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The Rockford Institute

A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Website: www.chroniclesmagazine.org
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5813.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

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Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture
(ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for \$39.00
(foreign subscriptions add \$12 for surface delivery,
\$48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute,
928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061.
Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL
and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the
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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 27, No. 1 January 2003
Printed in the United States of America

On Internment

Roger McGrath's article "American MAGIC and Japanese-American Spies" (*Sins of Omission*, October 2002) deserves a reply.

I am not ignorant of the MAGIC intercepts, but I insist that the United States was wrong to put the Nisei into concentration camps. California Japanese born in Japan did become enemy aliens on December 7, 1941, subject to internment. But their children, born in the United States, were U.S. citizens. Placing them in concentration camps was a terrible violation of the Constitution.

Although a few Nisei were traitors, most were utterly loyal to the country their parents had adopted, as demonstrated by their performance in the U.S. Army in Italy during World War II.

Why weren't Nisei in Hawaii jailed? Was the danger of attack greater in California or in Hawaii? Did Hawaii law forbid Orientals to own property? No. But California law did. Franklin D. Roosevelt was a politician who did whatever it took to get votes, pandering to the racism of Californians at the time.

As terrible as Roosevelt's interning of thousands of U.S. citizens was, that crime pales in comparison to what he did to the American spirit. FDR taught Americans to look to the federal government to solve their problems. The reparations program is only a small part of his legacy.

—Jim Ware
Baton Rouge, LA

Before December 7, 1941, the United States was not at war with Japan, so sending any information back to Japan was neither a crime nor evidence of disloyalty. Nor, by the way, were Saturday Japanese schools or Shinto priests. My immigrant ancestors always talked fondly of their German heritage, read German-language newspapers, and ate German food. If that was all the excuse the government needed, they could have locked up my whole family, because we continued to behave that way through the war and into the 1950's.

Dr. McGrath makes it clear that the number of Japanese informants was relatively small compared to the much larger number of Japanese-Americans interned.

Even the U.S. government would concede that most of the people interned were innocent.

Even if there was some justification for interning all of these Japanese-Americans, what was the justification for stealing their property—which amounted to much more than \$20,000 per person 40-some years later?

How did anyone know then, and how do we know now, that the MAGIC intercepts were true and that this reported information was of the slightest value to anyone in Japan? If Japanese intelligence had been all that effective, Hirohito would have waited a week and nailed the aircraft carriers that arrived right after the attack on Pearl Harbor. But, then, if our code-breaking intelligence was that good, how come we didn't have a clue that this huge Japanese fleet was sailing across the Pacific and parking 200 miles from Honolulu?

Even if the government was worried about a Japanese attack on the West Coast, the Battle of Midway (May 1942) ended that threat. Midway, by the way, is about 1,300 miles west-northwest of Hawaii—not exactly on San Francisco's doorstep. And that battle was also not a very good example of anyone's intelligence-gathering abilities. Neither commander seemed to know the whereabouts of the other guy's fleet. We got lucky. They didn't. Has anyone claimed that the reason we won was because we locked up 100,000 Japanese-American civilians?

Anyone who reads history is familiar with the government excuse that "We're taking this illegal and unpleasant action because we have information and knowledge that you don't, and we aren't sharing it. Trust us." Why should I? It is not as if the government has had a great track record in that regard.

—David R. Kluge
Sheridan, OR

Dr. McGrath Replies:

It is a great irony that I find myself defending President Franklin D. Roosevelt. My instincts are with Jim Ware and David R. Kluge. I fear the power of big government, which tends to become oppressive, even tyrannical. No president since Lin-

coln set us more on that path than FDR. Both excused their actions by citing national security and the exigencies of war. However, with respect to the resident Japanese, I don't know what other course FDR could have taken. The MAGIC decrypts revealed that hundreds of Japanese, both citizens and resident aliens, in California, Oregon, and Washington were acting as spies for the emperor. If Roosevelt had directed the FBI to target the individual spies, the Japanese would have known that we had broken their code. Faced with a similar decision, Churchill allowed the people of Coventry to suffer a Luftwaffe attack without warning.

The only Japanese who were "interned" were those who declared their loyalty to the emperor. They numbered nearly 17,000. A stunning one third of them were American citizens who had formally renounced their U.S. citizenship. At one point, it was thought that the internees might be exchanged for American prisoners held by the Japanese. The other resident Japanese were subject to an evacuation order that required them to relocate outside of the Western Defense Zone, an area that included California, the western halves of Oregon and Washington, and a small portion of Arizona. Those who were not able to move to another part of the United States were ordered to assembly centers, from which they were eventually taken to "relocation" camps. German and Italian aliens on the Pacific Coast were also subject to the evacuation order but, because of their small numbers, were simply told to relocate outside the Defense Zone within six weeks or face internment. Those suspected of enemy activities were interned. This included their minor children who were American citizens.

