

THE OTHER SIDE OF

AMERICA

THE July 4 parades and festivities have faded a bit. Indeed, there's confusion in the air. Quietly, among themselves, a lot of Americans are wondering just what all the fuss has really been all about.

After all Saddam Hussein remains in power, and talk of Iraqi nuclear weapons is more about now than before. Furthermore, the Arab-Israeli quagmire remains more deadlocked than before. And furthermore still little seems to have changed in Kuwait.

There's an undertone of cynicism here about all that George Bush and company have accomplished. And there's not a lot of talk anymore about the "new world order" which is what we were supposed to have been fighting for.

In this context, sometimes the lone voice challenging conventional wisdom has a special importance and a considerable resonance.

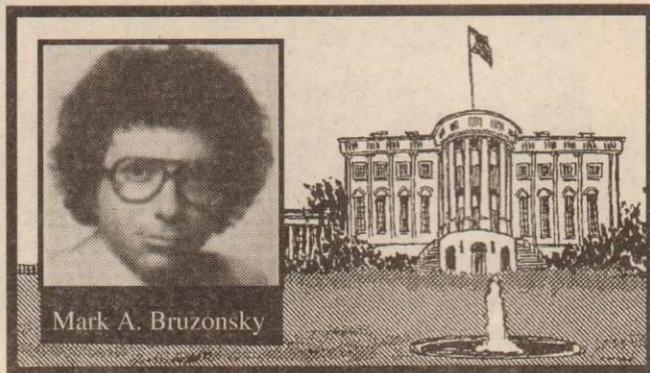
Such is the voice, and impact, of the *Washington Post's* Colman McCarthy.

He's not exactly a household word, especially outside of Washington circles - even though he did appear a few weeks back on the very popular Donahue television programme with host Phil Donahue giving him a rather sympathetic hearing.

And admittedly McCarthy is a longtime "peacenik" if you will. But whatever one's views of McCarthy's overall philosophical and existential outlooks, the column he published a few days ago in the *Washington Post* deserves a lot of consideration. And for that reason allow me the liberty of quoting extensively from it:

"Cheap repugnancies were on display when US military leaders ordered the saturation bombing of Iraq that slaughtered tens of thousands of civilians and near-defenceless soldiers. Now a sickening event offering parallel disgust

From



Washington

has surfaced: the money deals of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf to cash in on the massacre that he orchestrated."

That's McCarthy's brutal opening paragraph to his column titled *Schwarzkopf's price for glory*.

"A ghostwriter is being rounded up to put the general's words into a memoir for which Bantam Books is paying an advance estimated at more than \$5 million. Schwarzkopf, who remains on the public payroll until an August 31 retirement, has promised to come up with a book 'of high interest and enduring value'. While exchanging martial arts for literary arts, the general will also be turning a quick and huge buck at sundry podia. His lecture agents are reported to be lining him up for \$60,000-plus speeches. Lots of enduring value there too, for him.

"As Schwarzkopf leaves the army...none of his superiors - Bush, Cheney or Powell - appears to be up to the task of ordering him to wait until he's out of uniform to exercise his greed. Generals aren't paid to cut deals with publishers or lecture bureaus," McCarthy so rightly notes as he then proceeds to call the new American hero, Schwarzkopf, some names few have dared put into print.

"This is a hustler," McCarthy writes, "who has large lusts for money. He has been showing up everywhere...to announce how much he loves America and what an honour it has been to serve the flag. If that's true why is he getting the hell out of the army at the first chance?"

"Schwarzkopf went before the maps with what passed for wit, reaching a peak with his 'Hail Mary' cracks. Having

dabbled in show biz in the Gulf, it follows that he tap dances on, with a \$5 million book deal and \$60,000 per self-serving speech.

"What will Schwarzkopf, the war profiteer, be writing and talking about?" McCarthy continues.

"Will his book have a chapter on 'military fairies', the gay-bashing phrase he used in a speech at West Point to demean those who dared criticise the US army? Will he share the spiritual joys he felt at overseeing an air war that one of his pilots called 'a turkey shoot' after blowing away defeated, unarmed Iraqis on the roads north? How about a speech on the topic of swords-into-stock-shares, now that US arms sales...have resumed in preparation for the next war and next US intervention.

"Much of America, and most of the media, relish Schwarzkopf because he keeps the nation's eyelids securely closed on the moral blindness about our violence to Iraqi citizens in the name of stopping Saddam Hussein. The parades led by Schwarzkopf and his troops were spectacles of distraction. The effect of US bombing on Iraq's electrical plants - 18 out of 20 were hit - had led to a public health disaster for Iraqis suffering from epidemics of several diseases that are worsened by malnutrition. An estimated 170,000 children face death in the next year.

"During the war Pentagon

General Norman Schwarzkopf



liars said that only military targets were being bombed. They showed films to prove it. Now the line is that power plants were also bombed, because Saddam's war machine needed the electricity. By that rationale, it isn't a great leap to justify bombing homes, which the US did, because Saddam supporters were hiding in them.

"What is Schwarzkopf's message to the women and children of Iraq, whose photographs are showing up in US newspapers - mothers cradling starving infants in impoverished hospitals one day and burying them in local cemeteries the next? With his haul of money to boast of his non-heroics in a risk-free exercise that was a skirmish for the United States and a massacre for Iraqis, the huckstering general's word to the women and children is this: 'I'm rich, you're poor. In your face'."