

**Beyond Globalization: Approaching “America” Through
the State-Private Network, Culture, and Ideology**

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Abstract

The argument in this essay is that conceptions of “globalization” as a system rather than a process can be misleading, diverting our attention from fundamental issues regarding nation-states, geopolitics, and international relations. In particular, the essay contends that any consideration of political, economic, and cultural processes must incorporate two areas that are often marginalized or ignored: 1) far from disappearing as a central actor in international processes, the State—in particular, the US State—has increased in prominence; 2) consideration of that US State and its place in global relations must recognize the presence and power of an American “ideology” constructed by that State in co-operation with many “private” groups. The essay suggests that historical consideration of US foreign policy since 1945 takes us beyond both traditional “diplomatic history” and “globalization” through the examination of a State-private network. This essay does not, however, submit to the notion of a “hegemony” which is simply imposed by the American State-private network upon the rest of the world. To the contrary, tensions and even contradictions within both US foreign policy and American ideology lead to a space, both physical and discursive, where there can be local, regional, and international negotiations and responses. We are not simply observers of American power, but our own power will be limited if confined to abstract notions of “glocalisation”.

Keywords

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There is one occasion in the career of every British-based academic when he or she can speak without fear of intervention. No questions are asked, and no heckling is allowed. So, at my Inaugural Lecture in May 2001, I declared, “The greatest threat to the world is not Islamic fundamentalism but American fundamentalism—‘Americanism’”.

Much has happened in the following year. Yet, in light of all that has occurred not only in the United States and Afghanistan, in Israel and Palestine, and throughout the “axis of evil” but also in countries as diverse as Colombia, Somalia, and the Philippines, I stand by my statement.

Such an assertion requires not only a declaration of a politicized view, an acceptance that “objectivity” is not possible and, indeed, not necessarily desirable. It also demands a difficult negotiation of a number of prevalent or emerging schools of thought. So I would like to lay out my path with four assertions.

First, the US State matters. In 2002, as much as in 1952, the State—politically, economically, militarily, and culturally—is a prominent, if not the dominant, actor in defining “American” activity and the “American” perspective in international affairs.

I assert this particularly because I believe that many models of “globalization or “trans-national” interaction have erred by marginalizing or even writing out the State. In the “elite” or “top-down” version of these models, globalization has shifted from being a process to a controlling system. Donald Pease, one the foremost scholars in American Studies, has written recently, “If the globe has become a vast interlocking system for the production, accumulation, and distribution of capital, the nation state can no longer function as the operative category either for the regulation or the disruption of these processes (Pease 2001:85)”.

I certainly agree that “globalization” is significant. It was a process, beginning centuries before it became a 20th-century catchphrase, that took political, economic, and cultural formations beyond the “nation”. However, when globalization is elevated into an end in itself, it becomes a caricature of power. Pease was instrumental in the 1990s in projecting the concept of an American-led cultural imperialism but, when he sacrifices the “nation-state” for the “globe”, he sacrifices any meaningful evaluation of that cultural imperialism. Similarly, Roland Robertson, with his constructions of globalization as “process” and globalization as “program”, ends with the claim, “America is not integrated into the world system but is marginal in many behaviors (Robertson 2002)”.

However well-meaning, such statements risk naiveté. Even Pease, within two paragraphs of his assertion, is offering the correction of Linda Weiss, “Rather than counter-posing the nation-state and the global market as antinomies, in

certain important respects we find that ‘globalization’ is often the byproduct of states promoting the internationalization strategies of their corporations”. Robertson, admitting that he and allies have sought globalization as a positive alternative for political and economic issues of the late 20th century, has no way of confronting the “marginal” power of the US. He is left falling back, after 11 September, on swipes at those who would critique American foreign policy as “politically correct” and on his proclamation that, while Scottish-born, “By the way, I am an American citizen (Robertson 2002)”.

I assert the significance of the US State because I am also concerned about “grassroots” or “bottom-up” versions of globalization or trans-national interaction. I agree with Paul Gilroy’s assertion that “neither political nor economic structures of domination are still simply co-extensive with national borders” and sympathies with Stuart Hall’s search for a “model of the transverse relations of power that crisscross the globe (See Gilroy 1993, Hall 1996)”. I am troubled, however, that the State is absent from Gilroy’s work (with significant consequences for his theory of the “Black Atlantic”, disturbed that Hall has set his confrontation, in his work of the 1980s, with the role of the State in culture as well as politics.

Second, US power matters. Trans-Atlantic and international interchange does not occur on a level playing field, in respect to resources, geographic scope, and influence. Thus, I am unsettled by an outpouring of purported evaluations of “Americanization”. Leave aside, for the moment, that almost all studies consider Americanization in relation to the US and the “core” of Europe and that the “periphery” of Asia (except for Japan), the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America remains peripheral. Consider that even moderate statements such as Richard Pells’ reassuring conception of a two-way process, with Europe influencing the US (Pells 1997), are made in isolation from the contexts of political, economic, and cultural power. They can lead to caricatures such as the assertions by prominent historians such as Geir Lundestad and Volker Berghahn: “In the 1990s, Europe remained culturally as attached to the US as it had ever been, as measured in everything from the popularity of American movies and television programs to the increase in sales of Coke in Central and Eastern Europe” or “While there is still some European criticism of [American] culture, often using well-worn arguments going back as far as the 1920s, the fear of it has largely disappeared. On the contrary, intellectuals and the educated bourgeoisie have long joined in its enjoyment (Lundestad 1999, Berghahn 1999)”.