Most Americans today do not seem to understand that any Japanese, including aliens, could leave a relocation camp if they could reestablish themselves outside of the Defense Zone. Some 35,000 Japanese did so during the war. Those who relocated on their own by the end of March 1942 were not required to spend any time in the camps. The parents of Tokyo Rose, both Japanese aliens, were living in Los Angeles at the time of Pearl Harbor. They moved to Chicago and opened the Toguri market, which they operated throughout the war. More than 4,300 Japanese left the relocation camps to go to college at government expense, and thousands of others left the camps to work on farms. Meanwhile, in the relocation camps, the

death rate was lower and the birth rate higher than those for the American population as a whole. So was the graduation rate from high school. To use "concentration camps" to describe such places makes a mockery of Auschwitz and Treblinka. At the time, the Japanese-American Citizens' League praised the government for providing the relocation camps. Moreover, to call the evacuation and relocation "unconstitutional" is contrary to several Supreme Court decisions, which have never been reversed.

It is also popular to point out that the Japanese in Hawaii were not evacuated or relocated. Such a course of action was unnecessary because martial law was declared in Hawaii, and the Army ruled the territory with a military fist, something that is always left unmentioned.

The 1988 Civil Liberties Act that granted each Japanese relocated or interned \$20,000 was not compensation for "stealing their property" but a product of political grandstanding and pandering. It had nothing to do with property losses, which were settled long before, under the American-Japanese Claims Act of 1948. The U.S. government confiscated no property. Japanese claims were the result of being forced to move before they could harvest their crops, or before they were able to liquidate merchandise in their markets, or other such losses.

Contra Mr. Kluge, Midway was a brilliant example of intelligence gathering. Cmdr. Joseph J. Rochefort of the Navy's Combat Intelligence Unit at Pearl Harbor partially decrypted JN-25 and discovered that the Imperial Combined Fleet was preparing for a massive attack on "AF." The meaning of AF was a mystery: the Aleutians? Hawaii? the West Coast? In a clever ploy, he had false messages transmitted that the Japanese intercepted and repeated in code, which, in turn, revealed that AF was Midway.

The question of resident Japanese loyalty is difficult to assess. Those Japanese-Americans who served in the 100th Battalion and later in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team fought with distinction, and often with heroism, although their exploits have been embellished and exaggerated. However, the real question is not what an elite volunteer unit did in Italy but what the great bulk of the resident Japanese would have done had the Japanese waded ashore at Santa Monica and occupied California. In Korea, China, Manchuria, the Malay Archipelago, and the Philippines, the resident Japan-

ese aided and abetted the Japanese invaders.

If I were a loyal American of Japanese descent, I certainly would not have been happy with the evacuation order. However, as a wartime sacrifice, it does not seem to have been the greatest suffered. Just ask those Marines who clawed their way through the Pacific, beginning with the muck, stench, death, and horror that was Guadalcanal, "not a name but an emotion."

On the Lusitania

In "George W. Bush: Wilsonian Liberal" (*Views*, October 2002), Mark Royden Winchell writes: "As despicable as the attack [on the *Lusitania*] may have been, [she] was carrying British munitions."

Robert Ballard, the undersea explorer who explored the *Titanic* and the *Bismark*, also extensively explored the *Lusitania* in August 1993 and wrote of his findings in his book, *Exploring the Lusitania*. Ballard says that, if any contraband had been stowed onboard, it did not explode. And if contraband had been onboard but didn't explode, he would surely have found some trace of it—and he does not mention finding any.

—Harvey Miller
Springlake, TX

Dr. Winchell Replies:

I was not aware of Ballard's discoveries, and neither were my sources, which were published before Ballard's explorations. Perhaps more to the point, however, is that the polemicists who waved the bloody shirt after the sinking of the *Lusitania* were unaware that the ship had no munitions aboard. The British liner made itself a provocative target in time of war and sought to use civilians as a shield from German attack. In my mind, there is no question that the sinking of the *Lusitania* was a despicable overreaction on the part of a trigger-happy submarine commander. My larger point, however, remains intact: The saber-rattlers in America got far more mileage out of this deplorable situation than the facts would warrant.



Little White Lies

“From the mountains of Afghanistan to the valleys of Bosnia to the plains of Africa to the forests of Asia and around the world we are on the ground working with our Muslim partners to expand the circle of peace, the circle of prosperity, the circle of freedom.”

