

## **The Americanization of the World**

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With the publication of President Bush's statement of strategic priorities, a euphoric outburst of gleeful anticipation is sweeping across Europe. America intends to make our world "not just safer but better" -- an action that will be "sustained by faith in the principles of liberty and the value of a free society." Bush intends "to extend the benefits of liberty and prosperity through the spread of American values and tangible rewards for good governance." Discussion and speculation abound. What will the new Americanized Europe look like?

No country will feel the effects of Americanization more than Norway, long known for its naive view of social responsibility and fairness. American values will liberate Norway from the repressive restrictions of its social-democratic philosophy. While some disagreements continue over the look of the New Norway, a general consensus on major changes is taking form.

After more than half a century of high-quality, universal and equal healthcare treatment for all, Norwegians will adopt the more elegant pay-as-you-go American system. The best medicine will be reserved for those who can afford it. Those who can't will either join a limited service, for-profit HMO or simply go without healthcare. After all, who said healthcare was a right? It is a privilege for those who have earned the right to pay for it.

As part of the same exciting transformation, Europeans will soon be paying four to 10 times more for their prescription drugs, bringing pricing in line with the American experience. Americans understand pharmaceutical corporations have to make strong profits so they can develop new drugs. The American way is to solve every problem with a pill, so drug company profits must be protected at all costs.

To improve their safety and allow them to defend their personal property, Europeans will be encouraged to own and carry handguns, assault rifles and any other weapons they want. There is little doubt Europe will be the "safer" place promised by Bush once capital punishment returns, offering people the same deterrent protection against the murder of children and other innocents Americans enjoy.

Marijuana users will face long-term incarceration, raising public morality while also creating a boom in penal institution construction and increased employment not only for building tradesmen but individuals attracted to the dynamic new profession of prison guard.

Global fast-food companies will put small restaurants out of business, allowing Europeans to enjoy the security of knowing that no matter where they travel, the food will always taste, smell and look identical and be served by minimum wage, uniformed high school kids or pensioners. McDonald's, Burger King, KFC, Subway and other franchises will eliminate the anxiety of restaurant choice. As all European towns will look the same once the franchises and strip malls have been installed, Americans will no longer have to visit six countries in 10 days during their once-in-a-lifetime overseas trip.

Stand a group of Europeans next to a group of Americans, and it is obvious the former are nutritionally deprived. Once fast-food restaurants take over, Europeans will grow to their

proper size. And the economic benefits will be multiple: Big and Tall shops will open in all countries, and a billion-dollar diet industry will spring up. Foul-tasting low-fat foods will be everywhere. No food product will ever again be sold without a package claim of 10 to 99 percent less fat, calories, sodium, etc., etc.

Food animals will be raised the American way. No longer will chickens, lamb, beef cattle or any food animal be denied the benefits of growth hormones and antibiotic maxi-doses. Grains will all be biotech and farms will be run by huge corporations, which will benefit everyone. Selfish small-acreage farms will be swallowed up. Enormous food animal facilities will allow neighbors from miles around to smell the sweet scent of animal waste day and night. The sharing of animal droppings in streams, rivers and lakes will promote new exotic plant growth in unexpected places, greening our dull European world and delighting everyone. Europeans will no longer have to endure the burden of producing their own products. All items needed for good living will be produced in Third World countries. Even better, each town, large or small, will have at least one Wal-Mart to sell those goods. Wal-Mart will no longer be just "America's store" -- it will supply the world with low-priced goods while providing minimum-wage, 28-hour-a-week, no-benefits jobs for a permanent class of service serfs. As an added benefit, the congestion that has long plagued town centers in Europe will be relieved once Wal-Mart puts most small retail stores out of business.

When it comes to work, it'll be time for lazy Europeans to come to terms with the fact that "La Dolce Vita" may have been a great movie, but it's an unprofitable way to live. Four or more weeks of vacation a year will be replaced by two weeks (after two years of work).

Taxes formerly levied on the rich will be transferred to the middle class, creating a shortfall. Governments will then be justified in cutting back on public transportation or forcing it to privatize. Once railways and bus systems go on the auction block, automobile corporations will snap them up, as they did in many parts of America, and quickly bankrupt them. This will dramatically increase the need for cars, which will greatly increase employment in low-wage countries around the world. It won't be long before all Europeans either own or dream of the day they will own an American-made SUV. These gas-guzzling polluters will warm the earth, bringing a smile to the face of freedom-loving Eskimos, Siberians and researchers in Baffin Land.