I am especially concerned by such representations of “Americanization” because, third, US ideology matters. One must consider not just the State and power but its projection and justification through an organizing (or rationalizing) principle of “freedom”. Yet most US-based scholars have not ventured to

critique the notion of an American ideology. Some, such as Daniel Bell in the 1950s and Francis Fukuyama in the 1990s, have tried to deny ideology by making it “natural” and “universal” (Bell 1960, Fukuyama 1992). Others have reinforced and promoted it. In 1997 John Gaddis, perhaps the best-known American diplomatic historian, summarized his book-length proclamation *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, “NAIVE IMPRESSION: THE COLD WAR HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH GOOD AND EVIL (Gaddis 1997)”. Just to make sure we knew who was “good”, Tony Smith elucidated:

America’s victory in the struggles against fascism and communism between 1939 and 1989...has resulted for much of the globe in a fundamental reorganization of political power in a morally positive direction. For the moment, if democratic government is the only unchallenged form of state legitimacy virtually everywhere in the world, if social questions such as the rights of women and minorities are so widespread on almost everyone’s political agenda, if economic questions concerning the relative roles of state and society everywhere have common themes, then sure it is because of the worldwide impact of a philosophical—some might prefer to say an ideological—conviction that mobilized American resolve to win the struggles against Fascism and communism (Smith 1999:174-88).

This “triumphalism” is not just an affliction of old-fashioned “diplomatic” historians. As Pells, Lundestad, and Berghahn demonstrate, it has also shaped intellectual and cultural history. The emerging scholar Jessica Gienow-Hecht, in the guise of critiquing theories of cultural transfer, tips her hand when she vanquishes concepts of cultural imperialism by repeating Paul Hollander’s polemic that the appeal of “anti-Americanism” can be explained simply because its proponents “often settled in university towns” (Gienow-Hecht 2000:478).

Challenging both an uncomplicated globalization and notions of transnational communities, this is very much a “national” ideology. It is one of American exceptionalism going back almost 400 years, long before the establishment of the United States. John Winthrop’s (1630) declaration, “We must consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us”, still holds a powerful appeal. Thus, we have the paradox that the “United States”, officially resting on the separation of Church and State, rests upon the assertion of a public faith in “nation”. It is the paradigm of a civic religion (See, for example, Kammen 1991, Wills 1988).

Fourth, this US “nation” matters as the construction and extension of the State and political, economic, cultural, and ideological processes. As Salman Sayyid (2002) has concisely stated, “America is a dominant construct”, and this

dominant construct is a powerful obstacle to any assertion of a “post-national” environment. I am firmly behind Donald Pease’s question, “Is post-nationalism a form of US cultural nationalism?”. Where we diverge is Pease’s vision, similar to Robertson’s “globalization”, “The post-national...has established a kind of resistance to US nationalism (Pease 2001:83-85)”. The problems with Pease’s lack of a defined resistance emerges, unintentionally, in Paul Giles’ complaint:

A question arises whether American Studies might not become a redundant tautology: the remains of a patriotic age of empire-building that bears little relevance to the transnational networks of the 1990s...For all the talk about post-national narratives and comparatist perspectives, it remains very difficult to dislodge many of the primary foundational assumptions about American Studies because such assumptions are bound unconsciously to a residual transcendentalism that fails to acknowledge the national specificity of its own discourse (Giles 1994:337, 344).

Giles’ “transnational networks” are eclipsed not because of an antiquated concept of “American Studies” but because “national specificity” resides in structures, policies, and activities as well as discourse. The outcome is that Giles (1998) concludes, “From this point of view, America is valuable not for what it might be in itself, but for the interference it creates in others”, but with my focus upon the State and the history of US covert operations, my reading of American “interference” is not quite so positive.

What I am proposing is the critique, before and after 11 September 2001, of the State-private network, culture, and ideology.

For me, the historical framework of this critique is established with the American approach to a “total” Cold War. The conflict after 1945 between the US and the Soviet Union, involving not only diplomats, military power, and economic strength but also “ways of life”. As the seminal US document NSC 68, the blueprint for an American offensive in 1950, asserted:

The vast majority of Americans are confident that the system of values which animates our society—the principles of freedom, tolerance, the importance of the individual and the supremacy of reason over all—are valid and more vital than the ideology which is the fuel of Soviet dynamism. Translated into terms relevant to the lives of other peoples, our system of values can become perhaps a powerful appeal to millions who now seek or find in authoritarianism a refuge from anxieties, bafflement, and insecurity (State Department/Department of Defense 1950).