In delivering these ringing phrases, Secretary of State Colin Powell was not, apparently, alluding to the fact that, in both Africa and Asia, Muslims, many of them funded by “pro-Western” governments and oil sheiks, are engaged in a campaign to exterminate Christians. He failed to mention the continuing genocide in the Sudan and Nigeria, where young Muslim men shouting “*Allahu Akbar*” and “Down with beauty!” slaughtered a thousand Christians when a newspaper suggested (quite correctly) that Muhammad might have enjoyed the Miss World contest.

The partnership Secretary Powell envisions presumably does not include the Islamic terrorists of Indonesia, but he does have the poor taste to bring up Bosnia, where the United States supported an Islamic militant who wanted to impose *sharia* on a Christian majority. One of our Muslim partners in Bosnia and Kosovo was none other than Osama bin Laden.

Not content with repeating the palpable absurdities that are the staple of the multiculturalist left, Secretary Powell went on to describe plans to bring more Muslims into the United States and to exorcise those who sing “the siren song of the bigots, extremists who cloak themselves in false spirituality in an attempt to divide and to weaken us.” Here’s a howdy-do: A senior American statesman, in addressing Muslims, presumes to lay down the spiritual law to a prominent American religious and political figure. Of course, if Powell wants to talk about “bigots and extremists,” he might have said something about Muslims who claim religious support for their terrorism against Christians, and he might have begun by naming the man who introduced this belief into Islamic thought: Muhammad himself.

Pat Robertson, on this issue at least, is completely correct. He knows that Islam

(despite the existence of millions of “bad” Muslims who, in order to live in peace with their non-Muslim neighbors, have rejected some of the fundamental tenets of their faith) is a religion of war, not peace, and that any country with a sizable population of even bad Muslims contains a ticking time bomb, ready to go off in hard times when confused people begin searching for their spiritual roots. When Christians return to their roots, they find the Prince of Peace. When Muslims rediscover theirs, they find Muhammad the terrorist.

We all know that the Bush administration is caught between a rock and a hard place. The United States may soon be going to war against a country full of Muslims (Iraq), and the administration has to balance our government’s unwavering support for Israel with a desire to placate the oil-rich sheikdoms we pretend to believe are “moderate.” But there is nothing moderate, from the Christian point of view, about Saudi Arabia, which forbids Christian symbols and preaching the Gospel and funds anti-Christian Islamic movements around the globe. Saudi Arabia spawned Osama bin Laden—and the Saudi millionaires who continue, according to reports, to support him.

Since September 11, 2001, Americans have been lying in their beds with the covers pulled over their heads. They have allowed themselves to be persuaded that peace and order have been restored to Afghanistan; they have accepted the Bush administration’s argument that we can attack Iraq without provoking more acts of terrorism against the United States; they have tried their hardest to believe the President’s characterization of Islam as a “religion of peace” and have sat stolidly through news reports without ever suspecting that there was some connection between the Chechen hostage crisis in Moscow, the terrorist attack in Bali, and the terror spree of John Allen Muhammad in the Washington, D.C., area; and they have even thought Osama bin Laden was dead, though there was no evidence for his death except for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld’s wishful thinking that the invasion of Afghanistan had accomplished something.

Well, Osama is back, tearing off the covers and forcing us to stare the bogeyman in the face. Gangsters, terrorists, and warlords (many of them former Taliban leaders) are tearing Afghanistan apart and making people sigh for the good old days when the Taliban kept some semblance of order. “As you kill,” the prince of terrorists declared, “you will be killed.” The Bush administration, in focusing on the threat posed by Iraq, has forgotten that the original target in the “War on Terrorism” was the worldwide network of terrorists.

If the administration someday backs up its claims against Saddam Hussein, then limited strikes against Iraqi weapons factories and military installations may well be justifiable—though not necessarily a full-scale war that will cause the deaths of hundreds of thousand of civilians and destroy what little remains of the fragile Iraqi infrastructure. But no reasonable solution can be discussed, much less implemented, so long as the political classes continue to pretend that Muhammad did not found a religion of war, while incessantly repeating the mantra “Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction,” as if the United States were not the world’s greatest producer and supplier of such weapons, as if our government had not armed not only Iraq and Iran and Saudi Arabia but the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

So long as our political leaders continue to treat the American people as children, so long as they continue to misrepresent the most basic facts of the life-and-death struggle confronting America and the West, our foreign policy will be confused and dangerous, and our control of our own borders and destiny will become more tenuous with every passing day.

Telling fairy tales about our partnership with Muslims may seem, to State Department staffers and gofers, like a brilliant move. When the time comes to ask the American people to defend their borders and their interests from the global *jihad* that may be unleashed by an invasion of Iraq, however, these lies will inevitably come back to haunt them. ◊

