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THE GIFT

SEEING OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US - - HOW OTHERS VIEW AMERICA

A PAPER PRESENTED TO THE SPHEX CLUB - - NOVEMBER 15, 2001

INTRODUCTION

"Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion."

To a Louse **[1786]**
Robert Burns
1759-1796

The first two lines of this poem written in 1786 by the Scottish poet, Robert Burns, when he was 27 years old, are well known. But, the last two lines add wisdom to the excerpt and the four lines roughly translate as:

"Oh would some power give us the gift
To see ourselves as others see us!
It would free us from many blunders,
And foolish ideas."

The elusive "gift" described by Burns, and selected as the title to this paper, was suggested after a recent trip to Scotland. But, the topic of tonight's paper - - "Seeing Ourselves As Others See Us - -How Others View America" - - was chosen prior to our Scotland trip, during which the terrorists attacks of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center Towers occurred, and was developed from several sources. Knowing another Sphex Club paper was coming due, I once again rummaged through periodicals, newspaper clippings and magazines for a topic. What caught my eye was the Spring 2001 issue of *The Wilson Quarterly*, published by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. This issue contains seven essays by overseas

writers on the subject of "How the World Views America". These essays are the primary resource for tonight's paper but, giving credit where credit is due, other resources include Time Magazine, The Wall Street Journal, and The New & Advance.

Tonight's paper, and I hope the discussion that follows, in reality relates to how we determine what the role of the U.S. is, and should be, in the world. Let me also hasten to add that tonight's paper is offered in the spirit of discussion and debate rather than advancing any particular point of view. Finally, what follows comes from sources written prior to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center but these events may, in some cases, make the subject matter even more relevant to Americans.

BACKGROUND

In a poll conducted in 1997 by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, the consensus among those person described in the poll as "Influentials" (that is, foreign affairs and security experts, journalists, scholars, scientists, religious leaders, governors, mayors, top business executives, Congressional staff and labor leaders as opposed to the general public) on the greatest dangers to world stability remained much as the same as a similar poll conducted in 1993, namely: nationalism and ethnic hatred followed by proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Although majorities of security and foreign policy experts disagreed, these influentials believed that the major lines of conflict in the future would be between civilizations rather than nations, a thesis advocated by Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington. In another poll conducted by The Pew Center earlier this year in France, German, Great Britain and Italy, George W. Bush was seen as highly unpopular with the publics of the major nations of Western Europe. By wide margins, people in Germany, France, Great Britain and Italy all disapproved of his handling of international policy and the American president did not inspire much more confidence in these countries than did Russian president Vladimir

Putin. On the other hand, a solid majority of Europeans believed that, whatever their view of Bush, the U.S. and Europe have not grown apart in recent years. And those who do see differences as increasing do not attribute the rift to any single factor. Rather, solid majorities in this group point to the growing power of the European Union, the resentment stirred by U.S. multinational corporations, differences over culture, and the lack of a common security threat. It would be interesting to see what the results of a similar poll would be after the attack on the World Trade Center.

In the Friday, July 27, 2001, edition of The News & Advance, a front page article appeared with the headline of "Talks of Isolationism on the Rise." This Associated Press article appeared after the first six months in office of George W. Bush and described the widening rift between the U.S. and Europe and observed that some European leaders and others were suggesting that American was being drawn into a new era of isolationism. In the article, the Bush administration called it "a la carte multinationalism" -- joining allies when it suits U.S. interest. Prominent among the differences with European allies was abandonment of the 1997 Kyoto climate-control treaty dealing with global warming. 178 countries reached a climate accord and the U.S. was the only hold out; the determination to proceed with a missile-defense shield which some view as a violation of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The administration would like to see that pact "ditched" but Putin and many European leaders see it as a bedrock arms agreement; abandonment of a U.N. accord to enforce the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention saying that the agreement would "put national security and confidential business information at risk"; opposition to treaties to ban land mines (121 nations support) and nuclear-weapons tests and one for an international criminal court (138 nations support); opposing a proposed 189-nation pact against small-arms trafficking resulting in a watered-down version supported by the U.S.; and trade disputes, ranging from duties on bananas to tax rates. The article further observed that the U.S. death penalty, strongly supported by Bush, is scorned in Europe. And the hard-line American policy toward both Iran and Iraq has been dropped by all European allies except Britain.

The August 6, 2000, issue of Time magazine contains a brief blurb that "unilateralism is U.S.[US]". To make its point, the article states that "sometimes being a megarich hyperpower is just plain lonely. Especially when the entire rest of the world is wrong. And recently that seems to be happening to the U.S. a lot". The article then reviews opposition of the U.S. to many of the items mentioned in the newspaper article just described. These two articles reflect an apparent trend toward "neo-isolationism" or "nationalism" and are reminiscent of George Washington's Farewell Address in 1796 when he said 205 years ago "Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.". A fair question now is to what extent will the World Trade Center attacks on September 11 allow U.S. disengagement from the rest of the world.

THE ESSAYS

Turning now to the seven essays by overseas writers from South Africa, France, the Middle East, China, Germany, Mexico and Russia, and all of which were copyrighted in 2001 but prior to the World Trade Center attacks in September, the editors of *The Wilson Quarterly* focused on the debate about the U.S. role in the world. The editors observed in the preface that "[t]he overwhelming predominance of the United States in the post-Cold War world has left many Americans uneasy - - and a bit perplexed. . ." and wondering "[w]hy. . . doesn't the world see us as we tend to see ourselves, as selfless champions of freedom and democracy". The editors then observed that national unease was reflected in last fall's presidential campaign, when both major-party candidates called for a "new humility in the nation's foreign policy". With this disquiet in mind, the seven writers were asked earlier this year to describe how America looks from where they stand and, although many of the criticisms are harsh, the editors also observe that, from even the most critical, two truths emerge: "The United States cannot avoid engagement with the world; nor it can forego its role as a beacon of liberty."

What follows are excerpts from these seven essays and, because of the events on September 11 at the World Trade Center, the Middle East essay will have a bit more emphasis.

SOUTH AFRICA

A VIEW OF ROME FROM THE PROVINCES

by Allister Sparks
(South African Journalist)

The American scholar spoke in a matter—of—fact tone. "Not since Rome, he said, "has a single power so dominated the world—militarily, economically, culturally; in science, in the arts, in education." Around the Washington seminar table, sage heads nodded. It was not a statement uttered with boastful intent. It was spoken, and received by the audience, as an expression of self—evident truth.

Objectively assessed, the statement is probably true. American dominance in the world is indeed extraordinary. Yet, as the only foreigner in the room, I bristled. There is a disturbing whiff of hubris about such an assured assumption of one's own superiority. I made some crack about how good it was to come from the provinces to Rome to sit at the feet of the patricians, but I fear the irony passed unnoticed. The American self-image of a mighty power that is also a benign hegemon, the global custodian of democratic values and human rights, is deeply rooted. There is genuine bewilderment at the fact that the United States is not universally admired but is, rather, often seen as domineering and manipulative.