At one level, the years after 1945 marked the formation of an American “national security state”. Military services were unified in a Department of Defense, an Atomic Energy Commission was created to supervise the development of both civilian and military uses, a Central Intelligence Agency was established, and the Executive Branch organized and consolidated the making of foreign policy through the National Security Council. This was the era of sweeping statements such as the Truman Doctrine, multibillion-dollar initiatives such as the Marshall Plan, politico-military programs such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and specific conflicts such as the Korean War as well as a general increase in Government budgets and US involvement in countries throughout the world.

There was much more, however, to the American campaign. The crusade for freedom required not only a bureaucratic structure, military resources, and economic strength but also the mobilization of an ideology of “freedom”. While freedom may have become an inherent part of Americanism over three centuries, it was now consciously upheld as the contrasting bulwark to the evils of the Soviet system:

Unwillingly our free society finds itself mortally challenged by the Soviet system. No other value system is so wholly irreconcilable with ours, so implacable in its purpose to destroy ours, so capable of turning to its own uses the most dangerous and divisive trends in our own society, no other so skilfully and powerfully evokes the elements of irrationality in human nature everywhere, and no other has the support of a great and growing center of military power (State Department/Department of Defense 1950).

Thus the Truman Doctrine of 1947 transformed the Cold War from a case-by-case conflict with the Soviet Union to a global showdown not because of its immense geopolitical aim of providing aid to Greece and Turkey, not because of its place in the domestic struggle with a Congress reluctant to authorize such aid, but because of the ideological framing of the American mission:

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a

controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures (Truman 1947).

This ideological commitment meant that, far from being a foreign policy of “containment”, the American strategy sought to vanquish Soviet Communism. By October 1949, the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff was producing arrangements for “Political Warfare against the USSR”, including balloon drops of propaganda and training of “anti-Soviet elements [as] airborne and parachute guerrilla units” (Davies 1949). Ideology also placed a lens, often a distorting if not a false one, over struggles in the so-called Third World, converting pro-American authoritarian regimes into “free” Governments and reducing nationalist movements to Communist puppets of Moscow.

But how to wage this political warfare, to spread “freedom” through political, economic, military, and even covert activity? Any direction by the Government of freedom’s war against the Soviets would contradict the very ideology it was promoting. “Freedom” had to be upheld by “free” individuals acting “freely”.

Thus, the Government began to develop the State-private network. Such a network was not unprecedented—World War II had brought much closer connections between the Government, business, labor, media, academia, and other sectors—but now it was to be mobilized in peacetime. As the State Department’s George Kennan, one of the architects of US foreign policy, wrote in 1948:

What is proposed here is an operation in the traditional American form: organized public support of resistance to tyranny in foreign countries. Throughout our history, private American citizens have banded together to champion the cause of freedom for people suffering under oppression...Our proposal is that this tradition be revived specifically to further American national interests in the present crisis (Kennan 1948).

The network was launched through specific initiatives to “liberate” nations from the Communist bloc. The National Committee for Free Europe, spurred by George Kennan and his Policy Planning Staff, was nominally led by a “private” group of directors which included Chairman Joseph Grew (former Under-Secretary of State) and a Board with Dwight Eisenhower (former Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, later President of the United States), Lucius Clay (former US Military Commander in Germany) and Allen Dulles (former intelligence officer, later Director of Central Intelligence). More than 75 percent of its funds were provided by the CIA, its guidance was shaped by State

Department and CIA officers, and CIA liaison personnel worked with NCFE officials on a daily basis. DeWitt Poole, who had been responsible for US intelligence's Foreign Nationalities Branch in World War II, became NCFE's Executive Secretary; Frank Altschul, another World War II intelligence veteran, would become the director of NCFE's broadcasting.

Staffed by Eastern Europe émigrés, NCFE's activities included pamphlets, booklets, leaflets dropped by hot-air balloons into the "captive nations", a Free European University in Exile in Strasbourg, France, films, and tours of a Freedom Bell, as well as its most famous (and long-lasting) project, Radio Free Europe. The domestic side of the operation, Crusade for Freedom, provided more than cover for covert support through "fund-raising"; it also helped mobilize the support of the population for an aggressive foreign policy through Freedom-grams, the Freedom Bell, Freedom Scrolls, helpful newspaper and magazine articles, and even the highest honor for radio broadcasting, the George Peabody Award, "for the promotion of international understanding" (Lucas 1999).

NCFE was only the opening salvo in the US campaign. The CIA had established an invaluable precedent with its intervention into the French and Italian elections in spring 1948. Fearing that the Communists might legitimately become part of a ruling coalition, the Truman Administration authorized "all available economic, political, and, if necessary, military means to ensure that Italy remained a friendly, independent, democratic, and anti-Communist state (NSC 1947)". In addition to overt propaganda such as Voice of America broadcasts (with contributions from Eleanor Roosevelt, Bing Crosby, and Frank Sinatra) and State Department publicity, the CIA supported letter-writing campaigns, clandestine radio stations, distribution of US films with anti-Communist messages such as *Ninotchka*, and "free" newspapers. Millions of dollars was given to the ruling Christian Democratic Party and to non-Communist trade unions. Similar measures were implemented in France (Lucas 1999:45-46).

