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## BILL CLINTON'S ADVICE

**F**ormer US president Bill Clinton's scathing attack on current US foreign policy, we hope, would make President George Bush and his advisers realise that even among the American establishment there is very strong resentment against the decision to war with Iraq as well as to the post-war pronouncements.

The former president had at a seminar held in New York on Tuesday said: 'if you got an interdependent world, you cannot kill, jail and occupy all your adversaries. Sooner or later you will have to make a deal'. He had said that the American paradigm after September 11 has been that the event had given America the right to interpret all future events in a way that everyone else in the world must agree with America. If they don't they can go to hell'.

The fact that such remarks have been made by a former American president in public should make President Bush realise that even though a war has been won, hearts and minds of Americans were not with him. Usually nations back their leaders in war – be it right or wrong – but as the dust settles and miseries, crimes and injustices come to the open, much of that national pride and bravado dissipates away. If the economy suffers, national leaders are dead ducks at the polls as what happened to the incumbent president's father.

There is a widespread belief that a prime reason why President Bush was determined to war against Iraq was his sagging popularity at home. Following the greatest American disaster in living memory on September 11, his War Against Global Terrorism has not been spectacular and failed to catch the imagination of the people. It is believed that President Bush's thinking was that eliminating Saddam Hussein and his dictatorship would send his popularity rate soaring in the US. Even if it did happen, the suffering of the Iraqis, the human tragedies and the inability of the invading forces

to do very much for the Iraqi people that are brought on TV screens into American homes, will over a period of time, be disastrous to those responsible for the war. Besides, though few, American soldiers are still being killed.

Unlike any other national leaders, American leaders have striven to be acceptable to the world at large. Their international image does count very much in pursuing global American interests. But right now there are no regions in the world that could be identified as being supportive of the American president or his foreign policy. Even in Europe, the traditional allies of the Americans, there is no pronounced support. After the military victory, European leaders such as the French and the Germans are reported to be attempting to build bridges to White House for the Spoils of War but these are the leaders who in turn will be subjected to the backlash of public suspicion.

The best option appears to be the United Nations controlling Iraq till an Iraqi regime comes into being. But that does not appear to go with the belligerent mood of President Bush who has already expended 75 billion dollars on the Iraqi war but with no Saddam Hussein to show as captive and no Weapons of Mass Destruction for which purpose the war was waged.

Irrespective of the future vacillation of the popularity rates of President Bush in the US, American popularity internationally is apparently hitting a universal low.

This is a nation that has spent billions – much more than on the war with Iraq – since the last war, in building up its image as a democratic, law abiding nation to win hearts and minds of the people around the world. ■

Courtesy, *The Island*, 18 April 2003, Editorial.

### The well-known novelist Margaret Drabble on the USA

**I detest Disneyfication, I detest Coca-Cola, I detest burgers, I detest sentimental and violent Hollywood movies that tell lies about history.**

**I detest American imperialism, American infantilism and American triumphalism about victories it didn't even win...**

**I hate feeling this hatred. I have to keep reminding myself that if Bush hadn't been (so narrowly) elected, we wouldn't be here, and none of this would have happened. There is another America. Long live the other America, and may this one pass away soon.**

**From *The Daily Telegraph*, London**