[**Definition of "hegemony"**: Leadership, predominance, (especially among smaller nations) aggression or expansionism by large nations in an effort to achieve world domination]

[**Definition of "hubris"**: Excessive pride or self-confidence; arrogance]

Much of the hostility, of course, stems from envy. It has been the lot of the rich through the ages to be resented by the poor, and Africa, being the poorest of the poor, has more than its share of this resentment. But it is more accurate to speak of a love-hate relationship, for in Africa, as elsewhere, America's pop music and culture, its movies and television, its fashions and its fast-food restaurants are pervasive, even as the resentment of cultural invasiveness smolders. Developing countries want direct U.S. investment to build their economies, but the transnational corporations that make the investments are targeted as symbols of economic imperialism. The United States is criticized for not being more directly involved in humanitarian interventions, especially in Africa, but if it does get involved, it is accused of being hegemonic.

[**Note**: This reference to a love-hate relationship, or paradox, is repeated by other foreign writers in describing the American presence in their respective countries]

Ironically, South Africa, which shares in this love-hate relationship with the United States, is also caught in a Catch-22 in its relationship with the rest of the African continent. In regional terms, it is the most advanced democracy and something of a superpower, accounting for 40 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's total gross domestic product. For decades, African states longed for the day when South Africa would be liberated from its status as the apartheid pariah [outcast] and become the economic engine that would pull Africa out of its mire of poverty and underdevelopment, much as Japan did for the Pacific Rim. But now that South Africa is free and democratic, there is acute resentment of its businessmen as they thrust northward, and its political leaders are almost obsessively cautious not to appear to be throwing their weight around.

Like America in the world at large, South Africa has the power, but fearful of being called domineering, it winds up being accused of failing to provide leadership. It, too, is reluctant to join peacekeeping missions in Africa. "It's an exact analogy," says Gregory Mills, director of the South African Institute of International Affairs. "We're both damned if we do and damned if we don't."

South Africa's love—hate relationship with the United States has moved through cycles over the years. The United States has long been a reference point for black

South Africans, who have not only identified with the civil rights struggle of African Americans but at times looked to them for salvation, even as they resented what they perceived to be Washington's de facto support for white minority rule in South Africa. For their part, white South Africans, who still dominate the economy, admire the dynamism of American capitalism and have historically shared the American abhorrence of communism. . . but. . . have a faintly derogatory attitude toward the United States, inherited from their European past.

During the 1920s, Marcus Garvey's back-to-Africa movement ignited an apocalyptic expectation among black South Africans that their liberation was at hand. Word spread that Garvey, who had formed his Black Star shipping line to transport African Americans to Africa, was sending a fleet to liberate South Africa and establish a black republic.

In the 1950s, America, the land of Jesse Owens and Joe Louis, was perceived as the place where the black man was free, or at least where he was a man of the city, of the Big Time—with a big car, racy speech, and flashy suits.

Later, after . . .the banning of the African National Congress (ANC), and the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela, this romantic vision faded. It was replaced by a more hard—nosed identification with the Soviet Union when the West generally failed to support the ANC exiles, and only the socialist countries (including those in Scandinavia) gave them sanctuary and material aid. The intellectual influence of this support base; continued racism in the United States; a perception, particularly during the Reagan years, that Washington was a covert supporter of the apartheid status duo; America's shift away from its traditional liberalism; and the emergence of a tougher, more grasping form of capitalism all combined to make *capitalism* itself a pejorative word and the United States something of an ogre. Nthato Motlana, Mandela's lifelong friend and adviser, said "He [Reagan] seemed to support all the worst dictators in the world. We just hated Americans at that time."

That perception softened considerably in the late 1980s with the surge of public support for the anti-apartheid cause in America. Congress overrode President Reagan's

veto of sanctions against South Africa, and U.S. economic pressure proved decisive in forcing the apartheid regime to the negotiating table. Then came the collapse of the Soviet empire, at the very moment the ANC triumphantly assumed power after its long and arduous liberation struggle.

The end of the bipolar world [U.S. v. USSR] has brought a new ambiguity. The ANC is pragmatic and recognized America's supreme importance— Mandela's first trip abroad was to the United States, where he was given the honor of being one of the few foreign heads of state to address Congress. But with the end of bipolar competition, the Third World generally and Africa in particular find themselves increasingly on the margins of world affairs and even forgotten.

There is also a sense that the United States has become more arrogant and isolationist. The legacy of the Reagan years and the winning of the Cold War, most black South Africans believe, have produced a sea change in the American ethos. There has been a dwindling of the idealistic spirit that inspired the Peace Corps, a discrediting of liberalism, a persistent dominance in foreign policy of the "national interest" over "humanitarian interests"— likely to be more pronounced under President George W. Bush—and an attitude in domestic policy that in the land of opportunity the poor, who are disproportionately black, are to blame for their own misery.

Bill Clinton introduced more ambiguity into the U.S.—African relationship. Admittedly, be paid more attention to Africa than did any previous U.S. president. But he did not match his words and gestures with action.

Africa's crises multiplied during the Clinton years, yet the administration did little to prevent or alleviate them other than provide some token funding for peacekeeping forces. It took no action to stop the Rwanda genocide or the appalling atrocities in Sierra Leone.

It seems clear that after the 1993 military debacle in Somalia, which left 18 American soldiers dead, the United States will not soon use armed intervention again in Africa. Yet it has intervened in Kosovo and Bosnia, and would doubtless be willing to do

so again in the Middle East. The rationale is that U.S. national interests are at stake in those regions, but to Africans the choice looks more like racial discrimination. A recent study by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) shows that U.S. companies have larger investments in Africa (more than $15 billion) than in either the Middle East or eastern Europe. Fifteen percent of U.S. oil imports now come from Africa (mostly Nigeria and Angola), and the figure will increase to more than 20 percent over the next four years.

Another matter that raises concern in South Africa is the growing U.S. scorn for the emerging framework of international organizations and the trend toward greater American unilateralism. While maintaining its self—image as the global custodian of human rights, the United States took 40 years to ratify the 1948 Genocide Convention, and it remains one of the few countries that have failed to ratify the Landmines Agreement, the International Covenant on the Rights of Children, or the Rome Treaty establishing an international criminal court for human rights. Washington and Belgrade were the only two capitals that refused to participate in the proceedings of the Independent International Commission on Kosovo, which has investigated the war in that region.

"There is a schizophrenia here," says Richard Goldstone, the South African judge who cochairs the commission. Americans believe in these institutions, they want to see international criminals prosecuted, but they don't want to open themselves to the process. I think they fear that the institutions will be used against them politically, but it is perceived as arrogance, as though they regard themselves as above scrutiny."

Finally, of course, there is the matter of The Election, a source of much hilarity and jesting on the part of us provincials, who must subject our own electoral processes to the scrutiny of outside observer teams, and ultimately to the judgment of the United States, if we are to receive a stamp of democratic acceptability. Romulus in his feasts in honor of Neptune, so runs the legend, introduced the most ancient of all Roman

spectacles, the circus. Al Gore and George W. Bush, it would seem, have revived the tradition.

FRANCE

THE BARBARIC AMERICANS

by Denis Lacorne
(Professor of Political Science at the Paris Institute of Political Studies; visiting Professor at the University of Paris)

To the French, the winner of the American presidential election in 2000 was Bill Clinton. Political commentators expressed no particular liking for George W. Bush. 'The little that was known about him was not encouraging. Had he ever visited Europe? Only once—a short trip to Rome to attend a friend's wedding. The French consensus is that American democracy was discredited by the failure to complete the recount of Florida's votes. It is thus left to the American news media, according to an editorial in the weekly *L 'Express,* to save the "honor of American democracy" by finishing the job. But Bush's problem, for Europeans, stems from a flawed personality as much as from the election. In the French press, he has been called a "dumb leader" and the "Forrest Gump of American politics."