The specific success of the operation spurred the formation of a general network. Overseas operations of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations through recurrent subsidies from the CIA and the appointment of Tom Braden, a former intelligence officer who moved in New York social circles, to oversee the program. By 1951 the CIA had gone beyond the labor program with the establishment of the International Organizations Division, headed by Braden, to coordinate all aspects of "private" activity. Student groups (including the National Student Association), women's groups, the US Olympic Team, prominent artists (notably the Abstract Expressionist movement), orchestras such as the Boston Philharmonic, religious groups, academics, even critically-acclaimed American journals: wittingly or

unwittingly, all were financed by the CIA. Europe's leading non-Communist intellectual movement, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, was a joint creation of the US Government and intellectuals such as Sidney Hook and Arthur Koestler. Its publications, including the leading British journal *Encounter*, relied on Agency money; eventually CIA operatives would be inserted as editors (Lucas 2001).

This unprecedented venture to forge State-backed "private" international ventures laid the foundation for the next 50 years. CIA funding of the web of organizations would be dramatically exposed by the press during the Vietnam War but elements of the network would survive. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, which broadcast into the Soviet Union, would be re-presented as publicly-funded services. In the 1980s the National Endowment for Democracy would be established by the Reagan Administration as a new quasi-public "umbrella" group organizing and fostering anti-Communist efforts. Covert support would continue for organizations fighting old fights, such as the showdown with Fidel Castro's Cuba, and new ones, such as campaigns in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Iran, and Afghanistan.

This record of the State-private crusade is impressive (or horrifying, depending on your point of view) enough, but its legacy went well beyond the formal network. This was the formation of an entire Cold War "culture", including overt as well as covert State support, coercion as well as cooperation, and private autonomy as well as subservience, to make the most of those who would fight America's enemies and isolate, even punish, those who questioned the effort.

Well before Joseph McCarthy waved his fist and claimed that Communists had infiltrated the State Department, President Truman's advisor Clark Clifford was setting out a re-election strategy to tar the candidate of the Progressive Party, Henry Wallace: "Every effort must be made now to jointly and at one and the same time—although, of course, by different groups, to dissuade [Wallace] and also identify him and isolate him in the public mind with the Communists (Quoted in Ross 1968). It was the duty of "good" liberals to defeat not only Moscow but also "bad" liberals who were traveling with the other side. So Americans for Democratic Action would vanquish the Progressive Citizens of America, who were sinfully calling for a "true" program of civil rights for racial minorities, equal rights for women, fairer laws for trade unions, and increased social spending as well as avoidance of confrontation with the Soviet Union. The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations would expel branches who were too far "left". The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People would effectively expel W.E.B. DuBois, perhaps the leading African-American voice opposing domestic racism and overseas colonialism, and join the condemnation of Paul Robeson, the cultural

virtuoso who had publicly stated that African-Americans would not fight against the Soviet Union. Eleanor Roosevelt would castigate other leading women who called for "peace" without sufficient anti-Soviet vigor. American society had defined the acceptable limits of "Americanism" even as it promoted its universal goodness (See Lucas 2001, Laville 2002, Lucas and Laville 1996).

And, despite Vietnam, despite Watergate, despite the ostensible end of the Cold War, that process continues today. Consider the environment of 2001, even before the events of 11 September.

First, far from disappearing, the US State has been displaying its brute power. Before taking office in January 2001, the Bush Administration signaled its intention to increase defense spending sharply, notably in the development of a National Missile Defense. Just as significantly, the Administration stressed its intention to pursue a unilateral approach; within months, it had signaled that it would withdraw or pull out of negotiations on international agreements, including arms control treaties, the Kyoto Agreement on the environment, the establishment of an International Criminal Court, and restrictions on biological and chemical weapons and on mines. It confronted China to the point of open conflict and scared European allies. *The Guardian* of London summarized after George Bush's tour of Europe in June 2001, "Europeans can indeed now see Mr. Bush for what he is: the affable, inflexible front man for a rightwing business, political and military alliance intent on pursuing the logic of solo superpower to its domineering conclusion (*The Guardian* [London] 2002)".

So, despite the short-lived panic on 11 September in which a frightened George Bush air-hopped deeper and deeper into the interior of the country, the US State was prepared, "diplomatically", militarily, and rhetorically, to wage a "war on terrorism" in which Osama bin Laden, and then the Taliban, were only the first targets. Sweeping legislation was proposed for "homeland security" as more than 1,000 people were detained without charge. Billions of dollars were added to the budgets of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency as well as the military services. Hasty talks were conducted with countries through the Middle East and Central Asia to accept US action and, if possible, US bases. And, far from least, the US was readying an aerial and ground assault which would effectively bypass the United Nations, NATO, and its Cold War allies (with the possible exception of Britain).

