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It is not enough that the drug kaiser--fresh from making conservatives love the Department of Education as he extended its tentacles into every American classroom--is in charge of drug prohibition. He is also advocating a host of further invasions of our financial and personal privacy in the name of fighting drugs. The real agenda of the neo-conservative drug caesar has always been to expand what his mentor Irving Kristol calls the "conservative welfare state." And the warfare state.

Bennett's first action as drug emperor was to restrict the constitutional rights of law-abiding Americans. This will prove, I am afraid, an all-too-accurate prediction of his future conduct.

Three other thoughts: 1) By simply banning imported assault rifles, drug shah Bennett has given a large subsidy to domestic manufacturers. I wonder who gave what campaign contributions? 2) Those who consider assault rifles evil per se should think what it would have meant if each Jewish family in Germany had had such a weapon in the 1940s. 3) Every Swiss family has not a semi-automatic assault rifle in their home, but--as part of the country's defense plan--a fully automatic assault rifle: a military machine gun. And there is virtually no crime in Switzerland. Far from it being a risk to society for honest people to possess capable weapons, it is a blessing, and a mighty deterrent to crime. (Criminals dislike entering homes where the owner is armed.) No one but the honest will obey gun control laws, and no one expects anything else. Such laws are designed to disarm the people, not the scum.

The Salman Rushdie Affair

It's easy to be for freedom of expression when it means denouncing the Ayatollah. And, of course, he should be denounced, for no one has the right to advocate killing people with heretical views. But I can't help thinking that the Rushdie affair has some unexamined questions:

- 1) How much of the whole media brouhaha is fed by people who are anti-religious, and want to paint anyone who takes religion seriously as an Ayatollah-like zealot?
- 2) What about the lost distinction that defending someone's right to free speech doesn't necessarily mean agreeing with them? Moslems have every right to be upset, as Christians did with the Last Temptation of Christ.
- 3) Could some of the people hyping the Rushdie affair have other motives? For example, to make Moslems look bad for geopolitical reasons?
- 4) Why should the British taxpayers be forced to provide a round-the-clock army of police to a threatened multi-millionaire while regular citizens are mugged and burgled?

5) Would the New Republic, which has been sickeningly pompous on Rushdie and in its hymns to secular humanism, defend things it would find heretical? The answer is no. This liberal magazine has past defended Canada's "anti-hate" law, which was used to fine and jail a Canadian author, Ernst Zundel, who questioned the historical reality of the Holocaust. Liberal newspapers like the Washington Post and the Boston Globe have also praised the Canadian law and this prosecution. I'll believe Establishment liberals are really committed to free speech when I see Norman Mailer and his cohorts wearing "I am Ernst Zundel" buttons and holding readings of his works.

I personally am offended by writings advocating fascism, socialism, Communism, and other forms of special-interest big government. Many people understandably find Zundel's writings offensive. But his case is no different in principle from Rushdie's, except that Zundel is poor and in jail, and Rushdie is rich and protected.

Radicals as Media Distractions

There are apparently only a few hundred neo-Nazi "skinheads" in the country, but the publicity they receive would make you think there were millions. Their slightest ridiculous activity brings major national media coverage, with the implied message that anyone who disagrees with the status quo or criticizes the power structure is suspect.

That's why intellectually sound opponents of the status quo will never get the same attention as the skinheads or the LaRouchites. The media like to attack the most politically outrageous.

That's also the explanation for all the attention focused on Louisiana Republican legislator David Duke. He holds some positions that free-market people agree with (taxes, quotas, foreign aid, etc.) but he is also an adherent of the violent philosophy of the KKK. So he was a perfect target for liberals. (That's why we have to do an end-run around the controlled media and get our message onto TV ourselves.)

When Oliver North blamed Ronald Reagan, and Robert McFarland corroborated the testimony, the media barely paid attention. Worse, while North is demanding that top-secret information be released to spare his own hide, not a single conservative writer has attacked this.

Yet Oliver North has done much more damage to America than a few scattered fascists. North lied to Congress, shredded legal documents, carried out illegal war activities--all in the name of democracy and freedom. He also undermined any chance of an indigenous uprising against Daniel Ortega, corrupted the conservative movement that bought his jingoistic sloganeering, and tarnished America's reputation abroad.