

EUROPE - THY NAME IS COWARDICE

Commentary by Mathias Döpfner

(Matthias Döpfner, Chief Executive of German publisher Axel Springer AG, has written a blistering attack in the daily WELT against the cowardice of Europe in the face of the Islamic threat. Hartmut Lau translated the article. Axel Springer AG is a major group of conservative media companies.)

A few days ago Henryk M. Broder wrote in Welt am Sonntag, "Europe - your family name is appeasement."

It's a phrase you can't get out of your head because it's so terribly true.

Appeasement cost millions of Jews and non-Jews their lives as England and France, allies at the time, negotiated and hesitated too long before they noticed that Hitler had to be fought, not bound to agreements. Appeasement stabilized communism in the Soviet Union and East Germany in that part of Europe where inhuman, suppressive governments were glorified as the ideologically correct alternative to all other possibilities.

Appeasement crippled Europe when genocide ran rampant in Kosovo and we Europeans debated and debated until the Americans came in and did our work for us. Rather than protecting democracy in the Middle East, European appeasement, camouflaged behind the fuzzy word "equidistance," now countenances suicide bombings in Israel by fundamentalist Palestinians.

Appeasement generates a mentality that allows Europe to ignore 300,000 victims of Saddam's torture and murder machinery and, motivated by the self-righteousness of the peace-movement, to issue bad grades to George Bush. A particularly grotesque form of appeasement is reacting to the escalating violence by Islamic fundamentalists in Holland and elsewhere by suggesting that we should really have a Muslim holiday in Germany.

What else has to happen before the European public and its political leadership get it? There is a sort of crusade underway, an especially perfidious crusade consisting of systematic attacks by fanatic Muslims, focused on civilians and directed against our free, open Western societies.

It is a conflict that will most likely last longer than the great military conflicts of the last century-a conflict conducted by an enemy that cannot be tamed by tolerance and accommodation but only spurred on by such gestures, which will be mistaken for signs of weakness.

Two recent American presidents had the courage needed for anti-appeasement: Reagan and Bush. Reagan ended the Cold War and Bush, supported only by the social democrat Blair acting on moral conviction, recognized the danger in

the Islamic fight against democracy. His place in history will have to be evaluated after a number of years have passed.

In the meantime, Europe sits back with charismatic self-confidence in the multicultural corner instead of defending liberal society's values and being an attractive center of power on the same playing field as the true great powers, America and China.

On the contrary-we Europeans present ourselves, in contrast to the intolerant, as world champions in tolerance, which even (Germany's Interior Minister) Otto Schily justifiably criticizes. Why? Because we're so moral? I fear it's more because we're so materialistic.

For his policies, Bush risks the fall of the dollar, huge amounts of additional national debt and a massive and persistent burden on the American economy-because everything is at stake.

While the alleged capitalistic robber barons in American know their priorities, we timidly defend our social welfare systems. Stay out of it! It could get expensive. We'd rather discuss the 35-hour workweek or our dental health plan coverage. Or listen to TV pastors preach about "reaching out to murderers." These days, Europe reminds me of an elderly aunt who hides her last pieces of jewelry with shaking hands when she notices a robber has broken into a neighbor's house. Europe, thy name is cowardice.