At the same time, the American election provoked a series of French articles praising Bill Clinton's legacy and his well-demonstrated powers of seduction. There is a genuine French nostalgia for Clinton—a president who, in the view of Felix Rohatyn, the former U.S. ambassador to France, would have been overwhelmingly reelected had he been the president of France. Projecting their own perceptions onto the American political scene, French journalists were convinced that Clinton remained quite popular in the United States as well.

True, there had been minor problems with *l 'affaire Lewinsky,* but those were just diverting *polissonneries* (naughty tricks) that did not shift the balance of Clinton's

achievements to the negative side. As for Clinton's controversial pardons, they amounted, in *Le Monde*, only to a "failed exit."

French perceptions of the United States, as measured by a recent SOFRES/French American Foundation public opinion poll, are rather negative. Nearly half the French (48 percent) express neither sympathy, nor lack of sympathy" for the United States. Very few would like to live in the United States (16 percent), and an overwhelming majority (80 percent) are convinced that the American system of social protection does not work well, and certainly not as well as the system in France. When asked for "images that come to mind when you think of America," a majority of respondents (56 percent) gave answers linked to violence, criminality, the death penalty, and the liberal availability of weapons.

But the feelings are not entirely negative. Though only 16 percent of the French would ever consider living permanently in the United States, 39 percent would like to attend an American university. That is particularly true of the young, 54 percent of whom want to study in the United States. The percentage is even higher for French college graduates. (Two-thirds of them would like to attend an American university.) The U.S. educational system clearly has great appeal for young French people. And though we French fight to defend our language, we simultaneously borrow numerous English terms from the new economy. In the hybrid vocabulary of a new generation of Frenchmen, we talk about *"le net,* we pray for *"les business angels,"* we praise a *"petite startup,"* and we are reluctant to replace *"e-mail"* with a French term.

What should be of most concern to Americans is the perception that their country is a violent, uncivilized society, incapable even of assimilating its own immigrants properly. Why is that perception so prevalent in France? In part because the available evidence shows that the United States is indeed far more violent than most European societies. Consider, for example, comparative data on the number of men between the ages of 25 and 34, the "dangerous age" bracket, who commit murder. The comparison is stunning. Each year, 38 of 100,000 men in that age bracket commit a murder in the

United States, compared with fewer than two of 100,000 in Germany, one of 100,000 in France, and an even lower number in the United Kingdom.

Similar disproportions mark the prison populations of the United States and Europe. Some 650 of 100,000 Americans were incarcerated in 1997, compared with 120 of 100,000 individuals in the United Kingdom, 90 of 100,000 in France and Germany, 86 of 100,000 in Italy, 59 of 100,000 in Sweden, and 750 of 100,000 in Russia. The visual media reinforce this image of a violent America. Over and over again, they show the horrors of random school shootings and the cruelty of inner-city drug wars.

There's yet another reason for the negative image of America: the systematic denunciation by European media of the use—and abuse—of the death penalty in the United States. The campaign of accusation is sustained, systematic, organized, and relentless. In European eyes, America is still a barbaric country, a Wild West that does not know how to police its population and control its judges and sheriffs. Executions are not merely reported in the French press. They are made front-page events and are discussed by leading journalists, novelists, and justices of the highest French courts. They are the subject of numerous op-ed pieces, unsigned editorials, and popular petition campaigns. The life stories of American death-row inmates such as Karla Faye Tucker and Odell Barnes are thoroughly familiar to readers of French newspapers.

Jack Lang, the minister of education in the Socialist government, went to Texas to spend a few minutes with Odell Barnes, in the hope of influencing the state's Board of Pardons. Barnes was executed, but not before thanking his supporters. That led Bernard Pivot, an influential French TV personality, to express a new form of patriotic pride: "I may be an old-fashioned patriot, but this week I'm proud to be French: an American publicly thanked the French. He was on death row."

That statement clearly reminded the French that they belong to the universe of civilization, in contrast to their American cousins, the barbarians.

The ethical war between France and the United States is comforting for the French intelligentsia, who are able to reaffirm, at little cost, their moral and intellectual superiority. The war also reveals a surprising ignorance on their part about the workings of the American political system and the federal nature of the American political system. The centralism of the "one and indivisible" French Republic has not prepared us French to understand the functioning of a federal government. Few in France know that criminal law in the United States varies from state to state, and that the abolition of the death penalty would require 50 distinct legislative decisions (or a reversal by the U.S. Supreme Court). In France, as in most European parliamentary systems, it took only a simple majority vote in the National Assembly to abolish the death penalty in 1981, at a time when 62 percent of the French still favored the practice.

The slogan used so often by U.S. politicians amid candidates for local police and judicial positions—"Vote for me because I'm tough on crime"—is unfashionable in France today. The fact remains that France and its European neighbors are not violent societies. Food markets and wine shows are more popular weekend destinations than gun shows. And because our society is less violent than U.S. society, we are less willing to imagine the outside world as dangerous, and we are not disposed to fill the skies with a virtual Maginot Line against the missiles of some hypothetical rogue state.

A more fundamental difference between France and the United States lies, paradoxically, in a quality they have in common. Both claim to have invented the modern republican form of government, together with modern freedoms and human rights. The competing universalist pretensions of their two revolutions, the particular arrogance of the French intelligentsia, and the contempt of the American political class for neo-Gaullist posturing will ensure that France and the United States remain rivals. We French would like to civilize the world, but we are instead being globalized by the United States, even as our "civilization" is rejected by our European neighbors as excessively Francocentric. Yet there us one thing on which all Europeans agree: no country that has the death penalty today can pretend to be civilized.

CHINA

BEAUTY— AND BEAST

by Wang Jisi
(Director of the Institute of American Studies at the
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing)

In a recent survey of Chinese attitudes toward America, the respondents— a cross-section of Chinese society—were asked to give the first words that came to mind at time mention of the United States. Thirty—four percent of them answered "modernization," "affluence," or "high—tech"; 11.6 percent said democracy or "freedom"; and 29 percent responded "overbearing," "hegemonic"" arrogant," or "the world's policeman."

The sum of those responses is a fair representation of China's ambivalent sentiments about America, a nation whose name translates literally into Chinese as "Beautiful Country" *(Meiguo).* When the Chinese focus on America within its own boundaries, they see a nation that is beautifully developed, governed, and maintained. But when they view the United States as a player on the international scene, most Chinese see an unattractive and malign presence. The Chinese are similarly ambivalent about what they assume to be America's attitude toward China. Sixty percent of the respondents in the survey said they thought that America supports the process of reform and opening that is taking place in China, but an equal number said that the United States wants to prevent China from becoming a great power. They believe that Americans will accept only a China that goes the American way—and will hinder the nation's development if it does not.

Not all Chinese hold similar views of the United States. Chinese society today is increasingly pluralized, and the China-U.S. relationship is increasingly multifaceted. Yet to most Chinese—the general public and the political elites—American condescension toward China and the contrast between America's internal achievements and its external mischief are striking and puzzling.

At a closed-door meeting in Beijing, the editor of a leading Chinese newspaper expressed his feelings this way: "So far as its domestic conditions are concerned, the United States is a very good country. It is prosperous, powerful, and rich, and its living conditions are comfortable and humane. Americans have managed their country successfully. So why do we not want them to meddle in international affairs? Why are we so reluctant to learn from their experiences in running the country? Because they are too arrogant and too highhanded to be tolerated."

