

who considered it humiliating to salute the Indian Prime Minister, failed to show up at the India-Pakistan border town of Wagah, where the Pakistani Prime Minister welcomed his Indian counterpart.

The brief interlude of promise for Kashmir came to an end abruptly in July, when the Indian Army discovered that Pakistani soldiers and mujahideen had infiltrated in huge numbers into the Kargil sector in the north. Although the Indians drove the intruders back within a couple of months, it became evident that Islamabad controlled neither the terrorists, nor the mujahideen, nor even its own army. In October, the Pakistan Army, under the leadership of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, carried out a coup against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and came to power.

The next important intervention took place this year, when U.S. President Bill Clinton visited India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan on March 19-25. During his visit, the Kashmir issue was kept in the forefront as the militants went on a rampage, killing 45 Sikhs in a Kashmiri village. Clinton exerted pressure on Islamabad to curb the mujahideen and the *ji*had-seeking terrorists, and renewed efforts to resolve the Kashmir dispute were put into motion.

Since then, things have moved at a fast clip. First, in May, the Indian Prime Minister released from prison a number of leading Kashmiri militants belonging to the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), a local group of politicians who have supported militancy and extremism from time to time. New Delhi began to negotiate with the APHC with the objective of bringing peace to the Kashmir Valley — the center of violence and extremism.

A few days later, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, whose party is a partner in the coalition government in New Delhi, pushed a resolution in the state legislative assembly to seek more autonomy. Abdullah feared that the New Delhi-APHC talks were an attempt to undermine him politically, and that his party, the National Conference, would have to share political power in the state with the APHC.

As Prime Minister Vajpayee was smoothing Abdullah's ruffled feathers, the Hizbul Mujahideen announced the ceasefire on July 24. The extremists, who are still killing randomly in an attempt to sabotage the talks, have accused the Hizbul of getting the formulation scripted in Washington. While such sweeping accusations have limitations, it is true that Washington has leaned heavily on Islamabad to get "something" going.

What is evident now to both India and Pakistan, is that the Kashmir issue cannot be resolved militarily. Islamabad has realized, but is not in a position to act upon it decisively, that the *ji*hadis need to be curbed and that a better relationship with India would help Pakistan economically.

However, the Kashmir issue has become entangled with Afghanistan, where the civil war between religious fanatics under the Taliban flag and the non-Pushtoon alliance continues, threatening to destabilize the Central Asian situation as well. This thread still needs pulling.

London Goes Berserk against France

by Mark Burdman

Leading circles in London, and among London's co-thinkers in Washington, are in a state of apoplectic rage against France. The French have recently "broken the rules" on several fronts, including Foreign Secretary Hubert Védrine's attacks on the phony "democracy" extravaganza of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Warsaw in June, and, more recently, his insistence that the American and British bombings of Iraq be stopped, and that the sanctions policy against Iraq be eased. The French government has also distanced itself from crucial aspects of Anglo-American pro-speculation, "free-market" policies, by throwing its support behind the so-called "Tobin Tax" on international financial transactions.

As we reported last week, Lyndon LaRouche associate Jacques Cheminade, former French Presidential candidate and head of the Solidarité et Progrès organization, has stated, that the Anglo-American hostility toward France is a central factor to be taken into account, in establishing the context for suspicions, among leading circles in France, that the July 25 crash of the French Concorde supersonic jet may have been an act of sabotage and terrorism.

'Very Unhelpful to Great Britain'

Cheminade pointed, for example, to the July 19 speech by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, at the neo-conservative Hoover Institution in Palo Alto, California. In that speech, in the course of expressing her enthusiasm for the candidacy of George W. Bush for U.S. President, the old degenerate ranted against France, for its "delusions of grandeur," in allegedly trying to create a "European defense identity" that would weaken NATO. She said that France must be stopped, since it is "behind all the attempts to reduce American influence in Europe. . . . In the 21st century, the dominant power is America, the global language is English, the economic model is that of Anglo-Saxon capitalism."