The power of the State, however, was not sufficient to ensure a campaign against the enemy, particularly as it would quickly shift from bin Laden and al-Qa'eda (whose responsibility for 11 September was not substantiated by publicly-available evidence) to the Taliban (who had condemned the attacks within hours and who had indicated a willingness to discuss the extradition of bin Laden). An ideology of "Americanism" had to be mobilized, one which would override any diplomatic, legal, or ethical objections to military action.

The understandable reactions of horror, sorrow, and anger to 11 September had brought forth an emotive of Americanism, as in the ubiquitous display of the American flag, the public utterances of the Pledge of Allegiance, and the singing of “God Bless America” as an unofficial National Anthem, even the code names of the military operations against Afghanistan (“Infinite Justice”, “Enduring Freedom”). David Halberstam, formerly known as an incisive critic of the American adventure in Vietnam, framed the ideology in “Who We Are”: “I have seen the resilience of American democracy time and again...and I have come to admire the loyalty and energies and resolve of free men and women freely summoned (Halberstam 2001)”.

It was also striking how this Americanism led to a privileging of the 11 September tragedies as immediate “history”. Without belittling the terrible cost of the 3,000 deaths on that day (a cost compounded emotionally by initial estimates ranging up to 15,000), one might contrast the public reaction to the “day that changed history” to the lack of reaction to other man-made tragedies with even higher casualty figures, such as the Union Carbide leak at Bhopal, India, in 1984, the US military’s shelling of Panamanian shanty towns in 1989, or (in terms of long-term casualties) the American bombing of the Sudanese pharmaceutical factory in 1998.

What is significant for me is how the State harnessed these reactions in its preparations for the war against Afghanistan. A significant, perhaps defining, example is George W. Bush’s visit to “Ground Zero”² on 14 September. Bush, receiving widespread criticism for his immediate flight after the attacks, for his stumbling promise to deal with the “folks” responsible for the attacks, and for his delay in coming to New York, stood in a windbreaker and jeans atop a pile of rubble. As “one of the people”, with his arm around a firefighter, Bush explained how the United States would emerge stronger from adversity. However, it was only when a man in the crowd yelled, “We can’t hear you!”, that Bush found his voice. He proclaimed, “I can hear you. The rest of the world hears you, and the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon”. As one, the audience responded with the pounding, almost primitive, refrain of a tribal Americanism: “U-S-A! U-S-A! U-S-A!”³

Formal proclamations were no less strident. In his formal address to Congress on 20 September, President Bush assured:

² Even the term “Ground Zero” is an example of how American ideology can re-construct a contested meaning in the service of “Americanism”. Originally the term referred to the center of a nuclear attack, as in Hiroshima in 1945, and reflected fears about US power rather than commemoration of US sacrifice in the service of humanity.

³ The visit was carried live on Fox News on 14 September and this extract was shown repeatedly in following days.

We are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done (Bush 2001a).

In this campaign, there was no middle ground, no possibility of disagreement on detail with the US strategy, for such disagreement would be interpreted as a betrayal of “good” ideology. As Bush would declare in January, “If...you don't hold the values we hold dear true to your heart, then you, too, are on our watch list (Bush 2002)”.

Once again, however, we must remember that this American ideology was not created with the collapse of the World Trade Center. The event only crystallized the post-Cold War ideological formation of the 1990s, as the US tried to define itself against new enemies. On the “positive” side, Fukuyama’s “end of history” was a clumsy attempt to establish a US-defined “liberal democracy” as the final point of all human activity. Its “negative” counterpart was Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” thesis: “The fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural (Huntington 1993)”.⁴

So the Clinton years were far from a dismissal of Americanism. To the contrary, Clinton’s National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, claimed to reject the “clash of civilizations” but merely put a nicer face on America’s encounter with “rogue nations”:

Our policy must face the recalcitrant and outlaw states that not only choose to remain outside the family but also assault its basic values. There are few “backlash” states: Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and Libya. For now they lack the resources of a superpower, which would enable them to seriously threaten the democratic order being created around them. Nevertheless, their behavior is often aggressive and defiant. The ties between them are growing as they seek to thwart or quarantine themselves from a global trend to which they seem incapable or adapting (Lake 1994:45).

Lake asserted, “This is not a clash of civilizations”, but his next sentence used language which could have taken directly from the apocalyptic vision of

⁴ See also Huntington, Samuel P. (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon and Schuster; and the critique of Mohsen M. Milani and Michael Gibbons, “Huntington’s Dangerous Paradigm”, *Global Dialogue* (Winter 2001), pp. 18-32.

NSC 68, "Rather, it is a contest that pits nations and individuals guided by openness, responsive government and moderation against those animated by isolation, repression and extremism". Only the labels for the ideological menace had changed: "The enemies of the tolerant society are not some nameless, faceless force. They are extreme nationalists and tribalists, terrorists, organized criminals, coup plotters, rogue states and all those who would return newly freed societies to the intolerant ways of the past (Lake 1994b)".

