

Letters on “Friedman of the Times declares war on France”

23 September 2003

Below we post a recent selection of letters on Bill Vann's September 20 article, "Friedman of the Times declares war on France"

Tom Friedman has no business inciting further animosity toward France. France was right; the war was a mistake. It should never have happened. The other sovereign nations of this world do not have to kowtow to the US and our demands. We have gone to Iraq and destroyed it; now we do not want to pay to restore it. We expect other nations, who warned us what a bad idea war was, to put their citizens' lives at risk and to spend their citizens' tax money to fix our travesty and all the while being called names by our press and our officials. What a joke they all are.

GH

20 September 2003

Bill, a well-written, clear and concise view of the Iraqi morass and the antecedent circumstances and motivation that are glossed over by the “conventional” news media monopoly. It is worthy of note that every one I talk to—and most of my reading—indicates the same disgust with this chicanery, but the Big Three patently ignore it.

PS

21 September 2003

Dear Editor,

Mr. Friedman, in his ravings and frothing against the French, must of failed history or else he would realize the French were instrumental in the formation of America. Has he ever heard of the Statue of Liberty? Without the heavy cannon, firearms and assistance of the French navy, America would likely be more like a Canada!—Mr. Friedman would be overjoyed at that idea, but enough of history.

[You wrote about a previous Friedman column]: “The implications of this argument go beyond Iraq and the Persian Gulf. If Friedman's injunction is true for Iraqi oil, then why not for Russian oil, or that of Venezuela, Nigeria and other oil-possessing nations? Why, moreover,

should America's global mission be limited to the ‘protection’ of oil? What about iron, copper, cobalt, uranium and other vital ores? Can the US permit other nations to get control of that other increasingly scarce strategic resource—water?”

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/jan2003/frie-j15.shtml>

In fact they have always attacked countries to gain or maintain control of a resource, e.g., Chile and any number of Central American countries are examples of US aggression.

Iran was the best example where the ruthless regime of the Shah was installed by the US and Britain. So not only were they involved in the removal business, they have had a thriving installation business of dictators and puppets.

Good articles, always worth a read.

DO

20 September 2003

Just want to say fantastic! Friedman has received an unprecedented three Pulitzers. Nothing so shows the dishonesty of that prize. For years I have wondered at the idiotic things he has written. He has praised free trade that is nothing but a demand for US corporate aggrandizement and his writings on the Middle East have always been tilted against Arabs. He has been the most overrated columnist in America for years. Thank you.

DH

New York

20 September 2003

I for one fully concur and support Mr. Vann's concluding paragraph for establishing a national criminal tribunal to judge the few “megalomaniacs” responsible, including Mr. Friedman and his ilk.

The time may have arrived for a citizens group to demand from such programs as “Oprah,” PBS and in fact all television stations that allow the likes of Mr. Thomas Friedman to expound on neo-colonialism to provide for opposing views.

A Nuremberg-type criminal court comprised of US

citizens sitting in judgment of those responsible for our criminal invasion of Iraq would hopefully act as a deterrent to future neocons and make clear that Americans demand and expect a justification for wars and associated human and financial costs.

Some years ago a comedian on television when asked why he acted in a certain manner always responded, “The devil made me do it.” That must have given Mr. Friedman the comic idea of blaming France, which is a part-time summer home for another neocon by the name of Richard Perle.

Cordially,

AL

Little Rock, Arkansas

20 September 2003

Thanks to Bill Vann for his response to the Friedman article, which I read on Friday.

I agree with what he said about Tom Friedman’s article. Not only does Mr. Friedman label France an “enemy,” he denigrates her to the position of a jealous rival. What exactly is France supposed to be jealous of?

Friedman is hardly alluding to the “great” achievement of the Republicans in entrenching thousands of young troops in a bloody assault in Iraq, while at home cutting health care benefits for war veterans, or shattering the record for the biggest annual deficit in history, or having the first president in US history to order a US attack and military occupation of a sovereign nation, and doing so against the will of the United Nations and the vast majority of the international community? Maybe he thinks France is jealous because America is governed by an administration which lied to wage this war, a war to supposedly liberate a people used by the Americans as cannon fodder in the Iran-Iraq war, blasted back to an infrastructural stone age by America in the 1991 Gulf War, brought to its knees by American sanctions for 10 years, while suffering American air attacks over illegal no-fly zones for the past 10 years?

His report accuses France of both willing America into the current “quagmire” and more fantastically suggesting France is actually responsible for the current crisis, by “making it impossible for the Security Council to put a real ultimatum to Saddam Hussein” that allegedly “might have avoided a war.”

We’ve seen the goal posts shift over the past months between Iraqi liberation, regime change, weapons of mass destruction, responsibility for 9/11, and more recently being home to a terrorist network which didn’t exist in Iraq before the invasion—so one might surmise if it

actually does exist there now, it must have been spawned by this bloody attack.

But it seems now that Mr. Friedman would really have us blaming France, which clearly triggered the war and now is desperate to prolong it in a bid to assume its “rightful” place as America’s equal, if not superior, in shaping world affairs.

His repeated references to Arab/Muslims as radicals fail to buffer his argument, but instead exposes stereotyping that resonates a racism reinforced by the francophobia in this article. Sadly this is typical of Thomas Friedman, who writes propaganda cloaked in pseudo-impartiality.

Does he seriously believe that France’s current stance is borne of Rumsfeld and Bush’s failure after “America’s military victory in Iraq ... to magnanimously reach out to Paris to join in reconstruction”?

Does he really view the current situation in Iraq as a military victory? And what basis does he have for alleging that Europe was “feeling that maybe they should have taken part too”? It is insulting to assert that because Europe holds a different stance to America it is “misled by France” or wants no part in the “important political development project” happening in its own backyard. This is typical of the ideology spouted by a camp who views things in black and white, good and evil, and operates by appalling double standards and bullying.

Anyway I just wanted to voice my agreement with your article.

Regards,

BH

23 September 2003



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