

Worst China-Bashers Are Universal Fascists

by Michael Billington

The two China-bashing reports released in July, by the Pentagon and the Congressionally appointed U.S.-China Security Review Commission, were not intended to be factual appraisals or serious strategic studies of U.S.-China military relations. Rather, the faction within the defense-security institutions which is promoting a “Clash of Civilizations,” a military showdown pitting the West against Islam and the Confucian world (see accompanying article), prepared the Pentagon report with the clear intention of reversing years of U.S. engagement with China.

This “utopian” faction is called the “Wolfowitz cabal,” after Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. It was Wolfowitz who signed the new Pentagon report, which portrays China as hell-bent for war over Taiwan.

The Congressional report accuses China of providing technology and components for weapons of mass destruction to terrorist nations across the globe—an open invitation to unilateral U.S. action against China, economic and military.

These dangerous views are fiercely opposed by most other nations, and they are not without opposition within leading circles in the United States. A brief review of the nest of would-be imperialists who prepared the Congressional report shows the reasons for that opposition.

Fascists Speaking for the U.S. Congress

One of the two commissioners whose signatures are on the final Congressional report was the self-professed “universal fascist,” Michael A. Ledeen, now at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). Ledeen, like the other utopians on the Commission, had already weighed in with his “objective view” regarding China in numerous earlier publications. On Feb. 22, Ledeen wrote an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, “From Communism to Fascism,” which labeled China “a maturing fascist regime.” The so-called “evidence” he provides for this characterization: “China feels betrayed and humiliated, and seeks to avenge historic wounds. China even toys with some of the more bizarre notions of the earlier fascisms, like the program to make the country self-sufficient in wheat production—the same quest for ‘autarky’ that obsessed both Hitler and Mussolini”!

Ironically, “universal fascist” Ledeen—who believes that fascism can be a “stable, durable” form of state—used the label simply to back his claim that China is preparing for war: “Classical fascism was the product of war, and its leaders

praised military virtues and embarked upon military expansion. Chinese leaders often proclaim a peaceful intent, yet they are clearly preparing for war, and have been for many years.”

If this madness were not enough, Ledeen and his fellow commissioner Stephen Bryen, currently with the U.S.-Israel Business Council, co-authored a paper in 1997 which described China as the world’s greatest threat to peace. Again, their evidence is laughable, except that these men are taken seriously in some circles: “China has the world’s largest population, and can therefore put into the field the largest army”; and, secondly, it is “the last major Communist dictatorship.” Ledeen and Bryen called China the leading supplier of advanced weapons to “rogue nations,” and called for halting virtually all technology sales to China, naming computers and machine tools as examples of “dual-use technologies.”

Bryen, in a separate paper presented to the House International Relations Committee on July 11, 2001, declared that the primary policy issue facing the United States was “how to deal with an emerging superpower that, at least in its military doctrine, aims at driving the U.S. away from dominating the Pacific rimland.” The “rimland,” he added in a footnote, was a concept defined by Nicholas Spykman, a geopolitical follower of Adm. Alfred Mahan and Sir Halford Mackinder, which made the Eurasian “rimland” a kind of parallel to Mackinder’s Eurasian “heartland” thesis adopted by Adolf Hitler, and so admired by British imperialists. Spykman’s doctrine was a geopolitical sea-based version for Asia, of Mackinder’s land-based policy for Europe.

A ‘Likud’ Package

Bryen was the subject of a Federal investigation into allegations that, while working for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1978, he passed military secrets regarding military installations in Saudi Arabia to his friends in Israeli intelligence. A book by Machael Saba, *The Armageddon Network*, details that early episode in the now-infamous Israeli spy networks in the United States. In the 1980s, he worked with Richard Perle at the Pentagon, where they led a campaign to end technology transfers to Third World nations under the guise of “dual-use technology” concerns. Perle, now chairman of the Defense Policy Board, is the most rabid of the “Wolfowitz cabal,” demanding unilateral warfare against various supposed enemies in frequent press opportunities.

Another commissioner is Arthur Waldren, Director of Asian Studies at AEI, a center for radical free-enterprise fundamentalism. Echoing Ledeen and Bryen by describing China as an “outlaw” nation, and “almost by definition a potential threat to her neighbors and to the U.S.,” Waldren also promotes the line that China’s progress over the past decade is a “façade.” In a March 21 op-ed in the *Washington Post*, Waldren claimed that “Chinese officialdom has put one over on Western observerdom,” and that China’s economy has actually been in decline. Intoned Waldren, “The only way China

can possibly create enough jobs for its immense population is by adopting a free-market entrepreneurial economic system.” Like the bankrupt United States, or Argentina, perhaps?

Yet another ideological China-hater was added to this “Congressional review” of U.S.-China relations: Larry M. Wortzel, Director of Asian Studies at the Heritage Foundation—which, like AEI, promotes radical free-market fundamentalism. Wortzel’s most recent publication on China, an April 17, 2001 piece called “How To Respond to China’s Coercive Behavior,” calls for cutting off normal trade relations while building up Taiwan’s military capacities and expanding U.S. presence in the region.

One Commissioner Saw the Obvious

Such a team was clearly not appointed to provide a truthful, or useful, appraisal. This was obvious to Commissioner William A. Reinsch, the sole dissenter. Reinsch, the former Clinton Administration Undersecretary of Commerce, wrote a dissenting opinion, saying that the report “fails to present a fair and objective analysis of the U.S.-China security relationship, . . . adds to the level of paranoia about China in this country, and contains recommendations that could make that paranoia a self-fulfilling prophecy.” He ridicules efforts to blame the decaying U.S. economy on China, and adds: “It is ironic that the Report implicitly criticizes the Chinese for viewing the U.S. as a hegemon, at the same time it presents a view of U.S. interests in Asia that can only be described as hegemonic.”

Reinsch alludes to opposition from others on the Commission to the extremist intent of the primary authors, such that “the final version of the Report is an improvement over earlier drafts.” Clearly, however, the rest of the Commission chose to “go along to get along,” resulting in the final abomination.

Such ravings must not be confused with “analysis.” Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other ranking military officers, have voiced their opposition to this faction’s war plans against Iraq, and sources close to the U.S. Pacific Command indicate that there is similar disagreement within the uniformed military on adopting a confrontational policy toward China. The Pentagon report was ready for release in June, but opposition from within the uniformed military resulted in a delay for several weeks, much to the disgust of the right-wing press, such as Gary Schmitt at *The Weekly Standard*, who complained that such opponents are afraid of “pushing our advantage” as the only superpower.

As an indication of the factional disputes within the administration, just days after the reports were released, the *Washington Post* reported that the administration was considering “expanded educational exchanges for military officers and resumption of a regular high-level dialogue with China begun in the 1990s.”

The President and Congress would be wise to relegate both reports to dusty back shelves, and return to engagement with China.