Clinton himself proclaimed that the American Century was about to become the American Millennium:

We begin the 21st century well-poised to be that guiding light [for the world]. Seldom in our history and never in my lifetime has our Nation enjoyed such a combination of widespread economic success, social solidarity, and national self-confidence, without an internal crisis or an overarching external threat. Never has the openness and dynamism of our society been more emulated by other countries. Never have our values of freedom, democracy, and opportunity been more ascendant in the world (Clinton 2000).

Even if the Clinton Administration presented a friendlier, more caring face than its successor, it could use this ideology to justify the bombing of Sudan, renewable air assaults and sanctions against Iraq contributing to hundreds of thousands of deaths, and the consideration of a destructive assault against North Korea. It could pay lip service to international co-operation to alleviate suffering while resisting effective action on debt relief, the AIDS crisis in Africa, environmental change, and corporate abuse.

It is far from surprising that the Bush Administration's "war from terrorism" could draw upon the support of a State-private network, for that network has never gone away. The most visible example of the network has been the US media, which with almost no exceptions not only accepted but trumpeted the Administration's "Operation Enduring Freedom" (formerly "Infinite Justice"). Former Government officials now presented or interpreted the news, such as the reports of Pete Williams (the Department of Defense's spokesman in the Gulf War) now presented reports for NBC and General Wesley Clark's analyses for CNN. All networks put non-stop patriotic slogans, such as "America Strikes Back", and permanent symbolic flags on television screens. (Newscasters initially sported American-flag pins in the lapels of their jackets) (Lucas 2001).

The manifestations of the network have occurred throughout American society, however. Hollywood film and television executives met with Bush advisor Karl Rove in October to discuss how they could play their part in the war on terrorism. One immediate outcome was the idea of a broadcast by Muhammad Ali on Al-Jazeera television (which initially was reviled by the US

Government) explaining how the United States welcomed and respected the beliefs of Muslims. Subsequent cooperation has led to initiatives such as a special episode of *JAG*, a Fox television series about Navy lawyers, in which accused terrorists are tried by a military tribunal. (Needless to say, the terrorists receive a fair hearing) (“Tribunal” 2002).

The world of advertising has played its part not only with special campaigns at home to reassure the American people of the rightness of their cause but by lending Charlotte Beers to the Government to win over Muslims overseas. Beers, the former director of the advertising company J. Walter Thompson celebrated for her campaigns for Uncle Ben's rice (“Perfect every time”), Head and Shoulders shampoo (“Helps bring you closer”) and American Express (“Don't leave home without it”), “would really connect with the hearts and minds of those people”. After all, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated, “She got me to buy Uncle Ben's rice”. (The “mascot” of Uncle Ben's rice is a smiling, elderly African-American man who, for some, is a stereotyped Uncle Tom figure.) Beers told NBC News about her new task selling the US to the Muslim world, “This is definitely the most elegant brand I...I've ever had to work with, and I have a lot of facets of the brand. First it's President Bush and Secretary Powell embodying the brand. That's a pretty inspiring place to start” (The Times [London] 2001, .NBC Nightly News 2001).⁵

Businesses in every consumer sector have pressed their products as 100 percent “American”. A significant example has been the world of toy-making and children's costumes. For Halloween night, the preferred outfits for boys were firefighters, policemen, Uncle Sam, and George W. Bush; for girls it was the Statue of Liberty. Fisher Price distributed a Billy Blazes firefighter toy which became an instant bestseller (CNN.com 2001).

The singer R. Kelly modified his single “The World's Greatest”, initially made for the film *Ali*, to pay tribute to the heroes of 11 September. The video for the song not only had R. Kelly as a boxer in red, white, and blue gloves and shorts. It featured iconic poses of firefighters, medical personnel, and soldiers in the middle of the boxing ring, joined by children dressed in T-shirts with the word “Heroes”. Sporting events, from baseball and American football games in the days after the attack through the opening of the Winter Olympics in February 2002, were turned into patriotic extravaganzas. With President Bush opening the

⁵ The most extravagant (and culturally-blind) linkage of commerce, propaganda, and “Americanism” came in the advice of a London-based US advertising executive on “Selling the Stars and Stripes”, even as he protested, “Most Americans really have no idea why they are hated (aside from the obvious, that we're happier, better looking, and own 25 percent of the world's wealth). After months of trying to figure it out, have yet to land upon a set of nefarious actions or deeds that would justify such sentiments (Alsup 2001)”.

Olympics from a seat amongst US athletes and NBC television referring to Iranian athletes as part of the “axis of evil”, the *Guardian* of London reported:

The games have already been dubbed the “red, white and blue Olympics” because almost every event has patriotic overtones in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11. Nationalism has always been a part of the Olympics but IOC officials here feel the event is being used simply as propaganda for the US war effort (Campbell 2002).

