

tering resentment, ingrown anger, and self-hate are the inevitable result of the long years spent in fruitless opposition to the global reach of American power. Certainly, all those emotions were plain to see in the Left's reaction to September 11, in the failure to register the horror of the attack or to acknowledge the human pain it caused, in the . . . barely concealed glee that the imperial state had finally gotten what it deserved." Although many leftists subsequently "recovered their moral balance," Walzer says, "many more" did not.

The Left long ago "lost its bearings," Walzer says. Its critique of U.S. foreign policy—"most clearly, I think, from the Vietnam years forward (from the time of 'Amerika,' Viet Cong flags, and breathless trips to North Vietnam)—has been stupid, overwrought, grossly inaccurate."

As a result, leftists made a fetish of alienation, "refusing to identify with their fellow citizens, regarding any hint of patriotic feeling as a surrender to jingoism. That's why many leftists had such difficulty responding emotionally to the attacks of September 11 or

joining in the expressions of solidarity that followed"—and why they backed ineffective proposals such as turning the problem over to the United Nations.

Clinging to a "ragtag Marxism," many of Walzer's ideological confreres are blind to the immense power of religion. "Whenever writers on the left say that the 'root cause' of terror is global inequality or human poverty, the assertion is in fact a denial that religious motives really count." Minimizing the importance of Islamic radicalism, many have simply assumed that "any group that attacks the imperial power must be a representative of the oppressed, and its agenda must be the agenda of the Left."

Opting for the "moral purism of blaming America first," many leftists cannot bring themselves to criticize the "oppressed" elsewhere. Yet even the oppressed are morally obliged "not to murder innocent people, not to make terrorism their politics." What the American Left must do now, Walzer says, is to "begin again" by putting "decency first."

How to Get Government Moving

"Our Tottering Confirmation Process" by Paul C. Light, in *The Public Interest* (Spring 2002), 1112 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

When George W. Bush took office in January 2001, he had some 500 cabinet and subcabinet positions requiring Senate confirmation to fill. A year later, about one-third of the posts remained vacant. The problem? An appointments process that includes too many nominees and subjects them to too much screening, contends Light, director of governmental studies at the Brookings Institution.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made do with 51 Senate-confirmed appointees: 10 cabinet secretaries, three under secretaries, and 38 assistant secre-

taries. Bush's 500 include 14 cabinet secretaries, 23 deputy secretaries, 41 under secretaries, 212 assistant secretaries, and



"Days or even weeks" are needed to fill out some of the disclosure forms required of presidential appointees.

some 200 others. “Presidents seem to have embraced the notion that more leaders equals more leadership,” Light quips.

Extensive Federal Bureau of Investigation background investigations have added to the delays. Seeking to avoid embarrassment, the White House does early “preventive screening” that further bogs down the process. The ordeal puts off many talented recruits.

Failure is built in. To process 500 nominees at the average pace of 10 to 15 per week requires about 40 legislative weeks. “With recesses and vacations, the transition cannot be completed until a year into the

new term.” Frustrated cabinet secretaries have added new high-level staff positions such as chief of staff as a way of getting around the process, thus diluting the accountability that is the whole point of confirmation.

“Perhaps it is time,” Light says, “to ask whether we need so many layers of government.” Disclosure requirements, screening, and background checks could be scaled back. Some nominees could be spared Senate hearings. Does the nation really need the nominee for assistant secretary for public affairs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development to tell all?

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Transforming the Pentagon

“A Tale of Two Secretaries” by Eliot A. Cohen, in *Foreign Affairs* (May–June 2002),
58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Will 9/11 finally compel the defense establishment to abandon its love affair with the heavy weapons and conventional doctrines of the Cold War?

The forces that stymied Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s plans for “defense transformation” before the war on terrorism are still in place, notes Cohen, a professor of strategic studies at John Hopkins University’s Nitze School of Advanced International Studies: entrenched services, recalcitrant bureaucracies, the many interests with a stake in the production of costly traditional weapons. Yet he sees some reasons for optimism. Buried in the Pentagon’s \$300 billion plus budget are funds for innovative weapons such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), not to mention the routine purchases of routers, servers, and global positioning systems that laid “the base for the networked war that U.S. forces ended up waging in Afghanistan.” (Military logisticians were shamed into embracing the latter by the stellar efficiencies of companies such as Wal-Mart and Federal Express.) Younger officers—now majors and lieutenant colonels, even sergeants—are eager for change, and the strong American cultural predilection

for innovation and experimentation inevitably affects the military over the long term.

Still, the old battles will have to be refought. For example, because the Pentagon would rather spend money on new “platforms” than on ammunition, U.S. forces ran short of satellite-guided bombs during the war in Afghanistan. And even as the Predator UAV was pressed into service in Afghanistan last fall with great success, the Pentagon’s perfection-oriented office of testing and evaluation was declaring it not “operationally effective or suitable.” Next year, the Pentagon will spend just over \$1 billion on UAVs—and \$7.5 billion on conventional fighter jets.

In this new era, the United States will need to be prepared to station troops in many places—it currently has forces in Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Sinai Peninsula, for example. It will need forces that are highly mobile, often without relying on local bases or prepositioned supplies. This calls for things such as “arsenal ships” and a new bomber, Cohen believes. The Pentagon will have to get better at mobilization for sudden conflicts and find new ways to make use of regular personnel,