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## Why So Much Anti-Americanism Now? The Perceptions and Realities of U.S. Power and Its Way of War

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“We are about to kill people; it must serve a purpose.”  
Dan Lindley, remarks on September 13, 2001<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <<<http://www.nd.edu/~dlindley/handouts/attackcomments.html>>>

## Introduction

Largely because of President Bush and the Iraq War, but also because of the end of the Cold War and resulting unipolarity, the image and reputation of the U.S. has plummeted around the world. Yet the United States has gone to war many times in its history and has rarely suffered this much at the hands of world opinion. What about President Bush and this war is different now? How does the U.S. perceive its way of war? How do others? These are the questions that this paper addresses. Consider this: the U.S. has gone to war when it was attacked, because the CNN - effect spurred its people to action, because of lies and exaggerations by journalists, because of human rights abuses, because of domestic politics, because of economic interests, and to gain territory and colonies. And this is only the Spanish - American War of 1898. The point is that American motivations for war are often more complex than many realize. It often takes many factors to get the U.S. into war. Certainly there are exceptions, but even the history of Japanese - American relations before Pearl Harbor is more complex than is often assumed.

To make an acknowledged string of generalizations, in general Americans have whitewashed their history. They think they go to war for noble purposes, conduct their wars mostly justly, and do not lose, with the exception of Vietnam. In contrast, many Europeans and many around the world also do not see the complex reality, but instead have come to see the U.S. as an oft brutal and unjust self-interested superpower. President George W. Bush (hereafter President Bush) and the Iraq war have catalyzed a plummeting view of the U.S., while Americans have been slow to realize this. Neither the whitewashed view or the brutal view

serves the cause of improving international relations and conducting wiser foreign policy.

The reality is that the U.S. uses force far more often than its citizens realize. The international public face of the U.S. is highly militarized – from war, interventions, to shows of force, to using the military to conduct diplomacy. The U.S. has been less pure and noble than it usually admits. Yet on many of the biggest issues in world politics, the U.S. has been on the lighter side of the gray scale which will never be white in world politics. The U.S. helped the status quo powers prevail in World War I and in World War II. Many scoffed when Reagan said it, but the Soviet Union was indeed a horrible evil empire, worse than Reagan knew then. It was lucky that the U.S. won the Cold War.

However, it might be more accurate to say we all won the Cold War just by surviving. In reviewing U.S. war making and foreign policy during WWI, WWII and the Cold War, the U.S. provided what I will call here: self-interested public goods. Another way to view the U.S.’ history and current policies is counterfactually. What state would be preferable, realistically, as a great power, or sole remaining superpower? Russia? China? It is a grey scale, but in my view the comparison is not even close. Despite the confluence of 9/11, President Bush, and resulting Iraq War, the U.S. remains a mostly benign great power, warts and all.

I develop these arguments as follows. First, I review how Americans look back at their wars and show that Americans do indeed have an optimistic and noble view of their past. The views are termed American exceptionalism and universalism. Second, I explore what has changed under President Bush to catalyze the downward spiral in views about the U.S. and its power. While exceptionalism and universalism are enduring and periodic traits in U.S. foreign policy, President Bush has combined U.S. power and idealism in a unique and harmful way.

Third, I surveying the causes and conduct of many of the U.S.' principal wars: the Mexican - American War, the Spanish - American War, WWI, both fronts of WWII, the Cold War, the Vietnam war, the Kuwait War, the Iraq War, and the War on Terror. These surveys are necessarily brief, but cumulatively they make for a strong argument that going to war is a complex business and that stereotypes and self-stereotypes are unwarranted. In addition, the U.S. uses force far more often than most Americans realize, and indeed, the U.S. military is deeply involved in U.S. diplomacy. I will discuss the implications of these gaps between perceptions and reality on international relations and the conduct of foreign policy. Finally, I look to the future of U.S. and European grand strategy given their respective and evolving views on the use of force.

## What Has Changed About Anti-Americanism?

Looking primarily at the industrialized world, anti-Americanism rose with as the Vietnam War turned into a debacle. Of course, if that was anti-Americanism, there was much on display in the U.S. as well. Many in the West also took a grim view of President Reagan. At the time, though, American culture and people were still well liked. With the end of Cold War and with greater awareness and spread of globalization – which is often viewed as in part the spread of U.S. commercialism, values, and products – anti-americanism began to rise, and to take a more negative form across multiple domains from politics to economics and culture. However, the U.S. still retained generally favorable opinions in the West, until the Iraq War when the number of people having favorable opinions of the U.S. in the West plummeted ten, twenty, and even

forty percent in the case of Germany. In terms of popularity ratings for countries by seven Western (and Russian and Polish) publics, the U.S. consistently rates fifteen to twenty-five points behind other Western countries, and only Poles and Canadians (by one point) rank the U.S. ahead of China. Others also view the American people themselves somewhat more negatively than before the war. (Kohut and Stokes 1996, 23-29). The following table summarizes these trends (Kohut and Stokes 27):

FAVORABLE OPINION OF THE UNITED STATES					
	1999–2000	2002	2003	2004	2005
	%	%	%	%	%
Canada	71	72	63	—	59
Britain	83	75	70	58	55
Netherlands	—	—	—	—	45
France	62	63	43	37	43
Germany	78	61	45	38	41
Spain	50	—	38	—	41
Poland	—	79	—	—	62
Russia	37	61	36	47	52
Indonesia	75	61	15	—	38
Turkey	52	30	15	30	23
Pakistan	23	10	13	21	23
Lebanon	—	35	27	—	42
Jordan	—	25	1	5	21
Morocco	77	—	27	27	49
India	—	54	—	—	71
China	—	—	—	—	42

Source: Office of Research, U.S. Department of State and Envrionics (Canada), 1999–2000; Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2002–2005.

# How the U.S. Views Itself Regarding Its Uses of Force

## **U.S. SELF-IMAGE: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AND UNIVERSALISM**

The U.S. is a complex and diverse country with many views across a fairly broad ideological spectrum. However, there are some dominant strands in its ideology and nationalism which I term here American exceptionalism and American universalism. American exceptionalism is a self-image of superiority and beneficence across political, social, economic, international, cultural, and military domains. It is an image and spirit with deep historical roots, having been first observed by Alexis de Tocqueville in 1831.<sup>2</sup> Universalism refers to a belief that most people would like to live an American way of life and that one of the purposes of America is to stand as a beacon for others to flock to or imitate, and to more actively spread U.S. values and way of life. Exceptionalism and universalism work synergistically. A sense of superiority is almost necessary if one also thinks of oneself as a beacon and model.

