
OTHER NATIONS

The Algerian Quagmire

"Algeria's War on Itself" by Andrew J. Pierre and William B. Quandt, in *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1995), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2400 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-1153.

Since early 1992, Islamic militants and Algeria's military regime have been locked in a bloody struggle that has reportedly cost more than 30,000 lives. Now Algeria's woes are becoming a crisis for France, say Pierre, a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Quandt, a political scientist at the University of Virginia.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, France's relationship with Algeria is not especially close, and Paris remains very much in the dark about what is happening in its former colony. "Conversations with senior officials in Paris," the authors write, "reveal that the military-led government in Algiers is opaque to the French; they do not know where real power lies, nor can they account for the reasons behind the shifts in Algerian policies and attitudes. French contacts with the sizable Islamic opposition groups . . . are very limited."

When Algeria in 1962 finally won its eight-year war for independence, its economic ties with France were strong; but they have since shriveled. Algeria buys only about one-third of its imports from France, down from more than 80 percent at independence. The former mother country now gets only two percent of its oil and 30 percent of its gas from Algeria. "In the years after independence," the authors note, "some 60,000 French were involved in business, communications, and civil administration in Algeria. Now the number is down to 1,500, and for good cause: Islamic terrorists have been systematically assassinating foreigners since 1992." Within France, Islam is poorly understood, despite the presence of 800,000 Algerians, some of whom have lived in France for generations.

The French are alarmed. They fear not only terrorist bombs but the prospect "that hordes of Algerian boat people will migrate and take jobs away in a country with a 12.3 percent rate of unemployment."

Early this year, under the auspices of a Catho-

lic group called Sant'Egidio, leaders of the Algerian National Liberation Front, the Islamic Salvation Front, and other opposition groups reached agreement in Rome on a "National Contract" calling for multiparty democracy. It was intended to serve as a basis for talks with President Lamine Zeroual's military government. The regime quickly denounced the move as foreign interference and promised to hold presidential elections by the end of the year, the authors note, "without quite explaining how these elections would restore peace."

French officials have come to realize, Pierre and Quandt say, that they may need help to achieve peace. For the Algerian antagonists, "the former colonizers are more familiar than others, but they are also less trustworthy." The Sant'Egidio declaration, the authors point out, "included an appeal to the international community as a whole—not to France alone—for assistance in resolving the conflict."

Confucianism Lite?

"The New Confucianism in Beijing" by Wm. Theodore de Bary, in *The American Scholar* (Spring 1995), Phi Beta Kappa Society, 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

During China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s and early '70s, Confucianism and its supposed agents were viciously attacked. Today, with the hollowness of the official Marxist-Leninist ideology more and more apparent, the Beijing regime has been trying to reclaim China's Confucian heritage and use it to ward off the threat of Western decadence. Confucian temples have been restored to their former elegance, and a China Confucius Foundation, headquartered in Beijing, has been established. At a major international congress in China in 1994 to commemorate the sage's birth 2,545 years earlier, Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, the world-famous champion of the Confucian work ethic, social discipline, and zeal for learning, and a staunch critic of Western individualism, was given a thunderous ovation. Yet de Bary, an emeritus professor at Columbia University and author of *The Trouble with Confucianism* (1991), doubts that China's new commitment to

The Chechnya Obsession

Russia has been trying to wipe out the Chechen people for a very long time, writes David Remnick, author of *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire* (1993), in the *New Yorker* (July 24, 1995).

The Chechen Republic is a tiny, landlocked parcel on the southwestern periphery of Russia, and even now to most of the world it seems a second-order crisis spot, a geopolitical obscurity: Ceylon, Angola, Chechnya. In the Russian imagination, however, Chechnya is an obsession, an image of Islamic defiance, an embodiment of the primitive, the devious, the elusive. For more than three centuries, the czars and the general secretaries—and now a democratically elected president—have tried to obliterate the Chechens, first by war on horseback, then by deportation by cattle car, and now by heavy artillery bombardment and carpet bombing.

When Yeltsin described Chechnya not long ago as a "criminal" state, deserving of the same regard as the Medellín cocaine cartel or the Golden Triangle, in Southeast Asia, he was joining in a traditional Russian strain of rhetoric, a resonant demonology. In the mid-19th century, while the czars' armies were engaged in what turned out to be a 40-year war with the great warrior of the Caucasus, Imam Shamil, a Russian civil servant and scholar named Platon Zubov wrote, in a book on the northern Caucasus entitled "A Picture of the Caucasian Region and Neighboring Lands Belonging to Russia," that the Chechen nation is "remarkable for her love of plunder, robbery and murder, for her spirit of deceit, courage, recklessness, resolution, cruelty, fearlessness, her uncontrollable insolence and unlimited arrogance," and that "the Chechens spend their life plundering and raiding their neighbors who hate them for their ferocity." According to Zubov (and here he seems to speak for his regime and the regimes to follow), "The only way

to deal with this ill-intentioned people is to destroy it to the last." In this, the czars did not quite succeed: they ended the war by declaring victory but allowed the Chechens to live in relative autonomy. . . .