Europe's confusing and chaotic political parties will be eliminated, replaced by a one-party system pretending to be two. Europeans will learn that what they previously considered corruption (giving huge cash donations to politicians to gain access and consideration) is really "free speech." At last they will be permitted to enjoy yearlong campaigns. No more six-week campaigns without TV advertising. And those weekly forums when the leaders of each party sit together and present their visions to the public -- b-o-r-i-n-g. American-style attack ads will bring pizzazz and entertainment back to politics.

After years of dangerous transparency, Norwegian politicians will no longer be required by "sunshine" laws to turn over all correspondence not related to national security to any citizen who asks to see it. As Vice President Dick Cheney and the top oil executives who helped him formulate America's energy policy know, no government becomes great by letting the people in on what it is doing!

Europe will adopt American accounting rules, allowing CEOs to adjust the profit figures and enrich executives, who are already paid 500 times the wage of ordinary workers. Golden parachutes and \$1 million-a-year retirement packages for CEOs will give European

executives the incentive to do a better job for shareholders. Government oversight of corporate business conduct will be replaced by the American system of self-regulation, which has proven to be so effective.

For too many years Norwegians and other Europeans have been neglecting their economic -- which means patriotic -- responsibilities. "Living within one's means" is a fine-sounding phrase, but it does nothing to help national economies to grow. Consequently, all Europeans will be sent five to 20 credit cards so they can begin to incur a level of debt consistent with American freedom and values.

"Whenever I hear the word 'culture,' I reach for my revolver," Goebbels said, and his far-seeing words will provide the parameters for a bold new market-based approach to the arts and entertainment. Tax-supported public television stations will be sold to commercial interests. The discredited 20th century notion of airways belonging to the people will be history, as will the limited economic potential of broadcasting for the public good. Global media companies will decide what news or programs the public will see. Europeans will discover how much better entertainment is when a program is interrupted every 10 minutes to air five commercials!

A new era of victimhood will lead Norwegians to sue en masse for punitive damages. Presently Norwegians are expected to watch where they are going; they assume their accidents to be at least in part their responsibility. When American values prevail, this bizarre delusion will vanish, increasing the number of trial lawyers and other underrepresented professionals.

Sustainable energy schemes like Denmark's electricity-producing windmills will be stopped. People will be encouraged to use energy created with oil and coal. God put it there in the ground for our use; it would be wrong to turn our back on His gift. Europeans will realize that the Kyoto treaty is an insult to man's rightful dominion over nature. No country should ever sign treaties that might cause corporations to spend more money and thereby reduce profits: in the words of President Bush, "I'm not doing anything that will hurt the American economy." Once American values are in place, no country in Europe will have to care about or cooperate with, any other country in the world. That's freedom!

Europeans will accept that the best use of historic buildings is as gigantic billboards. If the Coliseum must stay in its present location, its name will be changed to the "Nike Coliseum." The preservation of culture, traditions, history and even language must be justified economically. Ninety-five percent of all Norwegians may currently attend Independence Day parades and celebrations, but no marketing studies have been carried out to determine whether these events generate enough business to make them economically feasible. If they do not, they must be ceased. Global soft-drink corporations will place their vending machines in every school, bending children's minds to assure brand loyalty and create lifelong consumers.

With American values will come a mass influx of toupees. Unlike in Europe, no American politician, political pundit or news analyst appears to have ever lost a single hair. Moreover, research indicates that almost all American politicians who wear toupees avoided military service in their youth. One theory is that toupee wearers are better able to tolerate the heat of the false hair on their heads since they were never required to wear helmets.

Finally, American values will enable Europeans to fulfill their real obligations. Instead of wasting their tax money on healthcare, social programs, repair of roads, bridges and support of cultural programs, the money will be spent on defense. The European Union will emerge as a potent military force. That will eliminate the endless time and millions of dollars needed to work in harmony with the rest of the world. Europe can turn all its efforts inward and not worry about things like world poverty, disease, the environment, global warming, pollution, brutal dictatorships or hunger. If other countries don't like it, tough. Like America, Europe will be a shining city of freedom on the distant hill, needing no one and watching out only for its own interests.

We can hardly wait.