A factor that many believe contribute to exceptionalism and universalism is American's embrace of religion. This is especially true of fundamentalist, evangelical, and born - again Christians who tend to be more outwardly messianic and willing to involve themselves in politics - both domestic and international. Other denominations or expressions of Christianity are more modest or inward looking.

Whether or not exceptionalism and universalism are justified is too simplistic a question. There are many great things about the U.S., some of which have gotten better over time. The U.S. is almost peerless as a land of equal opportunity. It is not perfect, but it is better than

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<sup>2</sup> <<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_exceptionalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_exceptionalism)>>.

almost anywhere else in not being as bound by class or race. The U.S. is forward looking, optimistic, and its people enjoy great amounts of freedom. As always though, a grey scale must be applied. Although it is arguably better to be poor in the U.S. than to live in many parts of the world, the U.S. is fairly brutal to those who do not succeed, especially perhaps in terms of health insurance. And of course, exceptionalism and universalism are riven with hubris. A major question I will answer below is why, if exceptionalism and universalism have remained constant in the U.S. for most of its history, have perceptions of the U.S. changed so dramatically for the worse recently?

When it comes to making war, exceptionalism and universalism, coupled with the assets of a large or superpower have helped the U.S. wage and win hot and cold wars against revisionists and/or evil powers such as the Soviet Union, Japan, and Germany. On the other hand, concepts such as Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine – subsets of exceptionalism and universalism – helped justify various incursions into the Caribbean, as well as the Mexican-American War, and the wars against the American Indians. These concepts also help demonstrate the deep historical roots of exceptionalism and universalism in American politics and in the American psyche.

The 1823 Monroe Doctrine declared that the Europeans should stay out of the Americas, and that in return, the U.S. would stay out of Europe's wars. On the one hand, the Doctrine was ahead of its time in opposing colonialism. On the other hand, as the U.S. was and is the dominant power in the Americas, the Monroe Doctrine is often viewed as a declaration of American hegemony in its hemisphere. The U.S. has gone to war, intervened or otherwise used force some thirty times South of its borders since 1846.

In use since the 1840s, Manifest Destiny refers to the idea that it was the destiny of the U.S. to expand Westward and perhaps beyond at least with regard to the American Way. The historian William Weeks wrote that Manifest Destiny was a “philosophy to explain and justify expansionism” to alarmed Europeans and “to the American people themselves, who needed reassurance that the course was righteous” (1996, 60-61). Not unnaturally, but perhaps with greater imperative than in other countries, Americans need to feel morally correct in their actions. As such, Weeks notes three elements in Manifest Destiny, the special virtues of America, a mission to remake the world in America’s image, and divine destiny to pursue this mission. Of course, the immense growth of the American people and state, and the resulting power imbalance to the West, made U.S. expansion nearly inevitable. Expansion of the British colonies and the pushing out and aside of the American Indians predated the founding of the U.S.. This was an old and familiar pattern. As the British colonies expanded, these demographic changes and the resulting Westward push were an underlying and primary cause of the Seven Year’s War in America (Franco-Indian War) that began in 1756.

American exceptionalism and universalism is described, documented, and promoted by a large number of scholars and pundits. Policy magazines on the right such as the *National Review* and *Weekly Standard* routinely excoriate the left for ‘blaming America first’ for any number of domestic and international problems. In contrast, they often view American power and values as the solution to many of these problems. In recent weeks, the *Weekly Standard* has run a number of stories about why the U.S. should attack Iranian nuclear facilities. This magazine is often said to have the ear of the Bush administration, and was influential in the run-up to the Iraq War. The Project for a New American Century was similarly influential before the war, and had been

calling for Saddam Hussein's ouster for years. Their website describes them as a: "a non-profit educational organization dedicated to a few fundamental propositions: that American leadership is good both for America and for the world; and that such leadership requires military strength, diplomatic energy and commitment to moral principle."<sup>3</sup>

Walter Russell Mead's *Special Providence* (2001) details what he calls America's underappreciated foreign policy, an foreign policy that countered European empires, and that prevailed in World Wars and the Cold War. Mead attributes this success to Hamiltonian protection of free trade, to Wilsonian promotion of democracy and liberal values, Jeffersonian preservation of democratic institutions, and Jacksonian appreciation of force and security. These four values sometimes conflict, as, for example, the Wilsonian strand is more concerned with spreading democracy than the Jeffersonian strand which is more inward looking. Nonetheless, these four strands co-exist have have produced a fairly steady and largely successful foreign policy. Dinesh D'Sousa writes in *What's So Great About America* (2002) that America's ideals and freedoms are the best in the world, and that American's have much to be proud of. In a book reflecting more detached scholarship, *America's Mission* (1994), Tony Smith argues that despite a number of flaws and mistakes, U.S. leadership in promoting liberal democratic internationalism has been of great value to world peace and security. Exceptionalism, and America's tendency toward crusading moralism, is charted in both domestic and foreign policy in Seymour Martin Lipset's *American Exceptionalism: A Double Edged Sword* (1996).

With the exception of Smith, many of the just mentioned authors and outlets fall at least in part, if not more wholly, under the rubric of neoconservatism. The Bush administration is

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<sup>3</sup> <<<http://www.newamericancentury.org/>>>.

often described as following neoconservative principles, of which Francis Fukuyama lists four:

a concern with democracy, human rights, and more generally the internal politics of states; a belief that U.S. power can be used for moral purposes; a skepticism about the ability of international law and institutions to solve serious security problems; and finally, a view that ambitious social engineering often leads to unexpected consequences and often undermines its own ends. (2006, 4-5)

However, a theme in Fukuyama's *America at the Crossroads* is that the Bush Administration was motivated by these principles and a view of benevolent American hegemony, but was and is not as captured by neoconservatives as many believe.

Of course, there are many critiques of U.S. foreign policy, and of exceptionalism and universalism in particular. Some notable examples of scholars who oppose a U.S. foreign policy of exceptionalism and universalism included Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky, who write that the the U.S. should bring most of its troops home from forward basing and drastically cut the defense budget in "Come Home America: The Strategy of Restraint in the Face of Temptation."<sup>4</sup> Applying the Yellowstone natural fire policy (let fires burn naturally, and do not try to put them out) to USFP, they argue that the U.S. can and should stay out of most wars around the world. Chris Layne is the best known proponent of the term and foreign policy known as 'offshore balancing,' which is similar in substance to the argument above. He writes in *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (2006) that U.S. foreign policy has been consistently offensive and expansionist for decades, that this foreign policy continued through the Cold War, and contrasts with most American's view of their foreign policy as defensive and reactive. Finally, Stephen Walt critiques President Bush's unconstrained

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<sup>4</sup> *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Spring 1997), pp. 5-53

use of U.S. primacy in *Taming American Power* (2005), and diagnoses the sources of resentment of America and reactions to the U.S. around the world.

