

## Clemenza and Tessio are like Britain and France

Laura E. Ruberto (July 03, 2008)



The Pax Corleone, or what happens when two political analysts offer a close reading of "The Godfather" in an effort to explain contemporary US politics

A critique of the US capitalist system. A comment on the Cold War. We've all heard these (and other) political-economic readings of both Mario Puzo's novel and Francis Ford Coppola's film(s).

I came across John C. Hulsman and A. Wess Mitchell's article "Pax Corleone" while checking out the ["Readings" section of the July issue of \[2\]Harper's \[2\]](#) that has been lying around my house for a few weeks now. It was first published in [February 2008 in The National Interest Online \[3\]](#), a site that



describes itself as a place that houses “informed analysis and frank but reasoned exchanges on foreign policy and international affairs.”

For the sake of getting out a quick blog post, let’s put aside all the cultural readings of the film and novel that intertwine such ideas as assimilation, ethnic identity, masculinity, gender, domesticity, religion, etc.

And let’s not even humor the idea of taking on those anti-defamation issues that always come up when someone utters the word godfather. Yawn.

Instead, take some time (10 minutes should probably do it) and read Hulsman and Mitchell’s description of what they call “the Sicilian art of alliance management” (could this be irony?).

In other words, what happens when the stories of the Tattaglias (misspelled in the article), Sollozzo, the “cakemaker” (Enzo the baker, unnamed in the article), and of course Michael and his family are meticulously applied to contemporary US foreign policy and the 2008 presidential race?

And does it make a difference that [Barack Obama names The Godfather as one of his all-time favorite movies](#) [4]?

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