

But how can a people's achievements be unaffected by their oppression? One of the many reasons to be against oppression is that it keeps people from achieving all that they could have achieved if they had been treated more decently. To proclaim oppression and still expect to find the oppressed equally represented among those with historic achievements and contributions is almost a contradiction in terms.

The past is many things, but one thing it is, is irrevocable. A past to your liking is not an entitlement.

•Don't we need multiculturalism to get people to understand each other and get along with each other?

Since this is an empirical question, you would expect people to seek an empirical answer, yet most of those who talk this way seem content to treat the matter as axiomatic. But is there any evidence that colleges that have gone whole hog into multiculturalism have better relations among the various groups on campus? Or is it precisely on such campuses that separatism and hostility are worse than on campuses that have not gone in for the multicultural craze?

You want to see multiculturalism in action? Look at Yugoslavia, at Lebanon, at Sri Lanka, at Northern Ireland, at Azerbaijan, or wherever else group "identity" has been hyped. There is no point in the multiculturalists' saying that this is not what they have in mind. You might as well open the floodgates and then say that you don't mean for people to drown. Once you have opened the floodgates, you can't tell the water where to go.

•How are we to be part of the global economy, or engage in all sorts of other international activities, without being multicultural?

Ask the Japanese. They are one of the most insular and self-complacent peoples on Earth today. Yet they dominate international markets, international finance, international scientific and technological advances, and send armies of tourists around the world. This is not a defense of insularity or of the Japanese. It is simply a plain statement of fact that contradicts one of the many lofty and arbitrary dogmas of multiculturalism. □

PRESSWATCH



Licked by Leaks

by Terry Eastland

Is the Clinton era fun, or what? I start with leaks, three big ones in particular. The first occurred six days before Bill Clinton took the oath. This was the leak to the *New York Times* of Zoë Baird's hiring of two illegal aliens and her failure to pay their Social Security taxes as required by law until just before her nomination. Reported by David Johnston, the story about the Connecticut lawyer came to him via anonymous sources he described as "government and Clinton transition officials."

The government officials had to have been from the FBI. On January 14, the agents were still working on the routine background investigation and thus had yet to send their report to Sen. Joseph

Terry Eastland is a resident fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.



Biden, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, through which any attorney general nominee must initially pass. Baird had told Biden of her nanny illegalities, but Biden could not have known the level of detail reflected in Johnston's story: it had to have come from someone who had seen the relevant documents—which only the FBI had. Besides, if Biden or his staff or someone else on the Hill had been among Johnston's sources, the reporter would have mentioned "congressional" sources. Coincidentally, while writing a piece on Baird for the *Wall Street Journal*, I had heard that the bureau had come across disturbing information. No one knew what it was, and the bureau wasn't talking—except to Johnston.

The FBI, which reports to the attorney general, would have had two reasons to leak. First, bureau officials didn't want as their ultimate supervisor someone who had cut corners with the law. The rank-and-file had had its fill of that: the week of the leak also saw FBI Director William Sessions publicly reprimanded for ethics violations by outgoing Attorney General William Barr. Second, the bureau didn't want later to be accused of not investigating the nominee fully. It had been embarrassed on this score in 1987, when it had been the press that caught wind of Supreme Court nominee Douglas Ginsburg's long-ago pot smoking. Getting a story like Baird's into print makes it a kind of public property, and therefore everyone's—not just the bureau's—responsibility.

There remains the question of why "Clinton transition officials" were also among Johnston's sources. Leaks can

be from people friendly as well as hostile to the leak subject, and the *Times* story itself, as well as my own reporting, persuades me that the Clinton transition officials who talked to Johnston were trying to help Zoë Baird in an ultimately ill-fated effort at damage control. These officials were probably acting on Biden's suggestion that Baird's nanny problem be made public prior to the confirmation hearings. Little did they know that the FBI had its own agenda.