The Chinese debate among themselves as to whether the confusing outcome of the American presidential election in 2000 reflected a dirty power game in a pseudo-democracy or a fair competition based on the rule of law and self-government. Many Chinese youngsters are fascinated by Bill Gates, Mariah Carey, Harrison Ford, and Michael Jordan. At the same time, serious observers point to school shootings, drug addiction, police brutality, and the disparity between rich and poor as evidence of what they call the "American disease."

But if the Chinese people view U.S. domestic affairs with favorable or mixed feelings, they take a quite negative view of the role and behavior of the United States in global affairs. They do not accept America's assertion that it acts in the world only on moral principles. They believe that self-interest drives U.S. foreign policy no less than it drives the foreign policy of any other nation. They point out that even American leaders justify U.S. international actions by invoking the national interest, as when President Richard Nixon said during his historic visit in 1972 that he had come to China in the interests of the United States. In 1991, President George Bush launched the Persian Gulf War to safeguard the Middle East oil supply, and not, as he asserted, to create a "new world order." In Rwanda and other strife-torn countries, Washington has taken few steps to help because it sees little to gain.

It is especially difficult for the Chinese to accept the notion Americans have of their "manifest destiny"—that they are the people chosen by God to save the rest of the world for democracy and freedom. In China's largely atheist society, the American

propensity to interfere on the international stage seems no more than a camouflaged ambition to acquire fortune and power. The 1999 military action in Kosovo by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), for example, was widely perceived in China as an American scheme—under the guise of protecting human rights—to conquer Yugoslavia, isolate Russia, weaken the European Union, warn China, and, ultimately, keep the United States in a dominant position.

Some Chinese with a liberal, cosmopolitan outlook, who may not be so critical of America's motivation or its alleged greediness for power, are nonetheless disturbed by America's attitude. The Confucian tradition regards modesty as a virtue and presumption as a sin. The United States, in their eyes, is guilty of assuming too much. They particularly resent members of the U.S. Congress who know little about international issues yet attempt to impose sanctions on other nations.

The vast majority of Chinese observers reject the U.S. notion that America should "play a leadership role" in the world—both because they see that role as self-assumed and because the word *leadership* in the Chinese language connotes a hierarchical order in which many are subordinated to one. In their view, the United States should "mind its own business"—and remedy the various manifestations of social and moral decay at home before it denounces others.

In Chinese eyes, the world would be a safer and fairer place if the United States, China, Russia, the European states, Japan, and many other countries shared responsibility for dealing with global and regional issues through multilateral consultations in settings such as the United Nations. Unfortunately, the world today is becoming increasingly unbalanced because international norms and institutions seem so much to favor the United States.

Economic globalization has clearly benefitted China. Millions of Chinese welcome the presence of Coke, McDonald's, Motorola, Microsoft, Disney, Reebok, and companies like them, and they earn good salaries working on the production lines of Western companies. But millions of other Chinese, particularly those working in state-

owned enterprises that face fierce competition from American industrial giants, may lose their jobs. Because Americans are in China to make money, and not out of a sense of charity, few Chinese feel grateful to the United States for the improvement in U.S—China economic relations.

For the Chinese, the United States is, at once, their greatest economic partner and their gravest external threat. It does not much matter to them how the United States is governed, or even how it conducts its global affairs generally. What does matter is America's attitude specifically toward the growth of China's national power.

The official Chinese line is that U.S. strategy is designed to Westernize, divide, and weaken China. Despite the obvious political motivation for such an allegation, the belief is widespread in China that the United States does indeed want to keep the country down for strategic purposes—and is not hostile merely to the communist leadership in Beijing. As one Chinese student of international relations has remarked, "I am puzzled by what the Americans have done to China. They say they do not like the Chinese government but are friendly to the Chinese people. That is understandable from a political perspective. But they have obstructed the Chinese bid for holding the Olympics in Beijing, threatened to revoke normal trade relations between the two countries, and shown little concern about the suffering in China from devastating floods. They try to dissuade China from selling weapons to the countries they dislike, even as they sell advanced weapons to Taiwan to strengthen its position against China's reunification. So do they really want to hurt the Chinese government only, or do they want to harm the Chinese nation as a whole?"

The Taiwan issue feeds the Chinese suspicion that the United States is pursuing a strategy of "divide and rule." It evokes the collective memory of China's being bullied and dismembered by Japan and the Western powers for more than a century after the Opium War. In 1950, at the outbreak of the Korean War, the Truman administration dispatched the U.S. Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait. In the Chinese interpretation, that

act and the subsequent U.S. support of Taiwan have kept the island separated from the mainland for more than 50 years.

Perpetuating the separation may serve several U.S. interests. First, by keeping China's territory divided and its sovereignty violated, the United States may hamper China's drive to achieve the dignity of a great power. Second, Taiwan's ongoing acquisition of U.S. weaponry is good business for U.S. military industries. Third, continued tensions across the Taiwan Strait provide an excuse for Americans to maintain a military presence in the Asian Pacific and to develop their missile projects. Finally, by endorsing Taiwan's democratization, Washington may exert more pressure on Beijing for political change. All these Chinese fears and interpretations of events persist in the face of assurances from the United States that its commitment to the security of Taiwan is morally motivated and intended to do nothing more than maintain peace in the area.

In the wake of the NATO bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade on May 8, 1999, Chinese policy analysts and scholars heatedly debated the status of China-U.S. relations and how China should respond to America's neo-interventionism. In the survey cited at the start of this essay, 85 percent of the respondents said they were convinced that the bombing had been deliberate.

Many Chinese are likewise disturbed by the condescending and overbearing tone of American criticism of China's human rights record. They are ready to concede, at least privately, that the human rights situation in China is far from satisfactory. But they suspect that the criticisms are politically motivated.

In any case, China's ambivalence about the "Beautiful Country" will linger. Deep in the Chinese mind lurks a strange combination of images of America— a repressive hegemon, a sentimental imperialist, a grave threat, a hypocritical crusader, a contagious disease, a successful polity, a gorgeous land, a ravishing culture, an indispensable partner, a fond dream, and a patronizing teacher.

GERMANY

A HERO WITH A BLIND SPOT

by Peter Schneider
(Writer based in Berlin and author of 18 books)

Anyone who has sent a child to school in the United States has observed the effects of the psychological drug called "high expectations": "You're good! We believe in you! You can do things others can't! In fact, you can do anything, be anyone—Michael Jordan or Bill Gates or the president!" it's easy to challenge this sort of naive American dreaming, which, in any case, Americans don't take literally. Europeans fail to understand that the unreal career promises represent a frame of mind. "The world lies open before you. Grab hold of it. You'll see its limits soon enough.

Germans do not regard the habit of effusive encouragement as a virtue. Whoever finds fault first—with a product, a project, or a colleague—supposedly proves his intelligence; whoever praises someone is suspected of having ended his studies prematurely, or of being in the person's debt. In the Old World, people underestimate the intangible energy one feels in the United States — the optimism, daring, and self—confidence.

I witnessed a striking illustration of this contrast with the introduction of the impotency pill Viagra. On American television, I saw the failed Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole give an ecstatic thumbs-up. He had tested the blue pill after a prostate operation, and, like hundreds of thousands of American men, he had experienced the miracle of resurrection.