Turning to direct critiques of the Iraq War, on September 26, 2002, many of America's leading realist scholars of foreign policy (Walt, Mearsheimer, and so forth) paid for an editorial advertisement in the op-ed pages of the *New York Times*: "War With Iraq is Not in America's National Interest." Many liberals dislike realists for the stress they place on the immutability of anarchy and the security dilemma. However, it was the realist's appreciation of the difficulties of using force, and the likelihood of balancing, that led them to oppose the war. Many of these same scholars are also part of the "Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy," and signed a statement warning that:

Against the backdrop of an ever-bloodier conflict in Iraq, American foreign policy is moving in a dangerous direction toward empire.

Worrisome imperial trends are apparent in the Bush administration's National Security Strategy. That document pledges to maintain America's military dominance in the world, and it does so in a way that encourages other nations to form countervailing coalitions and alliances. We can expect, and are seeing now, multiple balances of power forming against us. People resent and resist domination, no matter how benign.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, it is a reflection on the Bush Administration and the Iraq war, that the terms American Empire and American exceptionalism have skyrocketed in use by the U.S. news and wire services. For example, the term American Empire was used an average of about 100 times a year from 1992-1999, then rose to 200 times in 2000, and shot to nearly 1000 times in 2003,

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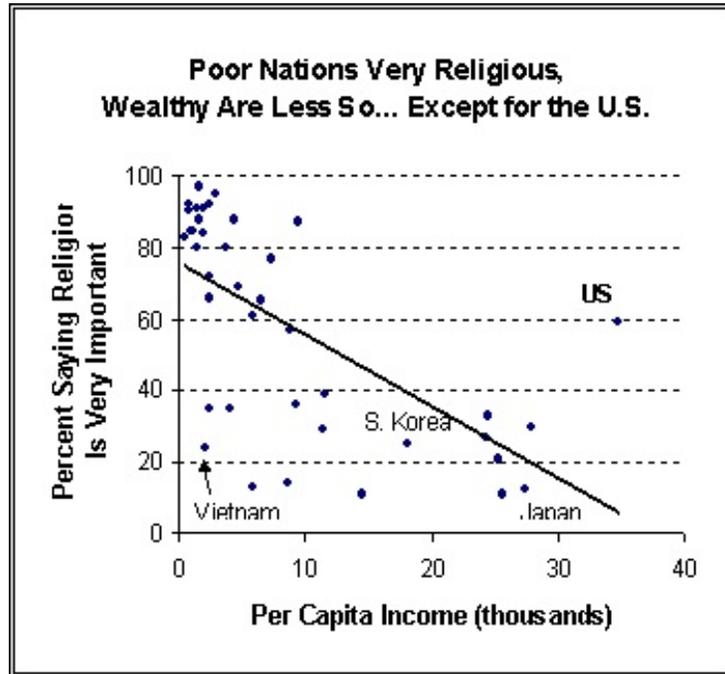
<sup>5</sup> <<<http://www.realisticforeignpolicy.org/static/000027.php>>>.

falling to around 800 in 2004. Likewise, the term American exceptionalism hovered around being used 20 times a year from 1992 through 1999. From 2000 through 2003, it was used about 60 times a year, and leapt to 160 in 2004 (Kohut and Stokes 2006, 10). This study depended on content analysis, but the scholars did not code whether the terms were mentioned in critical or supportive contexts. Nonetheless, it is clear that the political salience of these terms has skyrocketed under President Bush and after the Iraq War. This reinforces the argument that anti-Americanism was not just a product of the end of the Cold War and unipolarity, but instead was much aggravated by recent events.

### ***Religion***

Above, I mentioned religion as a factor that may contribute to the general American attitudes of exceptionalism and universalism. Going back to the Pilgrims, religion has long played an important role in the U.S., and it is hard to imagine the U.S. electing an atheist or non-Christian president. America's religiosity is a point of divergence with the industrialized world. Generally, as incomes rise, belief in the importance of religion declines. Hence, most Europeans and Japanese are disconnected from the U.S. on this issue. The Pew Global Attitudes project surveyed forty-four nations and asked if people if religion played a "very important" role in their lives. In the U.S., 59% of respondents answered yes. By contrast, 30% of Canadians answered yes, with 33% for Great Britain, 27% for Italy, 21% for Germany, and 17% for France. The

following table shows that the U.S. is an outlier among wealthy nations:<sup>6</sup>



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<sup>6</sup>“Among Wealthy Nations ... U.S. Stands Alone in its Embrace of Religion,” Released: 12.19.02, at <<<http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=167>>>.

Kohut and Stokes (2006) say that most Americans “see their religious beliefs as the basis for America’s success in the world,” and that this is especially true for evangelicals and less so for mainline Protestants and Catholics (97). In contrast, European views on the death penalty, abortion, secularism, and other issues have become more and more deeply entrenched and a point of pride for Europeans, and they are skeptical when religion affects policy issues (Kohut and Stokes 2006, 99)