The second major leak occurred on Sunday, January 24, just four days after Clinton became president. An hour before Defense Secretary Les Aspin was to be interviewed on CBS's "Face the Nation," the network was handed a copy of a draft memo, dated January 18 and apparently intended to prepare Clinton for his meeting the next day with the Joint Chiefs in which he would discuss his goal of lifting the ban on open homosexuality in the military. As described by the *Washington Post* on January 25, Aspin in the memo quoted Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell to the effect that the White House could count on only thirty Senate votes for lifting the ban; Aspin's concern was preventing "Congress from overturning a new policy" put in place early on by an executive order. Aspin told Clinton that he should view his meeting with the Joint Chiefs not as a negotiation but "the first step in the consultation that you have promised." He advised Clinton not to issue the executive order immediately but instead to "take the necessary administrative steps" to stop homosexuals from being discharged and to prohibit recruits from being asked about their sexual orientation. Following a review of the issue that Aspin would conduct, and following politically necessary meetings with members of Congress, especially Sen. Sam Nunn, Clinton could eventually issue an executive order.

Predictably, the administration's strategy for changing the policy on gays dominated the questioning of Aspin on "Face the Nation." Iraq and Bosnia took a back seat. This, no doubt, is what the leaker hoped to achieve on the eve of the president's meeting with the Joint Chiefs. Was the leaker a friend or a foe

of Aspin's? I'd have to say a foe—but which kind?

A gay rights advocate who disagreed with Aspin's incrementalist approach could have done the deed, hoping to embarrass Clinton into acting as he had originally intended by issuing an executive order early in his presidency. Such a leaker could have been inside or outside the administration, and if in the administration probably working in the White House or Pentagon. The more likely foe, however, was someone (undoubtedly at the Pentagon) who is absolutely opposed to any change in the gay ban, someone who figured that the more publicity the issue received, the more political difficulty Clinton would encounter. Political difficulty, of course, was exactly what befell Clinton over the next few days. Gays in the military dominated page-ones and news broadcasts and talk shows. And by Friday the president had indeed pulled back, in a compromise with Senator Nunn that postponed any executive order for at least six months.

If my reading is correct—if the Aspin memo was leaked by Pentagon opponents of Clinton's effort to lift the ban on gays—it is only one more indication that the new president is regarded by the military as weak and manipulable. Suffice it to say that it is not a happy thing for a president to have institutions like the FBI and the Pentagon trafficking in leaks so early in his tenure.

Now to the third leak—the odd "trial balloon" of Kimba Wood's pending nomination as attorney general, floated by White House aides on February 4. As the *New York Times* described the effort in its February 5 story, "The White House seemed to be putting out Judge Wood's name to test public reaction and insure that no damaging disclosures surfaced before officially nominating her."

As it happened, such speculation was premature. Wood's candidacy was finished late Thursday evening, not because of adverse public reaction (it was too early for that) or the surfacing of any damaging disclosures (there were none), but because of Clinton's own decision that she was not to be his nominee after all.

Evidently, the White House did not learn of the Wood nanny's erstwhile

illegal status until February 4—the same day it sent up its trial balloon. White House advisers decided almost immediately that nominating Wood would create, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it, "a serious perception problem." According to news reports, when Clinton was informed that the nomination could be the subject of discussion on "The Rush Limbaugh Show," he decided right then and there to ditch Kimba Wood. Clinton denied that fear of the Mighty Rush affected his decision, and Limbaugh himself disputed that he and his listeners were so benighted they could not distinguish between Baird and Wood.

The White House then put out the story that what made Clinton change his mind was that Wood had not disclosed the key details earlier. As one account put it, Wood had been narrowly "legalistic" in what she had told the White House. As Maureen Dowd suggested in the *New York Times*, it was rather ironic that Wood was shown the door for practicing what Clinton specializes in.

In any event, observe here that White House officials, having put up a trial balloon, were now busy shooting it down. Not only was Wood not sufficiently forthcoming, according to the anonymous sources, she had also (it was leaked) "trained" to work at a Playboy Club while a student in London twenty-eight years ago; this was not only an incredible cheap shot but an irrelevance that would have been seen as such by the Judiciary Committee and the public. But it does show that Clinton's people like to do damage when practicing damage control, even if to a woman whose sex they otherwise have nothing but the highest respect for.

“What happened to the liberal media that supposedly gave Bill Clinton every break during the campaign?” This is how the *Washington Post*'s Howard Kurtz framed a January 31 story on Clinton and a press that was now turning him into a punching bag. During the campaign, the press gave Clinton numerous breaks; among the news-magazine set, there were conspicuous Clinton cheerleaders (led by *Newsweek*'s Joe Klein), while poor Bush had none to speak of. But the real

problem was less that the press was pro-Clinton than that it was so relentlessly anti-Bush. (Especially on the economy—where is the big series exposing the lousy campaign coverage of economic issues?) What's happened since Clinton's election is that the press no longer has George Bush to kick around. With Clinton the only show in town, the press has been free to resume at least some of its adversarial practices.

