazine, under the headline, "The New American Empire?"

'Their Imperialism Is Visceral'

In Great Britain, the week of Jan. 5 saw the release of a new book by Oxford University Professor of History Niall Ferguson, entitled, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*. The book is a shameless *laudatio* for the 18th- and 19th-Century British Empire. On Jan. 7, Ferguson summarized his thesis in the London *Times*. On Jan. 9, Britain's Channel 4 TV began a six-part series, "Empire," narrated by Ferguson.

But while hyping the British and related imperial traditions, Ferguson is certainly one of those who wants to build up the imperial obsessions in the United States, as well. On Oct. 31, 2001, a couple of weeks after Blair guru Robert Cooper published his "The Next Empire" piece, Ferguson wrote a commentary for the *Guardian*, entitled, "Welcome the New Imperialism," in which he called on the United States to proclaim itself a "formal empire," and play the role of "global hegemon."

On Jan. 13, Ferguson received exuberant praise from curmudgeon Lord William Rees-Mogg, writing in the *Times* under the title, "The American Empire, A Fine Old British Tradition." Rees-Mogg effused about the emerging American Empire as the continuation of the historical "trading

empires” of Athens, Venice, and Great Britain. His Lordship likened Ferguson’s account of the determining importance of the English-French “Seven Years War” (1756-63), for the consolidation of the British Empire, to the U.S. war against “Islamic terrorism” and “Saddam Hussein’s regime,” now, for consolidating an American Empire: “These two struggles of empire have some characteristics in common. Both are global, both have economic, political and religious aspects, both have involved tensions between France and Anglo-Saxons, both could be decisive in terms of imperial power. [Not to remove Saddam] would be a crippling defeat for American authority.

“In the present struggle in the Middle East, the continuity of the Anglo-Saxon and imperial tradition is particularly obvious, with the U.S. travelling the same territory that Britain covered in the first half of the last century, and meeting the same problems of oil, Islam and Arab nationalism.”

Then came this wild falsification: “Indeed, it is no mere coincidence that 1776 marks the publication of Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and the U.S. Declaration of Independence. The United States may have retained more of the intellectual imprint of the British 18th Century than Britain itself.”

Of course, the Declaration of Independence was the complete antithesis to the writings of Smith and Gibbon.

British Empire Is Disastrous Model

Professor Ferguson, however, has also come in for some sharp attack in the British press, from writers who don’t share his airy-fairy view about the wonders of Britain’s Empire. Most devastating was Spanish historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto, who teaches at Queen Mary’s College at the University of London. Writing in the Jan. 12 *Sunday Times*, he began by ironically praising Ferguson, for not flinching from the fact that the British Empire was created on the basis of piracy, slavery, outrage, and atrocities. But, Fernández-Armesto wrote, in then trying to portray the British Empire as a vast positive development, Ferguson ignores the reality that Britain “deindustrialized” an India that was more advanced than Britain was when the British arrived there, and often created “massacres by famine” as a strategy. Wondering what agenda lies behind Ferguson’s propaganda, he quoted from the philosopher-historian George Santayana: “One Englishman, an idiot; two Englishmen, a sporting event; three Englishmen, an empire.” Concluding, Fernández-Armesto writes: “Are they really finished as potential empire-builders? Previous form suggests their imperialism is visceral. One shudders to imagine what they may do next.”

Ferguson’s book, and his television series, have been the subject of extensive controversy in the U.K. During the week of Jan. 5, the *Guardian* and *Independent* ran commentaries blasting him for his fantasy-ridden, “feel-good” depiction of the British Empire, and for ignoring the Empire reality, as seen by its victims.