In Germany, too, the news about the wonder drug triggered waiting lines in front of urology clinics. But in the special reports about Viagra on German television, you saw only the deeply concerned faces of experts who outdid one another with warnings: if you want to experience dizziness, headaches, and stomach pains, become blind, and risk

a heart attack, take Viagra! As Americans celebrated the hundreds of thousands of men who could enjoy their regained stamina, Germans focused on six men who had died—and warned those who survived that they had better visit their psychiatrists. We'll have to leave open for now the question as to which reaction will prove wiser over time. But to the question "Where would you prefer to live in the interim — with the 'thumbs—up optimists' or the 'head—shaking pessimists'?" the answer is easy.

The somewhat recent American culture of remembering the Holocaust has made a definitive contribution to the historical understanding of that unparalleled crime and to the moral education of those born after the fact, in the United States and around the globe. But does this culture of remembrance have a side effect? As identification with the victims of the Holocaust becomes a part of American identity, does it tempt Americans to suppress the crimes of their own history? It is astonishing that no monument or museum on the National Mall in Washington is dedicated to the history of American slavery. The Vietnam War Memorial honors the approximately 58,000 American soldiers who were killed in the conflict—but there is no mention of the approximately three million Vietnamese dead, most of whom were civilians.

Perhaps my greatest concern about American culture is that its inherent drive toward purity and innocence and its inclination to self-righteousness (and compulsion to save the world) come at the price of denying a good portion of America's history. I realize that I'm now jumping on the character trait I praised — for good reason —at the start. But the wonderful, highly productive optimism of Americans flows from a belief that in the eternal struggle between good and evil, the good empire flies the American flag.

The world needs and wants a good cowboy, whose justice and righteous individualism overcome evil empires. In contrast to all the other superpowers, America has actually lived up to this self-elected identity several times. What to do, then, when the justified have eyes only for the sins of others and not for their own? In the future, only a limited number of conflicts will follow the good-versus-evil pattern. The conflicts will revolve, rather, around the control and distribution of finite energy resources — and

the grotesque waste thereof in the United States. Questions about whether meat with hormones is healthy or whether biologically altered food should be marked accordingly are not answered by the conviction that what's good for America is good for the world.

And yet, my objections do not alter my fondness for a country in which I have spent some of the best years of my life. Perhaps Europeans should be disturbed that, of all things, the American way of life has become the model for the emerging world culture. Of course, it's not a good thing that a society that depends upon competition suddenly has no competitor in the world. Sometimes one hopes for a strong and equal Europe if only to save Americans from overweening pride and ignorance. Still, the anxious and envious inhabitants of the Old World might ask themselves what makes the American model so attractive. Precisely because it is incomparably more open and welcoming to integration than European society, American society is, to date, the only one in the world in which all non-Americans can recognize a part of themselves.

The image of the United States in Europe is similar in many ways to the image West Germany had in the East German media for 40 years: the negative details were correct, but the overall picture was fundamentally wrong. What gets lost in the picture is that, after each episode of intolerance, racism, and moral one-upmanship, a countermovement arises. Americans have not avoided most of the historical evils that befell Europeans before them. But in contrast to the Europeans, Americans have freed themselves from most of those evils on their own.

The Maryland village of Friendship Heights recently attempted to forbid smoking on public property—even outdoors—in accordance with the crazy slogan "A smoke-free America!" Meanwhile, heroes in Hollywood films still smoke. Perhaps this is the unique quality of American culture: of most things good or bad that you can say about it, the opposite is also true.

MEXICO

MEXICO'S NEW SPIRIT

by Sergio Aguayo
(Professor at the College of Mexico's Center for International Relations)

Mexico's perceptions of the United States have changed very little during the past five decades. What has undergone a total transformation, however, is the atmosphere in which thy are formed. This change reached its culmination with the defeat of the long—ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) at the polls on July 2, 2000, and the presidential victory of Vicente Fox. The end of the PRI's dominion after 72 years of authoritarian and often viscerally anti—American rule would seem to augur well for improvements in Mexican—American relations, and in many ways it does. But along with political change has come a new and more self-confident spirit of Mexican nationalism that will pose challenges for the United States.

In ordler to peer into the future, however, we must first reenter the past. Our two countries have a long common history, stretching back to the 16th century, that has profoundly influenced Mexican society and its attitudes toward the United States.

Today, from the Mexican perspective, we are entering the fourth phase of a long and complicated relationship. During the first centuries of our common history, the 13 American colonies were the weaker part, and New Spain the regional power. When this balance was reversed during the 19th century, the growing influence of the United States gradually damaged its positive image among Mexico's elite.

As late as 1821, Mexican leaders, having wrested independence from Spain, turned eagerly to the north in search of a national role model. But the American elite reacted with a combination of indifference and disdain. For them, Mexico was little more than a potential source of land and raw materials. John Adams put this early American view in explicitly racist terms when he said that there could never be "democracy among the birds, the beasts, or the fishes, or among the peoples of Latin America." Such beliefs

provided the rationale for America's undisguised exploitation of an "inferior" people and its pursuit of its "manifest destiny."

In 1848, a Mexican nation weakened by internal conflict and vanquished on the battlefield in the Mexican-American War surrendered half of its national territory to the United States. That conflict inaugurated the second phase of the Mexican—American relationship, but it also left a more lasting scar on Mexican consciousness. After the war, Mexico closed in on itself, doing everything in its power to forget the arrogant and aggressive neighbor that had delivered its humiliating defeat. Among intellectuals, scholars, and others, research and debate about the United States came to an abrupt and total standstill. With very few exceptions, they would not be revived for more than a century.

The third phase in the Mexican—American relationship came with the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17. Washington was at first openly hostile toward the nationalist radicals who overthrew the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz and established the PRI. But this confrontational tone was softened in 1927 with the arrival in Mexico of the new U.S. ambassador, Dwight Morrow. Although he was not a professional diplomat and spoke no Spanish, Morrow reached a broad understanding with President Plutarco Elías Calles that would largely govern the relationship between the two nations for decades to come.

More than anything, the United States wanted a stable regime on its southern flank. Throughout its history, the absence of threatening neighbors has been one of the keystones of America's international strategy. Mexican authoritarianism was able to deliver stability, and Mexico's leaders were willing, despite their occasional rhetorical sallies, to settle the differences that inevitably arose in pragmatic fashion. Thus, Mexico stood by Washington during World War II and the Cuban missile crisis. During the Cold War, Mexico's intelligence services cooperated with the U.S. Centnal Intelligence Agency.

In return for stability, the United States gave Mexico exceptional treatment. It scrupulously abstained from any involvement in Mexico's internal affairs. It tolerated a

regime on its southern border with a variety of seemingly unpalatable features: an independent foreign policy (in which the United States was frequently depicted as a threat), an economy with heavy state involvement, and a one-party political system.

Mexico was largely spared the arrogance amid interventionism that marked America's dealings with other Latin American nations — the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Chile, to name only the most outstanding cases. In 1976, when Mexico entered a long period of chronic economic crisis and currency devaluations, Washington quickly stepped in with aid. It is no exaggeration to say that these transfusions extended the life of Mexican authoritarianism.

