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The War Against Civilization
by John Maxwell

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We cannot say we weren't warned.

On May 6, 2002, the United States denounced the International Criminal Court, telling the United Nations that it would no longer consider itself bound by the Treaty establishing the ICC – signed by President Clinton in the closing days of his administration.

Clinton had reservations about the court, but he believed that the US could negotiate compromises, which would still have left the Court an effective tribunal for the trial of crimes against humanity.

The Bush Administration began almost as soon as it took office, to rail against the idea of the court itself, and began to blackmail smaller countries into signing bilateral treaties to (hopefully) render the Court without jurisdiction in those countries. The reason, according to various spokesmen for the US, was to protect the interest of American soldiers and diplomats from frivolous prosecution.

Mr. Pierre Richard Prosper, a senior US diplomat said the May 6 letter to the UN “neutralized” Mr. Clinton's signature and " ... It frees us from some of the obligations that are incurred by signature. When you sign you have an obligation not to take actions that would defeat the object or purpose of the treaty," he said.

By unsigning the treaty, the US would no longer have to extradite people wanted by the court, he said:

"What we've learnt from the war on terror is that rather than creating an international mechanism to deal with these issues it is better to organize an international mandate that authorizes states to use their unilateral tools to tackle the problems we have ..."

Law Free Zones

Unfortunately for the US, the world has seen what these unilateral arrangements can mean, at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, for example, and in the vast gulag archipelago for suspected terrorists now being operated round the world by the United States.

As one of Britain's most eminent judges, Lord Steyn, has said, the US has created a "law-free zone" where it can commit any crime against anyone without fear of prosecution. Or so Mr. Bush's advisers believe.

Unless Mr. Bush and his party seize power in the United States and remain in power for ever, prosecution and retribution are always in the offing, as the Chilean usurper/regicide Pinochet is now discovering.

One of the key loopholes the Americans believed they had discovered is that resigning from the ICC means that they do not have to extradite their own home-boy terrorists such as Luis Posada Carriles and his accomplice in murder, Orlando Bosch.

But the ICC renunciation was only the most significant act in a concerted US campaign to turn their backs not only on history but on civilization itself. It is now clear that the US Administration and its dwindling band of fanatics want to turn the world back to medieval systems of governance, justice and knowledge.

Global Warming: The US has worked overtime, using bad science, PR spin doctors and the power of money to try to turn back the Kyoto protocol on climate change. It was sheer embarrassment which forced the US four weeks ago to agree to continue being a part of the negotiating process. The tactic here will be to talk out the decision making process while the US continues to pollute the atmosphere and the seas and mankind's lungs and genes for as long as it is profitable.

Globalization: The US is adamant that her merchants and users should be free to scrape as much in profit from the rest of the world as possible by arrangements such as the WTO and GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) which will allow the Wal-Martization and McDonaldization of the world, destroying local artisans and their craft and substituting the obviously superior American ersatz productions, spreading asthma, diabetes, deformity and unemployment everywhere, while discrete "Free Zones" provide slave labor for the Cognitive Elite behind their electrified fences and shoot to kill policies.

While Jamaica and India must cough up the "uttermost farthing" for pirated DVDs and software, Americans will legitimately patent such things as the Neem Tree, Basmati Rice and eventually Reggae music.

Genetics: The United States and a cadre of rogue scientists will continue to plunder the Earth in search of desirable plants, for food and medicine, developed over centuries by peasants on the slopes of the Andes or the terraces of Assam. When they have found the most productive strains and patented them, they will then genetically alter them so that no further development and evolution is possible. These seeds will have no progeny, except in the tissue culture labs of Monsanto and Dupont. At that point, selective starvation (aka Eugenics) will become possible, as the companies which have patented life protest that they have run out of material and farmers in Peru and Jamaica and Assam and Sri Lanka will not be able to buy planting material.

"We have a shortage" will be the claim.

And, since Mr. Bush and his merry men do not believe in Evolution, all will be for the best in the best possible of all (gated) worlds.

GATS: That desirable green space in front of the University of the West Indies chapel at Mona would be greatly enhanced by a small, efficient Wal-Mart. And American universities will demand subsidies ("national

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treatment”) from Jamaica if Jamaica were unwise enough to give any assistance to the poor and indigent Jamaican students attending the UWI. If the children of the elite want to go to Harvard, the Jamaican government would have to pay their fees as well, as long as Harvard set up a drop shop in Jamaica.

Small Arms and Drugs: While the United States reserves the right to kill people with alcohol and tobacco, it has set its face firmly against ganja and cocaine, which unlike alcohol and tobacco are virulently dangerous substances, notwithstanding the fact that they kill far fewer people. And citing the immutable laws of Adam Smith and Free Trade, the Americans will refuse to control the export of small arms to places like Jamaica for the very good reason that when Jamaicans kill each other it is a purely domestic problem.

Oil: It is a curious fact that petroleum, which belongs by natural right to the United States, has been secreted by God under the land area and seas of various poor and often “failing states.” And when reckless and dangerous agitators like Hugo Chavez claim to be the rightful owners of the oil under their feet, they need to understand that their vain presumptions are entirely without fundamentalist justification and are in sacrilegious disrespect of the bottom line.

Assaulting Liberty and Civilization

The US Justice Department has now instituted an official probe with a view to criminal charges against the person or persons who leaked the state secret that president Bush had contravened the laws and Constitution of the United States by illegally ordering his National Security Agency to spy on Americans. A few Americans are agitated that this may mean some infringement of their civil liberties and may turn a few of them into unlawful combatants inhabiting some “law-free zone” for the rest of their natural lives. Mr. Bush has a divine right to break the law and exposing his crime is a crime.