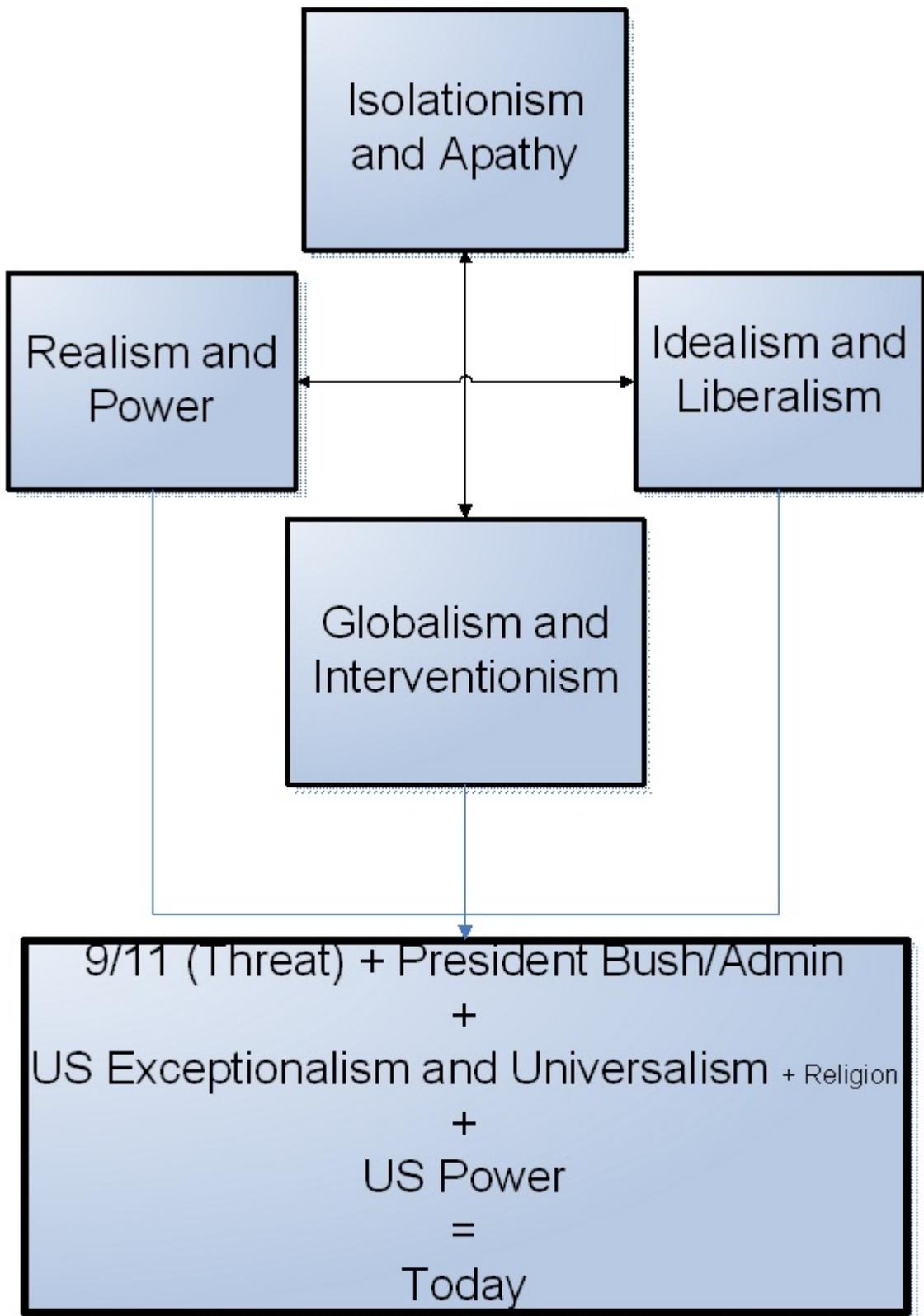
However, as a constant, background factor, religion in itself can not explain America’s increasing divergence with the rest of the industrialized world. So again, we look to President Bush to see what changed with his presidency. While fundamentalist, evangelical, and born-again Christians generally lean toward conservatism and the Republican party in the U.S., and previous Republican presidents have courted these Christians, President Bush appears to be quite motivated by these views compared to previous presidents. Although he has never clarified which denomination to which he may belong, or even specific views on some topics, he is “among the most openly religious presidents in U.S. history,” reads the Bible daily, looks to God’s guidance on policy issues, and his views seem to correlate closely with those of evangelicals. According to Bob Woodward’s *Plan of Attack*, President Bush is quoted as saying the he prayed ““for the strength to do the Lord’s will’ in Iraq” but also that ““I’m surely not going to justify the war based on God.”” (all quotes in Cooperman, Washington Post, 9/16/04 “Openly Religious, to a Point”). Reflecting American Exceptionalism, in his 2003 State of the Union Address, President Bush said when talking about the union between America and faith: “Yet there's power, wonder-working power, in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people” at <<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html>>>. The

term Axis of Evil and well as calling terrorists evil evokes religious themes.

Thus, with President Bush, religion has become not just a point of difference, but a reason why the U.S. has become perceived as dangerous. Religion helps explain why it is easy for critics to look at President Bush as a crusader.

One way to interpret is to focus on the four main and often opposing strands that have traditionally characterized U.S. foreign policy, and debates within the U.S. about its foreign policy. The first continuum is between isolationism and apathy versus globalism and interventionism. The second is between realism and power versus idealism and liberalism. These are simplistic, and do not always oppose but sometimes reinforce. Nonetheless, these are the main navigational points of U.S. foreign policy.

To explain the next graphic, Americans are susceptible to any of these strands in foreign policy from isolationism to globalism, realism to idealism, depending on who is leading and the strategic circumstances. What is disturbing to many is the confluence of factors leading to today's fairly unilateral and forceful foreign policy. President Bush and his administration have united three of the four boxes. American power and realism have merged with with idealism and globalism, and some degree of religiosity. But it is not a universalism based on universal values (there are none, of course), but a universalism based on a belief that with correct judgment and leadership others will follow willingly or have no choice (bandwagoning). What this helps show is that today's foreign policy is a result of some of the deepest core impulses within the American psyche, but that these strands have been merged in a way reflecting the unique circumstances of our time: 9/11, President Bush, and the U.S. as a unipolar great power.



## **WHY HAS EUROPE AND MUCH OF REST OF WORLD COME TO DISLIKE U.S. FOREIGN POLICY SO INTENSELY?**

In this section, I develop in more detail the argument that President Bush and his administration is largely to blame for hostile perceptions of America. Many things that others may find different or objectionable about America, including its exceptionalism and universalism and its religiosity, were largely tolerated or perhaps even appreciated. When they were critiqued, the tone was less strident (except in Cold War propaganda or in arguments from the far left). However, under President Bush, these characteristics are seen as dangerous, as they contribute to the view that the U.S. has become unilateral and aggressive.

A second part of the answer is more structural, and relates to divergences that go back to the end of Cold War. During the Cold War, the U.S. provided significant common goods or public benefits, both morally and in providing security. With the end of the Cold War, the importance of these benefits have declined, Europe has largely disarmed and developed a worldview that often differs from that of the U.S. Indeed, many people have shifted from thinking that the U.S. is a source of security, to believing with the Iraq War in particular that the U.S. is a source of insecurity and is itself a danger.

### **CHANGES UNDER THE PRESIDENT BUSH ADMINISTRATION**

During the Cold War, the U.S.' overarching goal was to contain the Soviet Union. Anti-

Americanism took fairly predictable forms. Typically, the more towards the left one's views, the more one disliked America. Leftists tended to view the U.S. and its foreign policy with greater cynicism and less gratitude, and saw the U.S. as a destructive capitalist and imperial power. Those on the right and center tended to be more grateful of the U.S. for protection and promotion of economic growth, and more wary of the Soviets. These are stereotypes, but are largely accurate, and I recognize that views on all sides were swayed by events such as Vietnam. Despite exceptions and errors, the U.S. largely provided security benefits to much of the developed world, and most people who benefitted were aware of this.