From the beginning, the PRI had maintained its power in part by astutely manipulating Mexican nationalism. In the PRI's revolutionary ideology, all foreigners (especially the Americans) were a threat to national sovereignty, and combating this challenge required that the government monopolize Mexico's relations with the outside world.

Until the 1990s, Mexicans who discussed the country's international affairs with foreigners, or who exposed Mexican human-rights violations and electoral fraud to the outside world, were automatically classified as disloyal or treasonous and subjected to harassment, exclusion, and marginalization. Most Mexicans interested in public life accepted the PRI's vow of silence. The reasons were various—the PRI's continuing legitimacy as the vehicle of Mexican nationalism, the memory of an unjust conflict (the war of 1846-48), and ignorance about the United States and the world at large. (Mexican universities did not even begin to offer courses in international relations until the 1960s.)

During the past four decades, a quiet revolution has taken place in Mexico's politics and in its relationship with the world at large. As the years passed, the government lost control over contacts with the outside world. Between 1975 and 1986, nearly 67,000 Mexican students, or about 5,500 annually, enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities. As many of these young people returned home and joined the ranks of the Mexican elite, the country's perspective began to change.

Misfortune also sped the opening of Mexico. The massive earthquake that struck Mexico City on September 19, 1985, brought an influx of aid and foreign visitors, and the guerilla wars in Central America made Mexico City a crossroads for them combatants and the many outsiders who became involved in the conflicts and their resolution. Mexican migrants, meanwhile, traveled back and forth across the Mexican-American border within increasing frequency.

The turning point came in 1985, when economic crisis forced the governments of President Miguel de la Madrid and his successor, Carlos Salinas ne Gortari, to begin liberalizing the Mexican economy and opening it to the world. Within a year, Mexico had joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (predecessor of the World Trade Organization). The inauguration of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on January 1, 1994, completed a shift that would have been impossible to imagine only a dozen years earlier. For more than a century, Mexicans had seen their country's close proximity to the United States as a great misfortune; now they saw it as an opportunity to be grasped.

The fruits of NAFTA spilled over into realms beyond commerce. During the 1990s, the opening to the north strongly influenced the battle for electoral democracy within Mexico. Much of official Washington came finally (though often reluctantly) to acknowledge that authoritarianism south of the border was producing perverse results. At the same time, a sense that change was in the air radically transformed perceptions of Mexico in the American news media, universities, and other institutions.

The election of July 2, 2000, was a triumph not just for Fox and his National Action Party but for Mexican democracy. With this election, Mexico reaped the harvest of economic and social changes that had been underway for many years. There is a new self-confidence in Mexico today and a new openness to the world, as Mexicans increasingly compete internationally in the academic, artistic, political, and business arenas.

Along with self—confidence has come a new willingness to defend our interests. For example, President Fox has pledged to press Washington for the protection of the labor and human rights of Mexicans in the United States. At the same time, however, the Fox government is boldly pursuing common interests. In a remarkable step in March, for example, Mexico agreed to a joint U.S—Mexican Task Force to combat the drug trade.

The year 2000 signaled the beginning of a new, fourth phase in the U.S.Mexican relationship. Mexicans continue to see their relationship with the United States largely in a very positive light. NAFTA, for example, has won widespread acceptance. Yet a MUNDOS MN/Consorcio poll reveals that a certain deep-seated mistrust of the United States remains: 70 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that the United States is "trying to dominate the world."

A more democratic and prosperous Mexico will be a more assertive Mexico. The change will revolutionize U.S.-Mexican relations in ways that are difficult to anticipate with precision. Washington has been accustomed to dealing with a neighbor that practiced a kind of papiermaché nationalism, a showy façade on a hollow foundation. Now there will be less rhetoric and more substance.

RUSSIA

AFTER THE THAW

by Yuri Levada
(A director in the Russian Center for Public Opinion Research in Moscow)

When Russia began emerging from decades of international isolation and confrontation with the West in the years after Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* (1985—1991), many Russians hoped for the quick establishment of friendly ties with the Western nations. Ten years of disappointment lay ahead of them.

Russians overestimated how much Western assistance would be available to help bring about their country's rebirth. They did not foresee the obstacles to effective

cooperation that would arise within Russia: the lack of comprehensive economic reforms, the absence of full legal protections for foreign investments, and the growth of corruption. And many were disappointed when the spirit of great-power confrontation lingered, despite the end of the Cold War, dashing hopes for normal relations with the West. Today, after several years of political and economic turmoil, there is growing nostalgia in Russia for the Soviet era, when the Soviet Union was perceived as a great power, with a host of dependent states under its domination.

In public opinion surveys, positive evaluations of the United States peaked between 1991 and 1993, a time of relative optimism about the possibilities of reform within Russia.

The nadir [low point] of Russian attitudes toward the United States came in the first half of 1999. The cause was the dramatic confrontation between Russia and the United States over Kosovo—in particular, over the bombing of Yugoslavia by NATO forces. Russians have long seen Yugoslavia (without much justification) as an area of special interest and the Serbs as their traditional allies, linked to Russia in part by their adherence to Orthodox Christianity. Propaganda further inflamed popular feelings. Russian public opinion turned sharply negative, and for the first time since measurements began, negative views of the United States outweighed positive ones.

Yet even during the worst weeks of the conflict, Russians saw their country's disagreements with the United States as temporary. Indeed, by early 2000, positive evaluations of the United States had returned to their immediate precrisis level.

Earlier this year, there was another drop in positive assessments of the United States, albeit a slight one. The change probably reflected popular reaction to the Borodin affair (in which a Russian official facing charges in Switzerland was detained by U.S. authorities) and to the harsher accents introduced into Russian-American relations by the Bush administration's position on antimissile defenses and other issues.

It's important to put Russian opinion in a larger perspective. A survey of attitudes toward a variety of countries suggests that Russians give negative assessments of

countries they see as a source of conflict. Thus, in Russian eyes, the United States fares about the same as its rival Iran and Russia's friendly but troubled neighbor Ukraine. Yet the attitude in Russia toward Americans as a people almost invariably remains very favorable, with 90 percent offering a positive view in one recent survey. Only the Japanese, who are favorably regarded by 95 percent of Russians, fared better.

In the last few years, the number of Russians who believe that other countries are ill disposed or hostile toward Russia has increased noticeably. Many Russians believe that foreign investment, the efforts of Western banks, and even humanitarian assistance are designed to denigrate and enslave Russia and to plunder its wealth. Russians remain suspicious of NATO. In a survey last August, the prospect of Russia's entry into NATO was viewed with approval by no more than nine percent of Russians. Twenty-two percent endorsed the creation of a defensive union as a counterbalance to NATO (in the spirit of creating a "multipolar world"). Russian cooperation with NATO was favored by 27 percent, while 23 percent did not want Russia to participate in any military blocs.

Much more popular was the idea of joining the European Union at some time in the future.

Despite the sometimes troubled nature of Russia's relations with the West and the reservations many Russians have about Western intentions, a significant majority of Russians believe that links should be expanded. When asked "How should Russia act in relation to the countries of the West?" in the survey last August, 74 percent agreed with the proposition that it should "strengthen mutually beneficial connections."

Attitudes toward the United States in Russian society have always been complicated. They continue to be influenced by fears and prejudices that remain from the Cold War era, and by current conflicts and misunderstandings between the two countries and between Russia and the West as a whole. Russia's painful domestic problems have exacerbated fears of the West and suspicion of its motives, but because of Russia's national inferiority complex, these sentiments have spawned a defensive rather than offensive approach to the world. Isolationist sentiment has grown.

