Code Word for Clinton's Global Goals: Bipartisanship

November 17, 1999

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It remains to be seen whether or not George W. Bush and other Republican presidential candidates have a coherent foreign policy, but there is no mistaking that Bill Clinton has one. His National Security Advisor Sandy Berger laid it all out in a speech last week to the Bilderberg Steering Committee.

Those who think the Bilderbergers are just a phantom of conspiracy theorists need to face the fact that Clinton's top foreign policy adviser was driven in a White House limousine on November 4 to address the Bilderbergers dining at the Library of Congress. The Library's magnificent Great Hall was an appropriate venue for a meeting of this 45-year-old elite group of Atlantic community movers and shakers.

Berger's speech was entitled "Strengthening the Bipartisan Center: An Internationalist Agenda for America." Clinton's goal is an "internationalist agenda," "bipartisanism" is the road to take us there, and "isolationism" is the dragon to be slayed en route.

"Bipartisanism" at the top levels in both parties is the essential glue that holds Clinton's foreign policy together. Berger bragged that the Administration has worked with both Republicans and Democrats in Congress to enlarge NATO, to pass NAFTA which is now to be expanded by similar trade bills for Africa and the Caribbean Basin, to join the World Trade Organization, to ratify treaties such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, and to finance "engagements" in the Balkans and "a host of other international initiatives."

Berger complained that Congress is "not meeting our obligations to the World Bank and IMF," is conditioning the payment of UN dues on unrelated issues, and has cut our request for peacekeeping by 60 percent. He asserted that "the only acceptable position for the world's wealthiest and most powerful nation" is to support these missions, not only with our UN vote but by paying the costs.

Asserting that "global leadership is not divisible," Berger said that treaties must be used to "establish

standards of international conduct," and America must respond to local conflicts. Not all of them, of course, just the ones that the internationalists choose.

Pledging more U.S. handouts and interventions, Berger whined about "a small group of Senators" who are responsible for the steady decline in our international affairs budget. He particularly complained that Congress "is refusing to fund a historic debt relief initiative" which Clinton is demanding.

Clinton had been demanding that the American taxpayers pay the debt of 41 nations including 33 in Africa. Majority Leader Tom DeLay calls this sending U.S. taxpayer dollars overseas "to subsidize the corruption and mismanagement of foreign countries" and robbing the Social Security surplus for "Ghana versus Grandma."

Clinton vetoed the foreign aid bill on October 18 because its handouts were 14 percent less than he wanted, calling it "another sign of the new isolationism." After some heated closed-door sessions with Administration negotiators threatening to close down the government, Congress added another $799 million to the $12.7 billion foreign aid bill.

Rep. Sonny Callahan (R-AL) commented that "every time somebody walks in the White House with a turban on his head," the President offers them money. Callahan said he was going to "buy me one of those turbans" and seek money for senior citizens.

Berger called opponents of Clinton's agenda a "dominant minority," a strange oxymoron. He ruefully recognized that these opponents have a "coherent philosophy" which sees "international spending as inherently disconnected to America's interests, views most multilateral enterprises with suspicion and considers most difficult international endeavors . . . as likely to fail and therefore not worth trying."

Berger urged his internationalist audience "to recognize when our beliefs are being threatened" and to "defend them together."

The Clinton Administration has had significant success in coopting Republicans to support its global agenda in the name of bipartisanship. On February 11, a long list of officials from the Ford and Bush Administrations joined with powerful CEOs, who are the source of soft money for the Republican Congress, to co-sign a two-page ad in the New York Times demanding that Congress immediately vote for four of Clinton's goals.

Attacking "isolationism" and the "drift toward disengagement from global leadership," these dignitaries demanded (1) more tax handouts to the International Monetary Fund, (2) use of the Exchange Stabilization Fund to prop up foreign currencies, (3) $1 billion in "back dues" to the United Nations, and (4) Fast Track trade authority for Clinton. Republican signers of these demands included President Gerald Ford, former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and Alexander Haig, former National Security Advisors Brent Scowcroft and Robert McFarlane, former U.S. Trade Representatives Bill Brock and Carla Hills, and the heads of scores of multinationals and bank corporations.

It would be a mistake to think that Clinton's foreign policy is just the result of improvisations or "wag the dog" coverups. Clinton has repeatedly enunciated his vision of where he is trying to take America, such as his statement on CBS Morning News on July 30 that he wants "to promote the integration of all the democracies."

That's where the "bipartisan center" is taking us. The question for Americans is, is that where we want to go?