Although some view Cold War - era left versus right debates as a matter of moral equivalence or dry history, the Soviet Union did turn out to be far worse on the grey scale of international behavior. I do not intend to white wash the U.S.' own errors, but the familiar facts are that Soviets killed 20 million of their own citizens, and ran a horrible authoritarian government over it's 70 years. Thanks to new documents and information, we now know they raped 2 million East German women during their occupation.<sup>7</sup> However in my view, the worst Soviet action was employing 60,000 people to develop biological weapons after signing the Biological Weapons Convention.<sup>8</sup> It is hard to imagine something more dangerous and evil. However, the focus here is on more modern perceptions and self-perceptions due to the current crisis surrounding U.S. foreign policy.

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S.' goals have been more diffuse: to increase U.S. power, to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to liberalize the world economy,

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<sup>7</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp 8, 45.

<sup>8</sup> Ken Alibek, with Stephen Handelman, *Biohazard* (New York, NY: Delta Books, 1999), p. 43.

to promote democracy and human rights, and to promote stability more generally (Walt 2006, 30-31). Save for the natural impulse to increase power, these general goals are fairly unobjectionable to much or most of the world community. World opinion towards the U.S. did not worsen because of these goals, it changed because of how these goals were pursued under President Bush.

President Bush and his advisors marked a departure from previous administrations in their belief in the utility and benevolence of American power, a power they believed should be unconstrained by norms and international institutions. These beliefs were amplified by 9/11, because the U.S. thought it had to react without constraint to prevent more such attacks, which in the future might be conducted with weapons of mass destruction. In this view, the rest of the world's views and institutions did not much matter. Implicit in much of the administration's views was a belief in what international relations scholars call bandwagoning. When states bandwagon, they side with the powerful as a way of maximizing their own power, security, and wealth. While bandwagoning surely occurs, a majority of international relations scholars believe that balancing is more prevalent. Balancing is when less powerful states line up to counterbalance the powerful.

Reflecting a supreme form of American exceptionalism, the following discussion is almost astounding for its hubris and belief in bandwagoning. It is a constructivist view of the world, except here it is power shaping new worlds, not ideas or idea entrepreneurs. New York Times Reporter Ron Suskind reports this conversation with a senior aide to President Bush:

The aide said that guys like me were "in what we call the reality-based

community," which he defined as people who "believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality." I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. "That's not the way the world really works anymore," he continued. "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality -- judiciously, as you will -- we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do." *NYT Magazine*, "Faith, Certainty and the Presidency of George W. Bush," 10/17/04.

Of course, two specific policies of President Bush have contributed to America's fall from grace in world opinion, the policy of pre-emption, and the Iraq War. To begin with pre-emption, true pre-emption as defined by the U.S. Department of Defense is: "An attack initiated on the basis of incontrovertible evidence that an enemy attack is imminent." A preventive war is "A war initiated in the belief that military conflict, while not imminent, is inevitable, and that to delay would involve greater risk."<sup>9</sup> International relations scholars also define preventive wars as wars intended to forestall unfavorable shifts in the balance of power. True pre-emptive wars are justifiable, and are viewed by most as legal under international law.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, preventive wars are less justifiable, are not legal, and can not meet the legal and moral ground of necessity.

It is clear from the iterations of the Bush Administration's "National Security Strategy of the United States of America" documents that President Bush intends preventive war.

In September 2002, the document read:

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<sup>9</sup> The DoD dictionary is at <<<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/>>>.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Ellen O'Connell, "The Myth of Preemptive Self-Defense," August 2002, for the American Society of International Law Task Force on Terrorism, at: <<<http://www.asil.org/taskforce/oconnell.pdf>>>.

In the Cold War... Deterrence was an effective defense. For centuries, international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack. Legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of preemption on the existence of an imminent threat—most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack. We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries. Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using conventional means. They know such attacks would fail. Instead, they rely on acts of terror and, potentially, the use of weapons of mass destruction—weapons that can be easily concealed, delivered covertly, and used without warning.  
<<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss5.html>>>.

In the March 2006, “National Security Strategy” the most direct passage on pre-emption read:

Our strong preference and common practice is to address proliferation concerns through international diplomacy, in concert with key allies and regional partners. If necessary, however, under long-standing principles of self defense, we do not rule out the use of force before attacks occur, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. When the consequences of an attack with WMD are potentially so devastating, we cannot afford to stand idly by as grave dangers materialize. This is the principle and logic of preemption. The place of preemption in our national security strategy remains the same. <<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf>>>

There were two new elements in this Bush Doctrine. First, it elevated pre-emption from a policy choice to a doctrine. Second, it claimed a right to pre-empt under conditions of uncertainty. There is a good deal of logic to these statements, if one can be fairly sure that the capability and intent exist to strike with WMD on the part of an adversary or terrorist. Uncertainty must be reduced considerably to justify war, and reduced to a lesser extent to justify a military strike. But being fairly sure is a vital pre-requisite, and one that President Bush failed to meet with Iraq.

The doctrine of pre-emption is not one that can be universalized, and is instead an “implicit recognition of American exceptionalism” that helped provoke the upsurge in anti-Americanism. As Fukuyama goes on to note, “The fact that the United States granted itself a right that it would deny to others is based, in the NSS, on an implicit judgement that the United States is different from other countries and can be trusted to use its military power justly and wisely in ways that other powers could not” (2006, 101).

As we have learned, Saddam Hussein had neither the capability or likely any intent to use WMD against the U.S. or its allies. At the time however, there were good reasons to believe that Iraq had some level of WMD, and would likely reinvigorate its programs further with the ever-slipping sanctions. Nonetheless, the intelligence failure is one reason why opinions about the President Bush have worsened. This failure is coupled with the poor situation on the ground in Iraq and the high level of insurgent and sectarian violence. Had there been WMD in Iraq, perceptions of the U.S. might be considerably more favorable today (Fukuyama 2006, 97-98).

President Bush’s personality and world-view is another factor that hurts how outsider’s perceive the U.S. It also explains to some degree why he was sufficiently popular in the U.S. to be reelected, something which mystified and dismayed many around the world. For example, President Bush has a tendency towards blanket, un-nuanced judgements, saying for example in his post 9/11 address to Congress on September 20, 2001: “And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists,” at:

<<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>>>. Such statements are normal for states at war, but this one does reveal the black and white, Manichean world view of

the President. In America, these strong views held by the President and his willingness to use force are part of why President Bush won re-election and why Republicans routinely out-poll the Democrats on security issues. Americans want a President they can rely on to pull the trigger when necessary, and John Kerry failed to convey that image.