Equally significant, in the operation of this network, has been the exclusion or dismissal of dissenting voices. The “free” US media has carefully regulated expression. For example, Noam Chomsky, the prolific critic of US foreign policy, has only been mentioned once in the *New York Times* since 11 September and even then he was identified as a “perennial dissenter”. Edward Said, despite his post at Columbia University, has not received even a single notice (Lucas 2002). US ties with the Taliban before 11 September, CIA support of Islamic fundamentalists from the 1980s, and American political and economic interest in controlling an oil and gas pipeline to be constructed in northern Afghanistan, all controversial but pertinent topics, has received scant coverage in the “mainstream” press; it is only through “alternative” Internet sites that the interested reader can obtain relevant material.⁶

When a well-known voice is raised against the “war on terrorism”, it is soon contained by other “experts”. The treatment of Susan Sontag—celebrated writer, intellectual, and activist—is a disturbing example. When Sontag was asked, with a number of other prominent New Yorkers, by the *New Yorker* magazine, to give their immediate reactions to 11 September, she asked: “Where is the acknowledgement that this was not a “cowardly” attack on “civilization” or “liberty” or “humanity” or “the free world” but an attack on the world's self-proclaimed super-power, undertaken as a consequence of specific American alliances and actions? (Sontag 2001)”.

Sontag was not the only respondent to raise such concerns but, given her prominence, she had to be put in her place. The commentator Charles Krauthammer led the attack on her “moral obtuseness”, writing in his syndicated column and in *Time* magazine:

This is no time for obfuscation. Or for agonized relativism. Or, obscenely, for blaming America first. (The habit dies hard.) This is a time for clarity. At a time like this, those who search for shades of evil, for root causes, for extenuations are, to borrow from Lance

⁶ See, for example, www.zmag.org/weluser.htm, www.antiwar.com, or www.war-times.org.

Morrow, "too philosophical for decent company " (Krauthammer 2001).⁷

In contrast to its treatment of the "left", the mainstream media featured Krauthammer's diatribe as other columnists added: "The American pacifists...are on the side of future mass murders of Americans. They are objectively pro-terrorist.... That is the pacifists' position, and it is evil (Kelly 2001)".

It is in such an environment that George W. Bush could move from Afghanistan to the "axis of evil" and that the term, with its World War II and Reaganite depictions of the foreign menace, could be accepted uncritically by most of American society. In a February 2002 poll, 82 percent of the US public considered Iraq "evil", 69 percent labeled Iran in such a fashion, and 60 percent put North Korea on their list. Almost 90 percent could respond confidently that Latifi Raissi, jailed for four months in Britain as an alleged accomplice of the 11 September hijackers and then bailed when the US Government failed to produce any evidence, should never have been released.

This is a bleak picture. If 50 years of the Cold War has given us a US State, an ideology, and a network which leaves little scope for considered evaluation of supposed "enemies", what hope is there? If rosy portrayals of globalization and notions of trans-national communities are Utopian at best, what alternatives to the American Millennium are available? In short, how can one answer Edward Said's challenge: "Is there any role, or any possibility of a role in the post-Cold War era of globalisation for...intellectual resistance and even freedom? (Said 1999)".

Yet, on closer examination, there is hope. It lies in the very notion of "Americanism", for that concept is based on an eternal contradiction. The ideology rests on a belief in American exceptionalism; yet its successful promulgation relies upon the assertion that American values are universal values. The only way out of the conundrum is the conviction that the rest of the world will want to become "exceptional" just like the United States; yet as David Halberstam (2001) concluded in his recent elegy to the American people, "Still, we remained very different from the rest of the world".

When the rest of the world does not follow the United States, the ideology is shaken to its foundations. After the bombing of Afghanistan began in October 2001, a leading CNN anchorman was lost for words when a correspondent informed him that 81 percent of Pakistanis polled favored the Taliban in the

⁷ Lance Morrow is a columnist for *Time* magazine who penned "The Case for Rage and Retribution" in the 12 September 2001 edition. See <http://www.time.com/time/columnist/morrow/article/0,9565,175435,00.html>.

military conflict versus only 3 percent support for the United States (Blitzer 2001). Academic experts commented, “While we may be quite supreme on the technological battlefield, we’ve left the war for people’s hearts and minds unoccupied and given Osama bin Laden and his cronies really free reign at manipulating mindsets (Post 2001)”, while President Bush exclaimed in exasperation, “I’m amazed that there is such misunderstanding of what our country is about that people would hate us. I am...like most Americans, I just can’t believe it, because I know how good we are (Bush 2001)”.

So the State-private cultural crusade collapses in frustration with a deficient “other”. Francis Fukuyama (2001), still trying to declare the “end of history”, offered, “Perhaps the hatred [of the US] is born out of a resentment of western success and Muslim failure”, while Professor David Forte (2001) asserted, “Most Muslims have been given a diet of socialist propaganda for decades, of hatred of the United States for a long time. They have never had the experience of a secular regime which is open and free by which they can understand the United States for what it is”. Even the British were considered beyond redemption, as political journalist Joe Klein sneered:

A sad truth: while all the carping [over US treatment of “unlawful combatants” detained at Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Bay] pains an Anglophile like me, most Americans don’t give a fig about what you think. There is the old American bias toward seeing Europe as tired, flaccid and hopelessly parochial. And there is an old American saying which I think I’ve just invented: Before you get up on your high horse, be sure you are not riding an ass (Klein 2002).