Long after the czarist failure to crush the Chechens, Stalin tried to remove them from the map entirely. In the midst of the war with Germany, he ordered the mass deportation of the Chechens, and also of other small ethnic groups, from the Caucasus and the Crimean peninsula to Siberia and the wastes of northern Kazakh-



stan. . . . The Chechens lived in exile for 13 years, and were allowed to return to the Caucasus only after Stalin died and Khrushchev, in 1957, announced that it had all been a mistake.

*The Chechens proved no less defiant in exile than they had been in battle against the czars' generals. In the third volume of *The Gulag Archipelago*, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn recalls seeing, while he himself was living in exile, that the Chechens were the one group that utterly refused to submit to Soviet power.*

Confucianism is more than skin deep.

Properly understood, he points out, Confu-

cianism is not just a social discipline and work ethic but "a form of liberal learning," in the clas-

sic sense of *liberal* as broadening and liberating. And few Chinese today have much acquaintance with this Confucian tradition.

"For most of this century," de Bary observes, "educated Chinese have learned nothing about Confucianism except the [Communist] Party's negative characterizations of it as 'reactionary' and 'feudal.' Quite apart from the closing of schools for years during the Cultural Revolution, and the turning over of instruction to workers, peasants, soldiers, and Red Guards, only a few college majors in classical studies have read any of the Confucian texts, while all students have been compelled to read the 'classics' of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao." Some Confucian traditions—"a certain reciprocity, mutual support, and give-and-take within the family"—may have survived in the home, but their carry-over to the world of politics and government is doubtful.

"Only with the reinstatement of some genuine Confucian culture, and the reading of basic texts in the school and college curriculum—which would require the retraining of a whole generation of teachers—could Confucian learning be articulated to the level of literate discourse so that it could have any significant influence on educated Chinese today," de Bary declares. Unless that should happen, he concludes, Beijing's new Confucianism "would amount to little more than mass indoctrination in official formulae, as mechanical and meaningless as the failed slogans of Maoism."

Should Japan Rearm?

"East Asian Security: The Case for Deep Engagement" by Joseph S. Nye, Jr., and "East Asian Security: The Pentagon's Ossified Strategy" by Chalmers Johnson and E. B. Keehn, in *Foreign Affairs* (July-Aug. 1995), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Fifty years after the end of World War II, Japan remains in effect a U.S. military protectorate. Johnson, author of *Japan: Who Governs?* (1995), and Keehn, a lecturer in Japanese politics at Cambridge University, argue that with the Cold War over and the yen so strong that the 45,000 U.S. troops stationed there "cannot afford a bowl of noodles," it is time for Japan to become a "nor-

mal" country and provide for its own security.

There has been a "profound shifting around the world, particularly in East Asia, from military to economic power," the two specialists argue. Tokyo welcomes the continued U.S. military presence as a short-term convenience, they assert, while it consolidates its economic ascendancy "in preparation for the day when the United States can no longer support"—financially or politically—its military forces in East Asia. The U.S. security guarantee, moreover, reduces the incentive for Japan to revise its constitution, which renounces war as a sovereign right of the nation, and to develop into a responsible "ordinary country" providing for its own defense, and helping to keep the peace abroad.

Nye, assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, insists—as a Pentagon report did earlier this year—that the presence of about 100,000 American troops in Japan and the rest of East Asia (including 36,000 in South Korea) is vital to the region's security. He calls the U.S. troops "a force for stability, reducing the need for arms buildups, and deterring the rise of hegemonic forces. . . . How the international system adjusts to the rise of Chinese power, the eventual rejuvenation of Russia, the evolving role of Japan, and the tensions on the Korean peninsula will be critically important to the future of East Asian stability and prosperity."

Japanese analysts fear, among other things, the international ripple effects of rearmament. The specter of a revived Japanese militarism, for example, might prompt neighboring nations, from Malaysia to China, to build up their own military forces. Japan, Nye notes, remains committed to the alliance, albeit one "tailor[ed] to the post-Cold War period." A 1994 report by a nongovernmental commission in Japan urged that the nation assume a larger international role, including greater participation in UN peacekeeping operations. Until a few years ago that was unthinkable, Nye points out. But in recent years, Japan has joined in international peacekeeping efforts in Cambodia, Mozambique, and Rwanda. Although Japanese attitudes toward the nation's proper role are thus evolving, it does not appear that Japan is going to become a "normal" country anytime soon.