Given its current weakened industrial and military potential, Russia cannot return to a policy of great-power confrontation. But it is also significant that a positive attitude toward the United States and the West as a whole still prevails in Russian public opinion. In the aftermath of the Yugoslavian crisis of 1999, and with President Vladimir Putin's rise to power, many observers feared a return to confrontation. Yet, although the military and the military-industrial elite have increased their influence, this has not occurred. Despite many complications and contradictions, the prevailing trend is still toward rapprochement [establishment or reestablishment of harmonious relations] with the West and the United States.

MIDDLE EAST

STRANGER IN THE ARAB-MUSLIM WORLD

by Fottad Ajami
(Professor of Middle Eastern studies, Johns Hopkins University)

That wily, flamboyant Egyptian ruler Anwar al—Sadat contracted an affection for things and people American when he dominated his land in the 1970s. In the distant, powerful United States, which had ventured into Egypt, he saw salvation for his country—a way out of the pan— Arab captivity, the wars with Israel, and the drab austerity of a command economy. But Sadat was assassinated by Islamic extremists in October 1981.

The chroniclers of Arab-Islamic history since the mid-1970's must come to terms with two especially puzzling developments: the spread of American pop culture through vast stretches of the Arab world, and the concomitant spread of a furious anti—Americanism. Thus, even as Egypt was incorporated into the American imperium, a relentless anti—Americanism animated Egyptian Islamists and secularists alike. It flowed freely through Egyptian letters and cinema and seemed to be the daily staple of the official and semiofficial organs of the regime. A similar situation now prevails

throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf, where an addiction to things American coexists with an obligatory hostility to the power whose shadow lies across the landscape.

America's primacy in the world since the defeat of communism has whipped up a powerful strain of resentment. Envy was the predictable response of many societies to the astonishing American economic performance in the 1990s—the unprecedented bull run, the "New Economy," the wild valuations in American equities, the triumphant claims that America had discovered a new economic world, free of the market's discipline and of the business cycle itself.

This global resentment inevitably made its way to Arab and Muslim shores. But the Muslim world was a case apart for Pax Americana and sui generis [unique] in the kind of anti—Americanism it nurtured. . . . [a] wholly different wind blows through Arab lands, where a young boy drove a Mercedes truck loaded with TNT into an American military compound in Beirut in October 1983; where terrorists targeted a housing complex for the American military in Saudi Arabia in June 1996; where two men in a skiff crippled an American destroyer on a re—fueling stop in Aden, Yemen. Grim, defining episodes of that sort, and many others like them, mark the American presence in Arab—Muslim domains.

In the aftermath of the October 1973 war, the Arab and Iranian heartland slipped under American sway, and America acquired a kind of Muslim imperium [**Definition**: sphere of control; command; supreme power]. The development gained momentum from the needs of both the rulers and the social elites who had taken to American ways. The poorer states (read Egypt) needed sustenance; the wealthier states (read the states of the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf), protection against the covetous poorer states. A monarch in Iran, at once imperious and possessed of a neurotic sense of dependency on American judgment, effectively brought down his own regime. The order he had put together became inseparable in the popular psyche from the American presence in Iran. And they were torched together. The tribune of the revolution,

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was particularly skilled at turning the foreign power into the demon he needed. Iran alternated between falling for the foreigner's ways and loathing itself for surrendering to the foreigner's seduction. It swung wildly, from the embrace of the foreigner into a faith in the authority of the ancients and the reign of a clerical redeemer.

In the years to come, there would be no respite for America. Khomeini had shown the way. There would be tributaries of his revolution and emulators aplenty. A world had flung wide its own floodgates. It let the foreigner in and lost broad segments of its young to the hip, freewheeling culture of America. By violent reaction the seduction could be covered up, or undone.

Consider Osama bin Laden's description of America, as reported by a young Sudanese follower of bin Laden who defected and turned witness for American authorities: "The snake is America, and we have to stop them. We have to cut off the head of the snake. We cannot let the American army in our area. We have to do something. We have to fight them."

The American military force that troubles Osama bin Laden, that hovers over his Saudi homeland and reaches the ports of his ancestral land in Yemen, is there because the rulers of those lands acquiesced in its presence, even sought it. Pax Americana [definition: a state of peace imposed by the U.S. on weaker or defeated nations; an uneasy or hostile peace] may insist on its innocence, but, inevitably, it is caught in the crossfire between the powers; the powers that be and the insurgents who have taken up arms against them and who seek nothing less than the extirpation of America's presence from Muslim lands

In fact, as Muslim societies become involved in a global economy they can neither master nor ignore, both rulers and insurgents have no choice but to confront the American presence. America has become part of the uneven, painful "modernity" of the Islamic world. Even American embassies have acquired an ambivalent symbolic character: they are targeted by terrorists amid besieged by visa seekers-professionals

who have given up on failed economies and a restricted way of life; the half—educated and the urban poor, who in earlier times would never have sought opportunity and a new life in a distant land. [Note: speaking of non-American's paradoxical struggle with their modernity, Marshall Berman in a 1982 book entitled *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* said: "To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world - - and at the same time threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are"]

Denial is at the heart of the relationship between the Arab and Muslim worlds and America. There can be no written praise of America, no acknowledgment of its tolerance or hospitality, or of the yearnings America has stirred in Karachi and Teheran, Cairo and Beirut, and in the streets of Ramallah. In November 2000, America extended a special gift to Jordan: a free-trade agreement between the two nations. Jordan was only the fourth country to be so favored, after Canada, Mexico, and Israel. The agreement was an investment in peace, a tribute to the late Jordanian ruler, King Hussein, and an admission of America's stake in the reign of his young heir, Abdullah II. But it did not dampen the anti-Americanism among professionals and intellectuals in Jordan.

There, as elsewhere, no intellectual can speak kindly of America. The attraction has to be hidden, or never fully owned up to. From Afghanistan to the Mediterranean, from Karachi to Cairo, human traffic moves toward America while anti-American demonstrations supply the familiar spectacle of American flags set to the torch. I know of no serious work of commentary in Arab lands in recent years that has spoken of the American political experience or the American cultural landscape with any appreciation. The anti-Americanism is automatic, unexamined, innate. To self-styled "liberals," America is the upholder of reaction [i.e. instability]; to Islamists, a defiling presence; to pan-Arabists, the backer of a Zionist project to dominate the region. [Note: In a syndicated column in the News & Advance on Sunday, September 23, 2001, Thomas Friedman with regard to the moderate Arab states, such as Saudi Arabia, said ". . . [w]hat they have never encouraged at all is for anyone to consistently present an alternative, positive view of America - - even though they were sending their kids here to be educated. Anyone who did would be immediately branded as a CIA agent"]

In the pan-Arab imagination, there would be a measure of Arab unity had America not aborted it. There would be a "balance" of wealth and some harmony between the sparsely populated Arab oil states amid the poorer, more populous Arab lands of the Levant had America not driven a wedge between them. There would be wealth for things that matter had those oil states not been tricked into weapons deals and joint military exercises they neither need nor can afford. "I hate America," a young Palestinian boy in the streets of Gaza said late last year to Michael Finkel, an American reporter who had come to cover the "Second Intifada" for the *New York Times Magazine.* But the matter is hardly that simple. Like the larger world to which he belongs, the boy hates America and is drawn to it. His world wants American things without having to partake of American ways. It has beckoned America, and then bloodied America. [Note: Many of us remember the irony of seeing television clips of Palestinians celebrating the World Trade Center attacks with one young Palestinian boy wearing a Chicago Bears sweatshirt]