It is in this space between “Americanism” and the universal that a constructive challenge can be made, not through the myth of the “global” but through more practical national and regional responses. For what is most striking, once one moves beyond the Anglo-American core, is how much the events of 11 September have fostered not unquestioning alliances with Washington but a search for autonomy beyond American control. The President of Iran, Mohammed Khatami, stated concisely at the end of September, long before his country was placed by the US within the “axis of evil”, “It is wrong to talk of countries being either with you or against you. We are against terrorism and war but also against your policies (Steele 2001)”. China may have entered the World Trade Organization, but its official skepticism of US leadership was expressed bluntly in the *People’s Daily* in April 2002:

As the sole superpower, the United States has frequently resorted to unilateralism and military force in recent years, adversely affecting international security.

The policies and measures it has adopted during the ongoing "anti-terrorism" campaign also exposed a US strategy that should arouse international concern (*People's Daily* 2002).

The search has only been reinforced because history did not begin and end with 11 September. To the contrary, the bloody resurgence of the Israel-Palestine conflict has thrown the choice between an acceptance of "Americanism", with its associated policies, and an autonomous position into sharp relief. Both Iraq and Iran have called for an effective response to Washington through temporary oil embargos, and even the regime of Saudi Arabia, the bulwark of the US position in the Middle East, has threatened a break and use of oil as a political weapon. Halfway around the world, Venezuela's own consideration of such action has provoked a short-lived US-backed *coup*.

These are not knee-jerk reactions. Iran, with its pivotal position in Central Asia, has sought a regional counterweight to the assertion of US power. China prepared for its entrance into WTO not by embracing a US-led system but by pursuing a regional partnership, through initiatives such as the Shanghai Pact, with countries from Vietnam to Korea in the south and east to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan (and, by April 2002, Iran) in the west.⁸ Russia, while dancing diplomatically with the US to avoid quick American implementation of Missile Defense and other unilateral American action, is pursuing new alignments with China, Central Asian states, and the European Union. The Organization of American States, while far from autonomy, made a significant intervention in April 2002 with their immediate opposition to the change of power in Venezuela.

And, most significantly at the present time, there is the possibility of a European alternative to Americanism. The US strategy, essential in the Cold War of fostering a supportive West European federation has fostered a European system stretching from Ireland to Turkey with the prospect of expansion to Russian borders. The economic dimension of this system, marked by the introduction of the Euro, cannot be separated from the consideration of political and military autonomy. Thus, before 11 September, Washington was already agitated about the proposed European Defence Force, European activity in the Balkans, and the European drive for agreements on an International Criminal Court, the implementation of the Kyoto environmental accord, and limitation and inspection of chemical and biological resources.

The attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon may have forestalled a US-European showdown. The caution of Jacques Chirac, the first

⁸ On the Shanghai Pact (and a limited US view of its significance), see Pomfret (2001).

European leader to rush to Washington, over retaliation against Afghanistan gave way to the shoulder-by-shoulder rhetoric of Tony Blair. Unreserved support, however, was only temporary. By February and the Bush proclamation of an “axis of evil”, the French Government was labeling US foreign policy “simplistic” and a leading British Conservative, Chris Patten, was warning that “Gulliver Can’t Go It Alone (Vedrine 2002)”. Far from heeding such warnings, the US Government has provoked further concern or even antagonism from European partners with actions from the imposition of tariffs on steel to its failure to restrain Israel in the current crisis over Palestine to its removal of Jose Bustani as head of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

As I write this, Romano Prodi, the head of the European Commission, is calling on Britain to cast its lot with Europe: “Deep down it is a matter of deciding where one’s future lies—fully in, or opting out. The real test the UK must pass is a test of its own political will and courage (Wintour 2002)”. In London, Hugo Young (2002) comments, “Some day soon, Washington will eat [Blair] for breakfast, along with the morality it then spits out”, and Will Hutton, another leading columnist, echoes Prodi’s challenge:

If Britain is to address its long-standing productivity problem or the weaknesses of its public services, it needs to be open to European examples and models rather than having its options locked in the American bear hug. In the same way that Britain should reappraise its relationship with American defence and security policy, so it must reappraise its relationship to American ideas of economic and social organisation. It is time the British recognised who they really are (Hutton 2002).

In May 2001, I asserted, “No one country has the resources to counter-balance US power. Instead, a European federation—economic if not political—is the only possible alternative at this point. From that base, it may be possible to construct new approaches to global issues—environment, health, political and military stability—which are not subservient to Washington’s conceptions and ambitions”.

I now offer one modification. Such arrangements should not just be within Europe but in other regions and between regions. It is this concerted *realpolitik*, rather than abstract talk of globalization, that offers a way out of the recurrent crises caused by the contemporary and historical context of “Americanism”.

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