There are more immediate explanations for the spate of negative stories Clinton received in January and February. One is that he made more than the usual number of specific campaign promises, and by January 20 he had broken many of them. In his broken promises (not to mention in his selection of an attorney general and in his effort to lift the ban on gays in the military), Clinton was a walking negative story. Mark it down: The press loves to report what is maybe the easiest story in the world to write—the flip-flop, the reversal, the contradiction. Thus, for example, on February 4, NBC's Andrea Mitchell paired some campaign footage in which Clinton declared that "everyone ought to be able to go to college" and that "money should not be an object" with tape that day of George Stephanopoulos in effect saying that money might be an object after all.

Also coloring some of the early negative coverage were the White House decision to bar reporters from the inner sanctum of the press office and the administration's slowness to return phone calls. Virtually unlimited access and quick response are two things prized especially by daily reporters. Compounding the negative spin was the sense that the new folks in the White House are incompetent. As NBC's Lisa Myers put it on the third day of the new presidency: "From up close, the Clinton White House has looked like the Not-Ready-for-Prime-Time Players."

"Read the Fine Print to Know if a Promise Really Counts," was the headline atop Michael Kelly's excellent *New York Times* story of January 26. It reported how Clinton didn't say during the campaign that he would not raise taxes on the middle class—he said he would not raise

taxes on the middle class "to pay for my programs." During the campaign no one paid much attention to those five qualifying words, which Kelly called a "legalistic construct" or "loophole" through which Clinton was trying to wriggle in order to claim he was not breaking a promise. With this president, Kelly advised, "it is always wise to read the fine print."

If Clinton stays true to character, and if other reporters are as alert to the fine print as Kelly, there will be more such stories. These will upset Clinton, who will therefore continue to try to bypass the traditional press and get his message out "unfiltered" through such gimmicky devices as the Detroit town hall meeting he held February 10. It is instructive that Clinton did not hold a formal White House news conference (Bush held 140 in four years) before his first town hall; it is equally instructive that the traditional press was tough on Clinton's Detroit performance. Indeed, the *Wall Street Journal's* news account sounded like an editorial:

Mr. Clinton was disingenuous in the way he described some of his recent

troubles. He made it appear that it was his preference to delay the decision about allowing gays to serve in the military; in fact he was forced into the delay by opposition from Capitol Hill and the joint chiefs of staff. He also said that he hadn't selected Judge Kimba Wood to be his attorney general before it surfaced that she had hired an illegal alien as a nanny. In fact, Mr. Clinton had chosen Ms. Wood and was checking her background before making an announcement.

Those who participated in the town hall—and who did not ask the kind of follow-up questions the press would have—had a less skeptical view of Clinton. Look for a gap to open up between the press and the town-hall public, and look for Clinton to try to widen the gap by criticizing the press. I'm betting it's part of his communications strategy, which will feature more such efforts as the one in Detroit. Don't bet on Clinton to succeed, if only because today's much more diverse media (including Limbaugh) makes it harder for a president to dominate public opinion. □

Lessons of the Bush Defeat

Edited by Peter W. Schramm

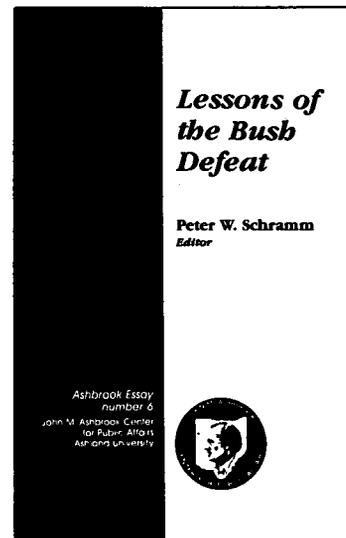
Contributors:

Fred Barnes
 Fred Baumann
 Mickey G. Craig
 Terry Eastland
 Christopher Flannery
 Lyn Nofziger
 Ken Masugi
 David K. Nichols
 Jeffrey J. Poelvoorde
 David Tucker
 F. Clifton White

Paperback, 90 pages
 Price \$3.00 + \$1.50 S+H
 ISBN 1-878802-16-X



Ashbrook Press—publishers for:
 John M. Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs
 Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio 44805
 (419) 289-5411 • FAX (419) 289-5425





