

Here is the back story to *Nationalism*, letter to Los Angeles Times, July 4, 1988. (Following)

In my worker-ant capacity in the movement opposing President Reagan's war against the peasants of Nicaragua, I had come across the "Kennan Statement," written in 1948 by the big-time State Department official George Kennan. To critics of U.S. foreign policy, it was proof positive that America's real goals vis-a-vis the Third World were strictly imperialist. The letter makes clear why this was, and has continued to be in the decades since, the most plausible explanation for U.S. global behavior.

I had by mid-1988 achieved some success in getting my letters into both the Los Angeles Times and the Los Angeles Daily News. Thus, in response to an opinion by one or another of these papers' normal stable of op-ed contributors, I naturally submitted this material on Kennan. I do not remember my first of at least three unsuccessful efforts to get this information into the Los Angeles Times, but it had to be earlier than October 9, 1987, when my letter about Kennan—*Policy of Cynicism*—was printed in the Los Angeles Daily News. (Through a chance spring 1988 meeting with a Los Angeles Herald Examiner editor, I also got a letter on Kennan printed in the Examiner: **Buchanan's foes and friends offer comments**, May 20, 1988.)

I was puzzled as to why the letters editor, whom I had spoken to several times on other matters, did not print them. I was deeply appreciative that she printed so many of my letters, but I was also in a bad mood, and I confess to becoming rather snippy with her as our conversations progressed and I became more frustrated. I suggested to her that it seemed as if she was following her superior editors' instructions, either tacit or explicit, to protect Kennan's image. She did not like that, of course, nor was it smart of me to bite her hand when she had been so generous.

Nevertheless, I was not about to give up, and when *Nationalism, Not Communism, Is Today's Threat*, by John Lukacs appeared on June 22, 1988, I wrote the letter shown below. This time, though, I sent it to someone else at the Times with a request for assistance in overcoming the letters editor's apparent reluctance to disparage Kennan.

Somehow it worked; the regular letters editor was off on the day the letter below was considered for print, and the substitute editor printed it. I naturally called, and thanked everyone for their assistance in helping me get this important piece of foreign policy history to the masses.

This was a big deal; I'm pretty sure that these three letters about a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy were the first ever to appear in any major newspapers. The Los Angeles Times was the coup, of course.

For the full statement by Kennan, go to <http://www.williamgbecker.com/quotes.php#K>

My relationship with the regular letters editor deteriorated further, for which I was to blame. I was very angry in those days, and insufferable in many ways. If she ever chances to read this note—my apologies. I'm still angry, and about many of the same things.

Los Angeles Times

Monday, July 4, 1988 / Part II

Nationalism

Third World citizens will react with special bitterness to the news that Moscow's June, 1948, break with the Yugoslav Communist leader Marshal Tito signaled "the end of the mirage of international communism." ("Nationalism, Not Communism, Is Today's Threat" by John Lukacs, Op-Ed Page, June 22)

Lukacs is correct, but Iranians who supported Mossadegh, Guatemalans who supported Arbenz, and Chileans who supported Allende will remember that it was just this "mirage" by which U.S. administrations justified the violent overthrow of their nationalist, and democratically elected, leaders.

These were not the only countries where the United States replaced popular nationalist governments with brutal dictatorships. And, there is evidence that Washington acted less from a mistaken "obsession with international communism" than from a profoundly ignoble purpose.

In February, 1948, four months before the Cominform-Tito split, State Department "wise man" George Kennan wrote in a top secret foreign-policy journal: ". . . we have about 50% of the world's wealth, but only 6.3% of its population." Kennan outlined a strategy: "Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity"

To that end, "We should cease to talk about vague and . . . unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when . . . the less we are hampered by ideological slogans, the better."

This exercise in *realpolitik* has led to the deaths of millions of Third World people through war, terror, and economic impoverishment. The virulent, and increasingly violent anti-Americanism we see around the globe is also a predictable result of this policy.

Sadly, Lukacs tarnishes his analysis by saying that the "various nationalisms of the Third World" are now the real "threats" to our national security and interests. And, does his Soviets-are-also-possible-victims theory hint at a future U.S.-U.S.S.R. defense pact against the Third World?

Third World nationalism is the appropriate foundation for national self-respect and non-exploitative economic development. We can help by accepting Lukacs' analysis and rejecting his implied conclusion.

~~6-27-68~~
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