This mind-set was expanded on by her guru, Lord Harris of High Cross. Harris was formerly head of the Mont Pelerin Society-linked Institute of Economic Affairs in London, and is often credited with having "created" Thatcher. During an Aug. 7 discussion, his lordship exploded against French policy in Europe, as "very unhelpful to Great Britain." He complained, that the French are "constantly talking negatively about what they call the Anglo-Saxon economies, blaming them for imposing a 'wild market economy' on the world.



Margaret Thatcher is chewing the rug over signs that France is exercising some independence from Anglo-American power.

The French prefer a corporatist-collectivist approach, and have been historically protectionist for some centuries. The French have been against us, in every stage.”

Getting more and more emotional, Lord Harris declared that “the French political ruling class is horrid. The French governing class is a disgrace!” Asked whether he agreed with former CIA director James Woolsey’s recent polemic, that the essential fight between the Anglo-Americans and the French is that the Anglo-Americans follow British “free trade” ideologue Adam Smith while the French follow the *dirigiste* ideas of the 17th century’s Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Harris exclaimed, “Woolsey is absolutely right, absolutely correct! France’s problem, is that it never had an Adam Smith, and that it is obsessed with Colbert.”

Harris raved that “a lot of the worst elements in French policy come from a Catholic authoritarian tradition. I’m a Church of England man myself. I know Europe’s problem very well, it is not only a French problem. These so-called ‘founders of Europe,’ [Italian post-World War II Prime Minister Alcide] de Gaspari and [West Germany’s Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer, they all come out of this Catholic authoritarian philosophy. They believe that the Pope is at the top, and their approach is one of imposition. Another example, is this Frenchman [Jacques] Delors, the former president of the

European Commission. He’s a typical French Catholic, who is obsessed with building up Europe as French-German-centered, in order to take on the Americans and the Far East. This is *folie de grandeur* [delusions of grandeur].”

Harris also denounced French President Charles de Gaulle as “typically French, with his *folie de grandeur*. He was an impossible man.”

Informed of Thatcher’s Palo Alto fireworks, he mumbled, emotionally, “Good old Maggie, good old Maggie.”

‘Europe of the Regions’

Cheminade also referenced a lead editorial in the July 27 *Wall Street Journal-Europe*, threatening that France would “break up,” because of the pressure of various “secessionist” movements, if the French government continued to oppose the policies of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

This line was also purveyed in an editorial in the mid-August edition of the London *Economist* magazine, a mouthpiece of the City of London. Under the title “Undoing France,” the editorial began by quoting de Gaulle: “There can be no security, no freedom, no efficiency, without the acceptance of great discipline under the guidance of a strong state, and with the enthusiastic support of a people rallied in unity.” In this way, the *Economist* stresses, “the father of the Fifth Republic identified two elements which have come to define contemporary France: a strong state, embodied by a powerful Presidency, and a unified people, living in an indivisible republic. Today, the French tend to regard these two features as emblems of their identity, and a source of the Fifth Republic’s political stability.”

But now, “astonishingly,” there are two separate proposals “on the table” in France that should change all this, the *Economist* exulted. One is a “devolution plan” for Corsica, the other, a referendum on Sept. 24 that would shorten the Presidential term from seven to five years.

With these in mind, the magazine writes that such tinkering with the Fifth Republic structure “carries risks. Already, the Corsican plan has emboldened other regionalists, including Basques and Bretons, to press their claims—and they may do so with force. Gaullists have a point when they declare that it ‘undermines national unity and the indivisibility of the republic.’

“Yet perhaps this should be welcomed. At a time when many European countries are responding to a growing popular appetite for regional self-government, in part promoted by the fashionable talk among Euro-enthusiasts of a ‘Europe of the regions,’ France stands out, as one of the last great centralized powers on the continent. Nothing in the current proposals suggests an imminent break-up of the French republic. Nor would that be desirable. But some loosening of the grip of the powerful center would be no bad thing.”

“Europe of the Regions” is a program of the British and the shards of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire oligarchy, for destroying nation-states across Europe.