### **STRUCTURAL CHANGES AND THE END OF THE COLD WAR**

With the end of the Cold War, the power and ideological discrepancies between Europe and the U.S. grew ever wider. For its part, the U.S. never really disarmed as it did after the two World Wars. Instead, it's defense budget only declined by about 25% from its peak under President Reagan.<sup>11</sup>

Europe's defense budget/s remain much smaller than that of the U.S., even when combined, it's smaller forces lack power projection capabilities, much of its spending is duplicative or redundant, and it has been slow in developing its own rapid reaction force.<sup>12</sup> In 2004, Europe spent \$266 billion on defense, while North America spent \$466. Due mainly to 9/11, North American defense spending rose 34% from 1995-2004, while European defense spending as a whole rose 7%, and Western European spending rose 5%.<sup>13</sup> The U.S. defense budget will go up another 7% next year alone. Barring a large external or internal shock, Europe is unlikely to find the will to build up it's military. It has proved reluctant to liberalize or

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<sup>11</sup> Office of Management and Budget, Historical Tables, pp. 158-159 at: <<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2007/pdf/hist.pdf>>>.

<sup>12</sup> Zdzislaw Lachowski, "The Military Dimension of the European Union," SIPRI Yearbook 2002.

<sup>13</sup> SIPRI data at: <<[http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex\\_wnr\\_table.html](http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_wnr_table.html)>>.

compromise core aspects of many of its countries social welfare programs. With populations that are aging and mostly stagnant or shrinking, demographics and social welfare will keep defense budgets limited.

As Kagan points out, the U.S. defense spending may make it more willing to go to war than the Europeans not just because it can, but because U.S. technology means Americans can fight with relatively much less risk to its own troops. Much of America's defense spending is devoted to long-range precision strike and other technologies that reduce risks to U.S. soldiers (Kagan 2003, 23).

It is commonplace to say that if you have a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. This pithy-ism is most often applied to the U.S. and it's apparent reliance in using force to solve problems. Of course, it also applies to Europe, which having little force, has a hammer which looks like bribes/incentives and talk/persuasion.

However, the roots of American militarism and European pacificism run deeper than just the power imbalance. From Asia to the Middle East, the U.S. has interests and a military presence in many areas of the world beset by security problems, arms races, and instability. Hence, the U.S. lives in a much tougher neighborhood than does Europe. This does not mean that Europe has no interests in these areas, it is just that the U.S. is much more deeply entwined. For example, on a day to day basis, it may matter little what relations the U.S. has with India, but a major area of progress for the U.S. under President Bush has been to tighten relations with India. This is due to increased economic ties, but also reflects a longer term strategy to build a balancing coalition against China. It is not true that all of the world has intensified it's dislike of President Bush and the U.S. India is a major exception. Fifty-four percent of Indians had a

favorable view of the U.S. in 2002, and the figure for 2005 was 71% (Kohut and Stokes 2006, 27). The bottom line is that security issues weigh heavily for the U.S. around the globe.

In contrast, Europe beat itself to a pulp in two World Wars this century, and had fought many wars before that. The E.U. was formed not primarily for economic reasons, but to cast intra-European wars into the past (Thompson, "Towards the Cosmopolis," PhD dissertation in progress, University of Notre Dame). Thus, the eradication of war is at the core of the E.U.'s essence. The E.U. takes great pride in settling its problems through negotiation and consensus. Its integration has so far proved a challenge for traditional realists, and their views about the pervasiveness of anarchy and the security dilemma, and the importance of the sovereign state.<sup>14</sup> The E.U. made great strides integrating after the Cold War. And despite the recent insecurities generated by Islamic terrorism and Muslim minorities, Europeans have done well in generating and deepening some shared values. In part because of this, and in part because at the end of the day, Europeans were and still are protected from each other and had the U.S. to rely on outside of Europe, the end of the Cold War was a "holiday from strategy" for many in Europe (Kagan 2003, 25).

These divergences create different world-views and conflicting threat assessments between Europeans and Americans. Leaving aside who may tend to be right, an awkward division of labor has been created in which, to the extent Europeans and Americans are cooperating, the Europeans are the sweet talkers and offer positive inducements, while the Americans back up diplomacy with the threat of force. If force is used, as in the Balkans and

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<sup>14</sup> For the realist argument, see: John J. Mearsheimer, Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer 1990), pp. 5-56. For an opposing view, see Stephen Van Evera, "Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 7-57.

Afghanistan, the Americans go in first and the Europeans follow to help with peacekeeping and stability operations.

This is an unhealthy division of labor for many reasons. It makes the U.S. out to be the tough guy. This is not good for U.S. security and, relatedly, its image. I believe we live in a balancing world, not a bandwagoning world. It may be necessary to be tough from time to time, and one need's to be strong to be persuasive, but in general, too much toughness weakens security because it provokes balancing. This is also a world in which the U.S. ultimately depends to some degree on cooperation, respect, and friendship for its own security. For it's part, Europe looks kinder, but also appears weak without military power. Without military power, it can not constrain the U.S., because it can not speak the language of power. Ultimately, because the U.S. can negotiate, bribe, and threaten force, Europe can be further marginalized whenever the U.S. wishes.

Another structural factor is the communications and polling revolutions, which have together greatly amplified the voices of the people around the world, and spread news around the globe at great speed (Kohut and Stokes 2006). In a way, the conference at the European University Institute that catalyzed this paper, is a reflection and acknowledgment of these twin revolutions

### **U.S. PERCEPTIONS OF EUROPE**

American perceptions of Europe, and Europe's own self-image and delusions are not the primary focus of this paper. But just as the U.S. seemed to have changed in other's eyes, the U.S.

perception of Europe and its utility has changed since the end of the Cold War. No longer the main front in the containment of the Soviet Union, Europe's importance waned after the Cold War. As noted, Europe's military power has declined and has had to rely on American power to fix problems in its own Balkan back yard. In addition, U.S. trade with Asia has boomed, and American eyes look East instead of West with increasing frequency.

In terms of international relations and foreign policy, Americans look favorably toward the British, with some favor towards Germany, with skepticism toward France, and do not really care much beyond that, except for people with ties to specific European countries. Americans have little use for the European conceit that they are more worldly and better at diplomacy. Such conceit does not sound justified from countries whose colonialism caused much of today's ethnic conflict and instability, from countries who started world wars, or whose Pantheon of national heroes contains a failed conqueror.

