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Herald Sun

Melbourne, Australia, Friday, December 5, 2003

The power of one

by *Andrew Bolt*



IN many James Bond films, 007 must battle some megalomaniac tycoon who plots to dominate the world by toppling governments and triggering wars.

It's always some nasty Right-winger, of course. In *Tomorrow Never Dies*, for instance, the filmmakers thought it would be a hoot to cast my boss, **Rupert Murdoch**, in the black hat.

How the Leftists who dominate Hollywood must have sniggered at the slur.

How odd, then, to find those same Hollywood liberals this week cosying up

to the very billionaire who most resembles that Bond villain -- currency speculator **George Soros**, fresh from toppling his latest president, this time in Georgia.

And how predictable -- to those with an eye for history -- to find that Soros is no Right-winger, but a preacher of the New Age Left.

You may remember Soros as the **American** financier who, in 1992, bet \$20 billion that the British pound would fall, and made a \$1.5 billion profit in one day.

Or you may remember how he made another fortune when Asia's financial markets crashed in 1997 -- a disaster that Malaysia's then leader, **Dr Mahathir Mohamad**, accused Soros of having caused for cash.

Some Australians have a sweeter reason to remember Soros. Top drug experts such as Melbourne's Dr **Nick Crofts** and Sydney's **Dr Alex Wodak** have received grants from his Lindesmith Foundation, which aggressively promotes their brand of "harm minimisation".

Soros's Open Society Institute also organised a petition to the United Nations demanding an end to the "war on drugs", and had it signed here by Victorian Treasurer **John Brumby**, drug adviser Professor **David Penington**, High Court judge **Michael Kirby** and a gabble of our politicians.

■OF course, Australia is only one of 50 countries in which Soros works. And his meddling here is nothing given what he's just done in Georgia.

Georgia has long been led by President **Eduard Shevardnadze**, the former Soviet Union's foreign minister under **Mikhail Gorbachev**.

Soros, who spends \$1 billion a year to promote his vision of the "Open Society", was a Shevardnadze supporter, but fell out with him, calling him a crook.

He then backed Georgia's former justice minister, **Mikhail Saakashvili**, and spent some \$4 million on a protest movement against the president. His organisations brought in experts in "non-violent revolution" from Serbia, gave \$700,000 to an activist group that bussed in protesters, and financed an anti-government TV station and newspaper.

It worked. Last month, protesters smashed into Georgia's parliament, yelling -- probably correctly -- that Shevardnadze had stolen the elections a month ago and must quit. Shevardnadze fled, and Saakashvili looks set for leadership.

True, this may turn out to be a victory for democracy. But it also looks like a victory for a foreign tycoon and his sponsored mates.

Indeed, the editor-in-chief of the *Georgian Messenger* newspaper this week said: "It's generally accepted public opinion here that Mr Soros is the person who planned the Shevardnadze overthrow." Shevardnadze says he's certain of it.

■NOR is this the first time Soros undermined a foreign government. From 1991, he spent up to \$100 million on activists campaigning against the president of Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia, **Slobodan Milosevic**.

He was also a huge donor to Human Rights Watch, and with six of his associates sat on its advisory committee on Europe.

In the early 1990s, the Kosovo Liberation Army began killing officials in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo. Its tactic was brutally simple: to provoke Serbian troops into retaliating so violently that the horrified West would intervene to give Kosovo independence.

It worked -- not least because the HRW condemned Serbia's reprisals so noisily that it boasted it had helped to inspire NATO's bombing of Serbia.

After NATO's "victory", Soros gave money to the United Nations' new International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and paid for training for its judges and prosecutor. He also paid two American law faculties to help the prosecutor find evidence against Serbia's suspected war criminals -- and Milosevic.

Yes, Milosevic is repulsive. But is it healthy for a billionaire like Soros to be so involved in triggering a war, creating a court and then helping to prosecute in it the leaders of the regime he's worked so hard to topple? Who elected him? Who holds him accountable?

And now, of course, we've signed up to the International Criminal Court that Soros spent millions lobbying for -- a court which, under its rules, must

consult groups of the kind Soros himself funds.

So far, you may argue, Soros has acted against only thugs and tyrants. But now he's moving against the leader of the world's greatest democracy, US President **George W. Bush**.

Last month, Soros declared that "America, under Bush, is a danger to the world", and defeating the president was now "the central focus of my life".

HE said he would give \$13 million -- the largest individual political donation in US history -- to America Coming Together, a far-Left group of pro-Democrat activists, and up to \$4 million for a Left-wing think tank. Another \$6 million would go to the radical MoveOn.org protest group.

"I've come to the conclusion that one can do a lot more about the issues I care about by changing the Government than by pushing the issues," Soros said.

Soros could say that without fussing many journalists because which of them fears the Left? Imagine the uproar if Rupert Murdoch had said it instead.

Still, I can understand why Soros isn't content with simply "pushing the issues", given what happened when one of his companies in 1986 bought Spectrum 7, an oil outfit owned by George Bush, whose father was the then US Vice-President.

"We were buying political influence," Soros said bluntly. Sadly, the Bushes didn't play ball with that bit of issue pushing, and "it didn't come to anything".

But this new tack already seems to be buying results.

■JUST this week, the wife of **Larry David**, creator of *Seinfeld*, invited Hollywood's elite to a "Hate Bush" event for the Soros-sponsored Americans Coming Together (and never mind that mixed message).

And here we see the newest threats to democratic government in this globalised world -- of celebrity activists, unaccountable "rights" groups and messianic tycoons from Soros to **Ted Turner**, all so terribly sure of their virtue.

Mix them up and who knows what the explosion will do. It could destroy a tyranny, or distort a democracy. There's no predicting which, because the targets are as idiosyncratic as the whims of George Soros, a man with far more dollars than sense, and fewer restraints than either. ■

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