

## ***The U.S. as Global Outcast: Growing Anti-Americanism***

By Stephen Zunes

The growth of anti-Americanism is obvious not just in the Middle East and other third world conflict areas, but even within Western European countries long considered to be among America's strongest allies. This is reflected in public opinion polls as well as through anecdotal evidence by those of us who frequently travel abroad.

This trend came to the forefront of popular awareness in the United States during the highly publicized trip by President George W. Bush to Europe last month.

The three major areas of concern highlighted during President Bush's European trip were the death penalty, global warming, and nuclear missile defense.

On all three of these issues, the position of the Bush administration was not fundamentally different from that of the Clinton administration.

Bill Clinton was just as strong a proponent as Bush is of the death penalty, a form of punishment long abolished in most civilized nations. Although not formally abrogating the Kyoto Protocols like his successor, Clinton worked hard to weaken and delay its implementation, as recently as last December's meetings. Similarly, while more realistic than Bush about the technological limitations of NMD, Clinton made clear his willingness to break with the SALT I agreement and pursue NMD unilaterally, should it look at all feasible.

Why, then, was Clinton so much better respected than Bush by the Europeans? Part of it was style. Clinton at least feigned an interest in the Europeans' perspectives and gave the impression he was seeking their consultation. As with traditional liberal Democratic constituencies

back home, they felt they had access to an understanding of their perspectives even if the actual policy decisions were very different than they desired.

Bush and his team, however, have tended to come across as unilateralists who simply do not care what the Europeans think, reinforcing the stereotype of arrogant and self-righteous Americans. The problem goes deeper, however, and goes back at least to the days of the Reagan administration, which defied the International Court of Justice and basic principles of international law through its attacks against Nicaragua. The invasion of Grenada in 1983 and the invasion of Panama in 1989 underscored American contempt for international norms, as did the bombings of Libya, Sudan, and Afghanistan. The Clinton administration did not object when UN Security Council resolutions were ignored by Israel, Morocco, and other allies, while at the same time claiming the U.S. had the right to unilaterally enforce UN Security Council resolutions against Iraq by bombing that country.

The withholding of dues the U.S. is obliged to pay the United Nations as well as the U.S. refusal to sign the treaty to ban land mines, the treaty to establish an international criminal court, or the treaty to ban child soldiers have cast the United States as an international outcast. In addition, the U.S. has refused to ratify the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, opposes making cheaper generic AIDS drugs available to the world's poor, and has refused to support the nearly universally supported tougher standards to crack down on international havens for tax avoidance by the super-wealthy.

In virtually all these cases, the U.S. position is that of a tiny minority in the international community.

It is not that the United States or any other country may sometimes find itself in the minority. Indeed, if doing so is based upon high moral principles, it may be necessary. However, the U.S. appears to have gone against international standards not for any principled reasons but for narrowly

defined strategic and economic interests, often in ways that violate international law and basic values of justice and human rights.

This is what is behind the growing anti-Americanism. Bush's arrogance and lack of knowledge and experience in foreign affairs may be a convenient foil for his Democratic critics at home, but the problem runs much deeper. It is a bipartisan problem, and

it requires a serious reevaluation of the U.S. role in the world.

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