

Editorial

The Empire Strikes Out

Of all of the boldfaced proponents of American empire, our favorite “Wanna-be Colonel Blimp of the Week” is a real-live Colonel and West Point graduate, to boot, Andrew Bacevich. He is the author of a recent book, simply titled *American Empire*, which argues—unconvincingly—that the United States is already an empire, that the American republican heritage is already dead, and “for policymakers to persist in pretending otherwise—to indulge in myths of American innocence or fantasies about unlocking the secrets of history—is to increase the likelihood that the answers they come up with will be wrong.”

Bacevich was, more recently, the author of a *Washington Post* Sunday opinion piece, April 20, which was part of a larger feature series of articles on the theme of “The Perils of Empire.” Bacevich sees no perils, save for the failure of American leaders to give their undivided attention to the realization of a new global *Pax Americana*. His own recipes for global conquest match sufficiently with the recent rantings of Donald Rumsfeld, his “future wars” guru Newt Gingrich, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Michael Ledeen and the entire neo-conservative gang in and around the Bush Administration, that his over-the-top frankness about the immediate goals of this “chicken-hawk cabal” deserves careful note—if for no other reason than it barefacedly exposes the lunacy of the entire imperial project.

The fact that the self-professed “futurist” Newt Gingrich is being promoted by Cheney and Rumsfeld (according to well-informed Washington sources) as the next Bush Administration Secretary of State, to replace Colin Powell before year’s end, is also not irrelevant to the issue of why Bacevich’s Blimpian fantasies need to be taken on.

What does the good Colonel propose? In his *Washington Post* op-ed, Bacevich concretely urged: 1) The United States must scrap NATO. The Soviet Union is gone, and Europe can sink or swim on its own military budget; 2) Pull the American troops out of South Korea as soon as the tensions with Pyongyang subside, so that all of America’s military might can be

targeted, for the foreseeable future, against the Islamic world—the center of global conflict; 3) “Transform” the American military into a truly imperial instrument, pursuing three missions, “to dominate, to punish and to police;” 4) Overhaul America’s diplomatic corps to assume the mantle of imperial proconsuls, combining the military and civilian overseas presence into one “mil-civ” function—what he calls a truly “imperial civil service.”

For patriotic American military officers—active duty and retired—Bacevich’s plans for “military transformation” to dominate, punish and police, need to be particularly torn to shreds. The Air Force is designated as the “dominatrix” of the services, using the new generation of “smart weapons” to kill from 50,000 feet. The Air Force and the Navy will also draw the responsibility to punish—also through long-distance aerial and shipborne missile bombardments. To the Army belongs the moral equivalent of KP duty: police the imperial domain. “But,” Bacevich lamented in his *Post* imperial recipe-book, “the Army has thus far refused to embrace this essentially constabulary role and resists the cultural, doctrinal and organizational changes that it demands.”

To say that this is madness is the supreme understatement. Not only is the United States in no shape—militarily, culturally, economically, or financially—to undertake this Napoleonic wet-dream. The very idea of American empire is an abomination, that flies in the face of everything that the United States once clearly stood for as a “beacon of liberty,” the “city on the hill” holding out the prospect for true national sovereignty and progress to peoples of every continent, race, religion, culture.

Lyndon LaRouche has devoted his every waking hour, for the past six decades, to reviving this true American republican heritage, and to waging war against those who would seek to bury that living tradition forever. It is high-time that others join more forcefully in this effort. Every time an Andrew Bacevich or a Newt Gingrich uncorks with an imperial rant, it is a moment of opportunity that cannot be missed.