## The U.S. and Its Wars

This section has two parts. First, I discuss the general U.S. self-image when going to war, and argue that the U.S. peaceful and benevolent image is incorrect in that the U.S. uses force far more often than Americans realize, and that its external image is different from its self-image. Second, I selectively review America's wars to demonstrate on the one hand that America used force with great substantive benefit, but that on the other the hubris associated with exceptionalism and universalism is not justified. While the U.S. and its military has done great things for Europe and Asia in two World Wars and the Cold War, it has also used force to steal,

plunder, colonize, and kill unnecessarily. Hubris is rarely wise in international relations, and it is not justified by America's history. A claim that we are on the lighter side of the grey scale compared to other great powers in history is justifiable, but that does not justify hubris.

### THE FREQUENCY OF THE USE OF FORCE

When it comes to foreign policy, Americans have a self-image of being relatively pacific, slow to anger, and rarely using force abroad.<sup>15</sup> The reality is much different because the U.S. frequently uses force, and its soldiers and ships are deployed around the world. Many Americans do not perceive this, but a U.S. military presence is often a key image of the U.S. for those outside the U.S. A 1993 report by the U.S. Congressional Research Service “lists 234 instances in which the United States has used its armed forces abroad in situations of conflict or potential conflict,” not including covert operations.<sup>16</sup> Jeffrey Barlow wrote in 1997 that the U.S. has used force in response to crises more than 200 times since WWII, and that two-thirds of these responses involved aircraft carriers.<sup>17</sup> Dana Priest examined the increased militarization of U.S. foreign policy in *The Mission* (2003) and noted that U.S. special operations forces were operating in some 125 countries, mostly on training missions. For a number of years, the context influence of the State Department has been declining, a trend which accelerated greatly under

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<sup>15</sup> On a societal level though, American culture is pervaded by toughness, and strength is often valued above brains and intellect.

<sup>16</sup> <<[http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/crs/crs\\_931007.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/crs/crs_931007.htm)>>.

<sup>17</sup> “Answering the Call: Carriers in Crises Response Since World War II, *Naval Aviation News* January–February 1997 posted at <<<http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/sys/ship/docs/970100-jb.htm>>>.

Bush when Colin Powell was Secretary of State, and the importance of the Department of Defense has been rising. As a result, the travels of the U.S. regional CinCs [Commanders in Chief] are “mechanically elegant and ceremonial, unmatched in grandeur by those of any other U.S. government official except the president and a few cabinet secretaries.” (17) Priest noted how much discretionary money and regional influence the CinCs exercise, and termed them “Proconsuls to the Empire” (Chapter 3).

### SELECTIVE REVIEW OF WARS

7. History
  - a. Mex War
    - i. For this war, the main argument is that the US provoked it and then used the victory to seize large amounts of territory.
  - b. Span Am
    - i. for this war, the main argument is that it often takes many arguments to sway the American people. Some were persuaded by human rights, others by wanting to oust Spain from the hemisphere.
  - c. WWI
    - i. Helped end war, stop aggressor Germany
  - d. WWII
    - i. History with Japan more complicated than Americans realize,
    - ii. but U.S. still critical to stopping two militarized and aggressive powers
  - e. Cold War
    - i. Made some small problems worse, such as Vietnam and other places where the two sides fueled fires. The drive for credibility was overdrawn.
    - ii. But U.S. was still on the right side, and managed things pretty well, all things considered. From Berlin crises to the Cuban Missile Crisis to managing allies, some smart politics.
  - f. Vnam
    - i. Drive for credibility led to a debacle and lost war. Cost 2 million Vietnamese lives.
  - g. Iraq 1
    - i. Very good war. Well done.
  - h. Iraq 2:
    - i. 9/11 + WMD was main motive
    - ii. Biggest problem was planning and risk reduction, a rush to war.
    - iii. Diplomacy poor all around

- iv. To Bush: you have to be an idiot if you can't win global support for a war against Saddam
  - v. To peace movement/war opponents: you have to be an idiot if you can't stop a war against someone who has not attacked anyone (except for backing Palestinian terrorists).
  - vi. To European war opponents: you are hypocrites for crying international law to oppose the war, for a war against one of the biggest international outlaws all the while actively weakening the sanctions for selfish profits.
  - vii. American exceptionalism in action (Fukuyama 2)
  - i. GWOT
    - i. Could have been a silver lining b/c WMD terrorism is a grave and growing threat, but focus is skewed in so many ways as Iraq, Katrina, Afghanistan, and now Somalia shows.
8. US has gone to war many times:
- a. for territory
  - b. to block NSQ powers and preserve the balance of power in Asia and Europe
  - c. to stop or roll back communism
  - d. for human rights/democracy/norms
  - e. for preventive reasons/to enhance security
  - f. to preserve access for business/to resources
9. So Main Arugments,
- a. U.S. has used force wisely and defensively
  - b. For gain
  - c. Has lost wars
  - d. Has caused excess pain and death
  - e. Some pride is justified, as is some humility
  - f. Do not take pride in being lucky
  - g. Take some pride in providing self-interested but nonetheless public goods.

## Conclusion

I make several principal arguments. First, Americans have a diverse history and foreign policy, with many different strands and impulses that vary in their relative strength over time. Second, the combination of the U.S. unipolarity, 9/11 and President Bush fusion of U.S. power and American exceptionalism and universalism culminating in the Iraq War have caused America's image and reputation to decline almost worldwide.

Where will America's image and international relations in general go in the future? President Bush will of course soon be replaced. A lot will depend on the next President, and whether others come to see that person as appreciative of their views, the rule of law, and someone who will use the U.S. military with restraint.

The Iraq War is a bigger problem for a number of reasons. The prospects for a successful outcome in the short to medium term seem slim, and it ranks as one of the U.S.' biggest errors, even if things do eventually turn around. The War has made the problem of Islamic terrorism worse for the West in general, has and will continue to distort and distract U.S. foreign policy, has contributed to higher oil prices around the world, and the risk of greater de-stabilization continues. Furthermore, there seems to be no way out. Even efforts to train up Iraqi security forces has often backfired and made sectarian violence worse by training and arming partisans (Biddle 2006). As such, this festering sore for the U.S. vis a vis the rest of the world probably will not heal in the foreseeable future, and may well get worse.

On a more general level, the current period and tenor of U.S. foreign policy will change, and probably in ways the rest of the world will appreciate. Just as President Bush has taken America in a direction that many dislike, and many Americans have welcomed and endorsed this direction, his poll numbers in the U.S. are now extremely low.