America entered Arab lands on particular terms. The lands were, in the main, authoritarian societies, and such middle classes as existed in them were excluded from meaningful political power. Monarchs and rulers of national states claimed the political world, and it was precisely through their good graces that America came on the scene. Pax Americana took to this transaction. It neither knew nor trusted the civil associations, the professional classes, the opposition. America had good reasons to suspect that the ground was not fertile for democratic undertakings. It was satisfied that Egypt's military rulers kept the peace. Why bother engaging those who opposed the regime, even the fragile bourgeois opposition that emerged in the late 1970s? Similarly, the only traffic to be had with Morocco was through its autocratic ruler, Hassan II. The man was harsh and merciless (his son, and successor, Mohammad VI, has all but admitted that), but he kept order, was "our man" in North Africa, and could be relied on to support America's larger purposes.

America extended the same indulgence to Yasir Arafat, the latest, and most dubious, ruler to be incorporated into its designs. In the Palestinian world, the security arrangements and the political arrangements had been struck with Arafat. His American handlers ignored such opposition as had arisen to him. With no real access to the

Palestinian world, and precious little knowledge of Arafat's opponents, America seemed to have to choose between the Islamic movement Hamas and Arafat's Palestinian National Authority. An easy call. The Palestinian strongman, in turn, accepted America's patronage but frustrated America's wishes.

The middle classes in the Arab world were mired in the politics of nationalism, whereas the rulers always seemed supple and ready to wink at reality. There was precious little economic life outside the state-dominated oil sectors, and little business to be done without recourse to the custodians of the command economies.

The populations shut out of power fell back on their imaginations and their bitterness. They resented the rulers but could not overthrow them. It was easier to lash out at American power and question American purposes. And they have been permitted the political space to do so. They can burn American flags at will, so long as they remember that the rulers and their prerogatives are beyond scrutiny. The rulers have been particularly sly in monitoring the political safety valves in their domains. They know when to indulge the periodic outbursts at American power. Not a pretty spectacle, but such are the politics in this sphere of American influence.

America's primacy will endure in Arab and Muslim lands, but the foreign power will have to tread carefully. "England is of Europe, and I am a friend of the Ingliz, their ally," Ibn Saud, the legendary founder of the Saudi state, once said of his relationship with the British. "But I will walk with them only as far as my religion and honor will permit." In Arab and Muslim domains, it is the stranger's [U.S.] fate to walk alone.

POST - SEPTEMBER 11, 2001:

Despite the tragic loss of life from terrorists attack on American soil, it is my view that we see ourselves as united. There is now a single enemy - - international terrorism - - to unite disparate interests both in America and abroad. We know now our own land is vulnerable to attack and the trend toward American isolationism, if it ever existed, is no longer an option. As the Wall Street Journal observed in its October 24, 2001, issue, the September terrorists preyed precisely on ". . . what Americans are like; their

welcoming borders, their ubiquitous technology, their thriving commerce and their culture of mobility." We are united and strong and we are vulnerable. But, as one European editorial after seeing the outpouring of volunteers and singing and waving the American flag throughout America, said that we have the miracle of freedom to unite us*. Perhaps, as we form alliances abroad to fight international terrorism and define our post-Cold War role in the world, we will remember the words of Robert Burns - - to see ourselves as others see us and help free us from many blunders and foolish ideas in the process.

David T. Petty, Jr.

*Editorial from a Romanian newspaper [attached]

Subj:	**Fwd: Editorial from a Romanian newspaper**
Date:	10/17/01 5:36:06 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	Ganormac
To:	GregMacDougal@hotmail.com, Chillcoots@Rkymtnhi.com, Cindy.mulqueeney@Sylvania.com, JM_Urick@naisp.net, Asigna0906, Csotera, Billndorie, elh@aretha.jax.org, Maxburry@widomaker.com, DWE333@cconnect.net, JimDoris@bangornews.infi.net, Milesjh400@cs.com, RJMiles@home.com, JimH@eastgrandfire.com, Bostonconstable@netzero.net, Roscoemarilyn@Yahoo.com, TLC@midmaine.com, JackSr@Mulqueeney.com, Arlm36@cs.com, RobertR2422@Hotmail.com, MrthAnn, WLutchko@Warwick.net, JLewis@arkansas.net, Stroobants, Incagirl@midmaine.com

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Forwarded Message:

Subj:	**Editorial from a Romanian newspaper**
Date:	10/16/01 9:59:23 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From:	DRhoadsMNY

Subject: Editorial from a Romanian newspaper

This is a great article....

From Romania: Recognition (And Envy) Of The American Ethos And Ilan!!

Editorial from a Romanian newspaper

An ode to America

Why are Americans so united? They don't resemble one another even if you paint them! They speak all the languages of the world and form an astonishing mixture of civilizations. Some of them are nearly extinct, others are incompatible with one another, and in matters of religious beliefs, not even God can count how many they are.

Still, the American tragedy turned three hundred million people into a hand put on the heart. Nobody rushed to accuse the White House, the army, the secret services that they are only a bunch of losers. Nobody rushed to empty their bank accounts. Nobody rushed on the streets nearby to gape about.

The Americans volunteered to donate blood and to give a helping hand. After the first moments of panic, they raised the flag on the smoking ruins, putting on T-shirts, caps and ties in the colors of the national flag. They placed flags on buildings and cars as if in every place and on every car a minister or the president was passing. On every occasion they started singing their traditional song: "God Bless America!".

Silent as a rock, I watched the charity concert broadcast on Saturday once, twice, three times, on different TV channels. There were Clint Eastwood, Willie Nelson, Robert de Niro, Julia Roberts, Cassius Clay, Jack Nicholson, Bruce Springsteen, Silvester Stalone, James Wood, and many others whom no film or producers could ever bring together. The American's solidarity spirit turned them into a choir. Actually, choir is not the word. What you could hear was the heavy artillery of the American soul. What neither George W. Bush, nor Bill Clinton, nor Colin Powell could say without facing the risk of stumbling over words and sounds, was being heard in a great and unmistakable way in this charity concert.

I don't know how it happened that all this obsessive singing of America didn't sound croaky, nationalist, or ostentatious! It made you green with envy because you weren't able to sing for your country without running the risk of being considered chauvinist, ridiculous, or suspected of who-knows-what mean interests.

I watched the live broadcast and the rerun of its rerun for hours listening to the story of the guy who went down one hundred floors with a woman in a wheelchair without knowing who she was, or of the Californian hockey player, who fought with the terrorists and prevented the plane from hitting a target that would have killed other hundreds or thousands of people. How on earth were they able to bow before a fellow human?

Imperceptibly, with every word and musical note, the memory of some turned into a modern myth of tragic heroes. And with every phone call, millions and millions of dollars were put in a collection aimed at rewarding not a man or a family, but a spirit which nothing can buy.

What on earth can unite the Americans in such a way? Their land? Their galloping history? Their economic power? Money? I tried for hours to find an answer, humming songs and murmuring phrases which risk of sounding like commonplaces. I thought things over, but I reached only one conclusion. Only freedom can work such miracles!