

audience that his policies produced “record numbers of new businesses,” “record numbers of millionaires and billionaires,” and “took one hundred times as many people out of poverty as were taken out in the Reagan-Bush years.”

Clinton’s voice is being heard far beyond Indianola. This week, Tom Daschle and other Senate Democrats will hold an event on Bush budget policies that will highlight the “top ten budget cuts,” a list that includes almost every cut mentioned by Clinton in Indianola. Coincidence? No. The event was Clinton’s idea, and he personally suggested the cuts to highlight.

ULTIMATELY, NEXT YEAR’S race will be one more referendum on Clinton, with the Democratic nominee arguing for a return to the policies of the Clinton era and Republicans claiming that all our economic and national security troubles are Clinton’s fault in the first place—that he created a bubble economy and ignored the terrorist threat. Several of the senior Clinton advisers I interviewed believe they’ve already won this debate when it comes to the economy and domestic policy. “On domestic policy, it’s not even a close call,” argues one person close to the former president. “But people are now looking back on his foreign policy more fondly.”

This is where Wesley Clark comes in. Clark has emerged as the candidate of the Clintonites. Whereas once that mantle looked as though it might go to Edwards, the North Carolina senator is presently stuck in neutral. Edwards’s gamble that the Iraq war would go well and the election would turn sharply back to the economy now seems unlikely to pay off. Having strongly supported Bush on the war and lacking significant foreign policy experience, Edwards is now poorly positioned to take advantage of Bush’s sudden vulnerability on foreign affairs.

So it was somehow fitting that Clark’s announcement this week eclipsed the coverage of Edwards’s official campaign kickoff. On paper, Clark is an almost laboratory-perfect candidate to run a campaign that will compare the Clinton years with the Bush years. On domestic policy, he is a blank slate that can easily be filled in—much as Edwards was—with elements of Clintonomics and the Third Way by all the Friends of Bill swarming to his campaign. More important, talking to some of Clinton’s advisers, one gets the sense that they see Clark as the perfect man to redeem Clinton’s foreign policy legacy. He wasn’t just “Clinton’s general,” as some in the Pentagon dismissively referred to him; he was Clinton’s general in what the Clintonites consider their defining foreign policy achievement: the Kosovo war. That war emphasized what ex-Clinton aides argue were the three pillars of his foreign policy: the judicious use of force, multilateralism, and an emphasis on human rights. Today, former senior aides to Clinton talk a lot about the fraying Western alliance and Bush’s bumbling personal diplomacy and unilateralism. They argue that it will take a military man to make the argument that the military is not America’s only foreign policy tool. And they seem to view

Clark as someone who doesn’t just neutralize Bush’s national security strengths but who neutralizes Clinton’s cultural and characterological weaknesses. He’s an Arkansas Rhodes scholar who not only fought in Vietnam but had part of his hand blown off there.

Little wonder, then, that Clark’s kitchen cabinet reads like the guest list from Renaissance Weekend. Bruce Lindsey, Skip Rutherford, Don Fowler, Mickey Kantor, Eli Segal, Ron Klain, Peter Knight, and Mark Fabiani are all now working for or supporting Clark and are all veterans of the Clinton years. (The presence of Lindsey, who is at the heart of every conspiracy theory about Clinton and is one of the former president’s best friends, will give an immediate jolt of energy to the Clinton-hating right.) Representative Charles Rangel of New York, an important black leader who is close to the Clintons, gave Clark an enthusiastic endorsement this week, and Rahm Emanuel, the senior-Clinton-aide-turned-congressman is also now on board. *The New York Times* recently reported that Clinton told friends at a party that there were only “two stars” among Democrats: Hillary and Clark. Says one top Washington Democrat, “There is a clear sense from the Clinton camp that they are winking and nodding for Clark.”

When I briefly talk to Clinton after his Indianola speech, he is coy, suggesting his one-day dip into presidential politics was just that. “This is a really unusual thing for me to be doing this,” he tells me. Asked whether it is too late for Clark to get into the race, he initially feigns ignorance of the kind of political details for which he has a famously encyclopedic memory. “I don’t really know as much as I used to even about the filing deadlines,” he demurs. But, pressed on whether Clark has missed the boat, he finally offers a firm “no.” “I think this thing is still coming together,” he says.

A few minutes later, having shaken hands and signed autographs for an hour, he gets into an SUV and is driven off across the field. He sticks his head halfway out the window and waves goodbye to a mass of cheering Iowans.