In the Name of Humanity

by Cathy Young

If the Clinton administration is shaping up to look like soap opera, what genre can adequately describe the politics of post-Communist Russia? Theater of the absurd, perhaps. The end of 1992 was marked by more turmoil, as the Yegor Gaidar government crumbled and career Soviet apparatchik Viktor Chernomyrdin—whose name, for the linguistically minded, is of Ukrainian extraction and means, roughly, “black-face”—took over. Price controls on food staples were reinstated and then almost immediately rolled back. Deputies in the Supreme Soviet scuffled in front of TV cameras at the December Congress. In January, two democratic members of parliament, Lev Ponomarev and Pyotr Filipov, were roughed up by protesters from “Working Moscow” (a hard-core Communist group headed by Viktor Anpilov, in his previous life a Soviet TV correspondent in Nicaragua), who were picketing the White House. A few days later, the evening news reported that a certain deputy had used “language we cannot repeat in our program” in a speech at the Supreme Soviet. A friend from Moscow writes in disgust, “The Supreme Soviet is starting to look like a den of criminals. They fight, they swear—pretty soon they’ll start attending the sessions armed with bike chains and knives.”

Back in the States, we have the invaluable Stephen F. Cohen of Princeton University, his face fixed in a worried frown, to explain that the United States is wrong to stake its Russian policy on one man—Boris Yeltsin—to the exclusion of other democratic forces. (He was known to have a different opinion when the one

man was Mikhail Gorbachev.) Cohen points to Yeltsin’s falling popularity and urges Americans to be more respectful of the democratically elected albeit imperfect Russian parliament and its chairman (speaker) Ruslan Khasbulatov, the former Yeltsin sidekick who has emerged as a leading opponent of “free-market extremism.” In his December 1 speech to the Congress, published as a booklet under the modest title *In the Name of Humanity*, Khasbulatov—who has a Ph.D. in economics from Moscow State University and used to be the dean of the international economic relations department of the Plekhanov Economics Institute in Moscow—gives his colleagues a little lecture on economic theory and history:

The so-called neoclassical liberal model . . . is based on the complete rejection of state ownership and, accordingly, the absolutization of private ownership, which presupposes a drastic reduction of the social functions of the state. The starkest example of such a model is the economic policy of the United States of the post-Roosevelt period.

Having thus dispelled in one stroke the notion of the superiority of the Soviet educational system, Khasbulatov goes on to denounce “the attempts to Americanize our economy” and advocate a “socially oriented market economy” of the Scandinavian, Israeli, or Canadian type. So Stephen Cohen’s affection for the man is hardly a mystery.

As often happens, however, Khasbulatov’s dislike of unbridled capitalism appears far more theoretical than personal: in addition to having moved into Leonid Brezhnev’s old quarters, he is said to be extensively involved in real-

estate speculation through his cousin, a co-owner of the Style-Bank real-estate firm. The weekly *Stolitsa* also reports that the speaker may have had a hand in a bank fraud operation that cost the Russian Central Bank between 35 and 116 billion rubles. The operation, uncovered in the spring of 1992, consisted of fictitious firms getting cash from the Moscow branch of the Central Bank by using fake money orders from Chechen banks (Khasbulatov is from Checheno-Ingushetia) and dissolving before the deception could be found out. Curiously, while it usually takes weeks to cash a money order in Russia, these were cashed in a few days. The director of the Moscow branch of the Central Bank, Georgi Shor, happens to be the other co-owner of Style-Bank.

Perhaps Cohen’s sympathies might be cooled by strong evidence of far more disturbing misconduct. In an interview with *Moscow News*, Galina Starovoštova, a widely admired democratic political leader who served as Yeltsin’s adviser on ethnic affairs until she was fired last November, denounces the “masculinism” of Russian politics, and, *inter alia*, has this to say: “I understand how tough it is for female deputies to work in a parliament whose speaker constantly permits himself crude remarks that would have cost him his job in any civilized society.”

And what about Cohen’s contention that the Russian parliament (elected in 1990 under an effective one-party system) represents the Russian people? Actually, surveys show that while Yeltsin’s popularity is not what it used to be, the parliament and its leader are even less popular. In a December 13 poll of 2,257 Muscovites conducted by the All-Russian Center for Public

Cathy Young is the author of *Growing Up in Moscow* (Ticknor & Fields).