I remember vividly what I was doing on the morning of September 11. My hair was standing on end *before* the planes struck the World Trade Center. I was trolling the web and copied several stories about a new project called Echelon, a worldwide network of satellites and computers which had the capability to read or record the secrets of anyone, any company, any government, anywhere. The European Union was about to protest about Echelon, the stories said. After 9/11 there has been a complete absence of stories about Echelon.

Case Study: The destruction of liberty can be choreographed, as Hitler and Stalin both knew. “Obedience is good, Control better,” Stalin is reported to have said. And when Hitler began to enslave his people he started with blacks (Yes! Blacks! the “spawn” of the Senegalese and Jamaican troops of the First World War armies occupying Germany) He next attacked homosexuals, Gypsies and then the Jews, picking them off one by one, choosing the most friendless – as Niemoller said – to begin with.

Mr. Alex van Trotsenberg of the World bank infamously described Somalia as “almost a non-country.” Haiti is obviously a non-country, and Iraq cannot be far behind.

What has happened to these two countries may be instructive. It was in Iraq, 8,000 years ago, we are told, that civilization as we understand it, first developed.

After suffering defeat in the arranged Gulf War, the Iraqis were starved and bombed continuously for ten years, their land contaminated by depleted uranium, their children poisoned, the wombs of the women so corrupted by radioactivity that many produced monsters. One American general said in 2002 there was nothing left to bomb in Iraq but the odd outhouse and a few unsuspecting shepherds, yet the US and British unleashed “Shock and Awe” against these people, a barbarous attempt to cow them into surrender, to un-man them and convince them to greet the “liberators” with flowers and kisses.

The reality was different.

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"She was standing in the wrong place, so I shot her" said one 18-year-old American GI.

Iraq's historic places and museums were looted and vandalized. Mr. Rumsfeld was unperturbed: "Stuff happens" he said. Unlike Reichsmarshal Herman Goering, he did not reach for his revolver on hearing the word "Culture" – He probably did not understand it.

The Fight Against Slavery

Two hundred and one years after freeing themselves from slavery, the Haitians are once again engaged in the same struggle. The Haitians have been abandoned by their friends, their relatives and the world police, terrorized by the Americans, Canadians, Brazilians and French, and by the United Nations.

Their president and his family were kidnapped, transported out of his country as "cargo" and finally found refuge in South Africa, one of the few places with the *cojones* to defy the United States in such matters.

The Haitian people are being raped, tortured, falsely imprisoned, brutalized and massacred by known and convicted criminals, one of whom is now running for President under elections sponsored by George Bush and Kofi Annan. The lawful President is being denigrated, vilified and libeled for building more schools in five years than had been built in a century, for giving the children of Haiti their own radio station, for setting up a medical school open to poor students, for instituting a disaster preparedness network, for liberty and democracy.

And, what happened ten years ago when American-sponsored generals first removed Aristide is happening again. Rape and murder are again instruments of policy under the supervision of the man who oversaw Aristide's kidnapping, former US Ambassador Foley.

Lynn Duff, an American journalist reports on a woman she met in Haiti:

"My daughter who is four years old was sleeping on a mat on the floor. They kicked her out of the way. My other daughter is nine years old. She was so scared she didn't even cry. ...The police took my husband away because they said he was a *chimère* [terrorist]. They shackled him and beat him on his head. Then they took him out of the house.

" ... One policeman showed his identification card and said, 'See what this is? It means that I can do with you whatever I want.' But it was too dark for us to see the name on the card, even though we recognized it as a policeman's identification card.

"... one police officer said to me, 'Don't worry, you'll enjoy it.' I think you can imagine what happened next. All of the police officers raped me, both in the natural place for having sex and also in the unnatural way, in my rear.

"The whole time my children were there watching. When the police officers finished with me, they went for my oldest girl, the one who is here with me today. They wanted to violate her as well but she is too small. One police officer put his fingers up inside of her and she bled.

"Today we are here at the clinic to see the doctor because my daughter is in a lot of pain since the attack. She has pain in her body and pain in her heart."

Paul Farmer, an American professor of medicine and medical Anthropology has spent two decades in rural Haiti, teaching people to deal with HIV/AIDS. He has devoted his life to curing the world, starting in Haiti. At this moment he is in Rwanda, pursuing his mission.

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I got an email from him last week. He said that he had examined the priest, Father Gerard Jean–Juste in a prison in Port au Prince. Jean–Juste has committed no crime apart from being a pastor and leader of the Haitians. He had also decided to run for President.

He was arrested and held on no charge. Farmer examined him in prison and discovered that Father Gerry is suffering from cancer, probably leukemia. According to Farmer:

"... he is not only a prisoner of conscience, one of hundreds in Haiti, but a sick one who needs more than prayers and letters of support. He needs proper medical care and, probably, chemotherapy. It's hard enough, as we know from our own long experience in central Haiti, to deliver chemotherapy anywhere in the country, but it's simply not possible to do so in a Haitian prison."

It was the Haitians who first abolished slavery and first proclaimed the universal rights of man, the doctrine enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 149 years later. If their very right to Liberty is now in question, can yours be far behind?

If civilization itself is under attack in Iraq, where next?

If Liberty itself is smothered in Haiti, where does that leave you?

John Maxwell of the University of the West Indies (UWI) is the veteran Jamaican journalist who in 1999 single–handedly thwarted the Jamaican government's efforts to build houses at Hope, the nation's oldest and best known botanical gardens. His campaigning earned him first prize in the 2000 Sandals Resort's annual Environmental Journalism Competition, the region's richest journalism prize. He is also the author of How to Make Our Own News: A Primer for Environmentalists and Journalists (Jamaica, 2000). Mr. Maxwell can be reached at jonmax@mac.com.

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