He’ll be back. ■

Trade Negotiators Gone Wild. Spring Broke

BY JEFFREY D. SACHS

FOR YEARS, THE United States has told West African nations—struggling to survive against disease, famine, desertification, and debt crises—that their pleas for foreign assistance are misplaced. All they really need is “trade, not aid.” The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, at the behest of American policymakers, have in effect advised Burkina Faso not to worry so much that two of every ten children there die before the age of five. After all, policymakers said,

if Burkina Faso just followed the hallowed free-market path, it would find prosperity. On its face, the advice was cruel and misplaced, as it left millions of Africans to die needlessly in recent years.

But the cruelty is even worse than that. Farmers in West Africa who literally staked their lives on trade—buying fertilizers and farm implements to compete on world markets—now find that they actually have neither trade nor aid. In a farce worthy of Monty Python, America's trade negotiators in Cancun last week walked away from a global trade deal that might have given Third World farmers a free market for their exports. The reason: The Bush administration wanted to protect roughly 25,000 cotton growers in the South, whose main harvest is billions of dollars in government subsidies. This harvest is a big boy's business, with the overwhelming proportion of benefits received by farms larger than 100 acres; truly poor American cotton farmers could be helped at a fraction of the cost. Yet, just as George W. Bush opposed action on climate change to avoid upsetting coal miners in the swing state of West Virginia, he has also decided he can't alienate Big Agriculture—major campaign contributors—in the Southern states that he will need to carry in 2004. Instead, he'll force American consumers to pay higher prices and condemn more Africans to poverty—or worse.

IN THE RUN-UP to Cancun, the world's poorest countries argued, correctly, that the trading system was rigged against them by protectionism and subsidies on the few goods they can profitably produce. In manufacturing, these goods include textiles and garments, where a handful of high-cost producers in the Carolinas successfully keep U.S. markets closed to low-cost producers in poor countries.

In agriculture, the barriers are in cotton and sugar, where America's production costs are higher than the production costs of tropical locations fit for these crops. In recent years, as production in West Africa and other low-cost producers rose, and world prices for cotton fell, America's handful of cotton producers sought and obtained increased subsidies and market protection. Indeed, this year's subsidies of nearly \$4 billion for cotton are so high that the United States has actually significantly expanded its exports in world markets, despite sharply increased supplies from low-cost producers. World prices of cotton have plummeted as America's subsidized exports have flooded the market. For Africans, the result is a loss of roughly \$300 million per year in income—a literally life-and-death difference for large numbers of impoverished households teetering on the brink of survival. And, because American cotton-growers receive several thousand dollars per farm via direct subsidies and market protection, American consumers unwittingly pay higher

taxes to retain this rigged system.

The situation was so unbalanced that the 2001 trade negotiations launched in Doha, Qatar, were dubbed the Doha Development Round, a recognition that it was clearly the turn of the poorest countries to reap more benefits of the international trading system. Then, in May, Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Benin called for a phasing out the protectionism holding them in their poverty trap, pitting the ten million impoverished farmers in these nations—and the American consumers who would buy their high-quality and inexpensive cotton—against the few thousand well-heeled and well-organized American cotton growers. The Africans noted that the \$3.7 billion in subsidies American cotton producers are expected to receive in 2003 is greater than the national income of each of their countries. They hoped to make headway on this massive disparity at last week's Cancun meeting, which brought together the world's trade ministers to advance the talks begun in Doha.

Instead, U.S. special interests won the day, and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick played the heavy. Deflecting the call for an end to protectionism, he said that, rather than selling cotton, impoverished farmers in the developing world should consider selling cotton shirts instead. Marie Antoinette's response to hungry French peasants, "Let them eat cake," cost Marie her head. Zoellick's equivalent, "Let them make shirts," brought him the fulsome praise of America's cotton lobby: National Cotton Council Chairman Robert Greene noted, "Robert Zoellick provided extraordinary leadership to the U.S. negotiating team."

When the impoverished countries refused to fold their hands at Cancun, negotiations were suspended, perhaps until after America's 2004 elections. Cheers and hoots went up throughout the anti-globalization crowd demonstrating outside the negotiating site. They took pleasure in the fact that the rich countries did not succeed in pushing another unfair deal down the throats of the poor. But, of course, Cancun was no victory at all for the poor: Their only satisfaction is that, as they continue to suffer and die, it won't be with their formal consent.

The farce of U.S. trade politics likely will not be debated in the upcoming election. No "Union of American Cotton Consumers" will rally in favor of free-market candidates. The truth is that the political pandering exhibited by President Bush and Karl Rove is not met with scorn by most Democrats but with envy. Candidates in both parties will pander to special interests in the election, even if the Democrats lack the smarmy self-righteousness of the White House. In fact, many leading contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination have already staked out protectionist positions. So the White House and the Democrats provide part of an answer to the question: Why do they hate us abroad? Because this rich and powerful country has stopped addressing the concerns and needs of the rest of the world—even in the case of the world's poorest people. ■

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