It is also true that many aspects of his foreign policy are not endorsed by Americans, and never were. In polls, most Americans value cooperation with others, dislike pre-emption (defined as preventive war), and want cooperation with Europe. A January 2005 poll showed that 34% answered favorably to this question, and 58% of Americans opposed it: "Do you favor the so-called preemption strategy, which says that the U.S. should attack countries as soon as we

perceive them to be threats?” Note that the question is fairly hostile to preemption, by defining it as preventive war. And it mis-characterizes President Bush’s national security strategy. Sixty nine percent want the U.S. to cooperate with others even if it means sacrificing some national interests, while 31% oppose. Fifty-six percent wish to remain close to out “traditional European allies,” while 38% do not want to compromise with Europe. The phrasing is pro-European, but the numbers are fairly strong. Sixty-five percent of Americans also think that America’s has declined, and 68% think that failing to find WMD in Iraq has hurt U.S. credibility.<sup>18</sup>

Kohut and Stokes (2006) make similar observations, noting that American Chauvinism leads most Americans to ignore the world, not want to change it. In 2004, Americans ranked promoting democracy as the 18<sup>th</sup> most important foreign policy goal, and this was true on a bi-partisan level. They also note the irony in that many wanted Clinton to be less isolationist in the 1990s, and now want less leadership from the U.S. under Bush (47, 71-72). This suggests to me though, that U.S. Presidents and their policies, are key and variable drivers of anti-Americanism, and its various forms. Americans do not even want the U.S. to play a leading role in international relations. Only one in eight think the U.S. should be the single leader, and only one in five want the U.S. to be “first-among-equals” with other leaders (73). In the end, Kohut and Stokes argue that Americans are both internationalist and isolationist, multilateral and cooperative as well as unilateral: “When it comes to U.S. international engagement, the American Public is subject to persuasion and to changes of heart.” A lot depends on who the President is, and what threats and issues the country faces (83). It will be an ironic day when the

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<sup>18</sup> A report, “American Attitudes toward National Security, Foreign Policy, and the War on Terror,” based on a poll conducted for the Security and Peace Institute, at: <<<http://www.securitypeace.org/pdf/AmericanAttitudestoNatSecPoll.pdf>>>, pp. 11, 16.

rest of the world begins to complain about American isolationism (if that occurs).

Another perhaps reassuring fact is that American power has been tamed by the Iraq War. Not only has it drained U.S. force and will, but has sobered some of the most cavalier proponents of making a new U.S. century. The quote above about the ability of the U.S. to make its own reality seems absurd against the backdrop of the quagmire in Iraq. Those who prior to Iraq were afraid the American hegemony was almost limitless, or even that unipolarity meant hegemony made find some perverse comfort in the limits to American power on display in Iraq.

That said, it is worth remembering that American power is still enormous, and the gap between U.S. military power and almost every other state except perhaps China is only like to grow. By some calculations, U.S. defense spending is about, or greater, than fifty percent of all global defense spending, while others note that U.S. defense spending is larger than the next top twenty countries. The U.S. spends more on military research and development than any other country spends on its entire military (more than \$60 billion).<sup>19</sup> The U.S. Office of Management and Budget notes that the 2007 defense budget is anticipated to be \$439.3 billion, for 2007, “a 7-percent increase over 2006, and a 48-percent increase over 2001.”<sup>20</sup> They also write that this is 3.8% of of the U.S. GDP.<sup>21</sup> As this is 2.2% below a roughly average Cold War budget in terms of GDP, this level of defense spending is easily sustainable by the American economy. The wars

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<sup>19</sup> Jeffrey Chamberlin, Congressional Research Service report: “Comparisons of U.S. and Foreign Military Spending: Data from Selected Public Sources, January 28, 2004, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division available at: <<<http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RL32209.pdf>>>, data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI, at: <<[http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex\\_trends.html](http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_trends.html)>> and these self-explanatory links: <<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_military\\_expenditures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_military_expenditures)>> <<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S.\\_military\\_budget](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._military_budget)>>.

<sup>20</sup> at: <<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/pdf/Defense-07.pdf>>>.

<sup>21</sup> at <<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2007/pdf/hist.pdf>>>.

in Afghanistan and Iraq are paid for out of supplemental funds, and are not part of the U.S. defense budget, above. The point here is that U.S. unipolarity is likely to be an enduring feature of international relations for some time to come.

Perhaps even less reassuring is that many in the Administration and in the U.S. still want to use force to solve problems, including attacking Iran. Of course, force is always an option, and one that is often proper to have on the table. But the drums are beating loudly on Iran, and the pace of diplomacy seems too hurried, against the backdrop of a August 2005 CIA estimate that Iran may be able to build a nuclear bomb in about ten years.<sup>22</sup> This doubled the previous estimate of five years. Ten years provides a long time to continue working on the problem with solutions other than war.

I shall not end with a call for less hubris, for more priority placed on international institutions, or for greater respect for international law. These arguments are well developed by others, including Nye, Ikenberry, and Walt. I am confident that the West and industrialized share many common values both domestically and internationally. The day will come when these shared values become more obvious than they are today on the international scene.

I also think we share an interest in fighting domestic and international terrorism, and that the U.S. should view this as a campaign against terrorism and not a war. This would allow us to focus on using all the tools we need to fight terrorism, not just military ones.<sup>23</sup> As we look to the

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<sup>22</sup> Dafna Linzer, "Iran Is Judged 10 Years From Nuclear Bomb U.S. Intelligence Review Contrasts With Administration Statements," Washington Post, August 2, 2005 at <<[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/01/AR2005080101453\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/01/AR2005080101453_pf.html)>>.

<sup>23</sup> Lindley, Campaign Against Terrorism, <<[http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst/ocpapers/op\\_22\\_1.PDF](http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst/ocpapers/op_22_1.PDF)>>.

future, it is almost inevitable that the threat of WMD war and terrorism will grow. This is because the technological capabilities are diffusing and these weapons will only grow easier to make. I believe that states develop bonds when they share common values, and when they share common threats. We share the threat of WMD war and terrorism, and no one is immune.

There is another threat we share, and one that should unite all citizens in the developed world and beyond. As the threat of WMD war and terror grows, increasing pressure will be put on civil liberties and rights as surveillance cameras proliferate, databases are merged, and people are tracked and monitored (Dershowitz). A common commitment to preserve civil liberties and not to sacrifice them should be a common calling for all who aspire to keep these liberties. As we march almost unknowingly into an Orwellian world, I quote Benjamin Franklin: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

1820 May 24, 2006  
3184 May 30, 2006  
4296, May 31  
5647 June 1, 2006  
6376 June 4, 2006  
7556 June 5, 2006  
9191 June 6, 2006  
9629 June 6, 2006