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the American Empire

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US unilateralism has become the dominant issue in world politics. It has been one of the most visible features of the present US administration ever since George W. Bush took office in January 2001. Bush's speedy denunciation of the Kyoto protocol on global warming prompted the **Financial Times** to comment, 'An anti-regulatory stance at home and a unilateralist approach abroad are signs that the US government will be the most conservative since the Second World War.' [1] This trend has been dramatically reinforced since 11 September 2001, above all with the Bush administration's drive – as usual tailed obsequiously by Tony Blair – to launch a war intended to impose 'regime change' on Iraq. The first anniversary of the attacks on New York and Washington was followed by the publication of a new *National Security Strategy* that begins with the affirmation, 'The United States possesses unprecedented – and unequalled – strength and influence in the world,' and concludes with the warning, 'Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in the hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States.' [2]

This blunt avowal that, as the right wing journalist Anatol Lieven puts it, the US is seeking ‘unilateral world domination through absolute military superiority’ has come as an unpleasant surprise to those who swallowed the idea – widespread in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War – that economic globalisation was being accompanied by the emergence of forms of ‘global governance’ that would overcome the centuries-old struggle for supremacy among the Great Powers. [3] No one has defended this view more strongly than Blair, who first unfolded his ‘Doctrine of International Community’ during the 1999 Balkan War and reaffirmed it at the Labour Party conference in September 2001. [4] Blair’s rhapsodies about ‘reordering the world’ sit ill with the entirely accurate prediction of Condoleezza Rice, George W. Bush’s national security adviser, that his administration would ‘proceed from the firm ground of the national interest, not from the interests of an illusory international community’. [5]

Understanding US imperialism

There is something faintly comic about the way in which Blair’s self righteous moralism has now been pressed into service to provide a façade of justification for the *realpolitik* of Bush and his advisers. But the important question is to understand what is at stake in the present US war drive. Edward Luttwak defines grand strategy as the dimension of inter-state conflict ‘where all that is military happens within the much broader context of domestic politics, international diplomacy, economy activity, and all else that strengthens and weakens’. [6] So what is the grand strategy of the American empire under George W. Bush?

One of the distinctive features of the Marxist theory of imperialism is that it treats diplomatic and military conflicts among states as instances of the more general process of competition that drives capitalism on. More specifically, as

formulated by Nikolai Bukharin during the First World War, the theory of imperialism argues that in the course of the 19th century two hitherto relatively autonomous processes – the geopolitical rivalries among states and economic competition between capitals – increasingly fused. On the one hand, the increasing industrialisation of war meant that the Great Powers could no longer maintain their position without developing a capitalist economic base. On the other hand, the growing concentration and internationalisation of capital caused economic rivalries among firms to spill over national borders and become geopolitical contests in which the combatants called on the support of their respective states. Economic and security competition were now closely interwoven in complex forms of conflict that developed into the terrible era of inter-imperialist war between 1914 and 1945. [7]

It is this theory that provides the best framework for understanding the contemporary US war drive. But before proceeding it is important to clarify one crucial point. Often both friends and critics of the Marxist theory of imperialism reduce it to the claim that imperialist states act exclusively from economic motives. One recent version of this is the widely held belief that the real aim behind the Western attack on Afghanistan was the desire of the Bush administration and the oil corporations to which it is closely allied to build a pipeline through the country as a means of exporting the oil and gas of Central Asia. [8] Now, undoubtedly the energy reserves of the region are an important factor in Washington's interest in the region, but to reduce the war in Afghanistan to this interest would be a bad mistake. The US attacked Afghanistan, as we shall see, primarily for political reasons focused on reasserting its global hegemony after 11 September. The greater access it gained to Central Asia was an important by-product of the overthrow of the Taliban, not the main motive behind this action. At the same time, however, it would also be a mistake to reduce US strategy to geopolitics:

control over Middle Eastern oil is, as we shall also see, a major preoccupation in the Bush administration's war planning. [9]

More generally, throughout the history of imperialism, Great Powers have acted for complex mixtures of economic and geopolitical reasons. At the end of the 19th century the British ruling class began to perceive Germany as a major threat to their interests, in the first instance because of the decision by the Second Reich to build a world class navy. This was a threat to Britain's naval supremacy, and to the security of the British Isles themselves, but control of the empire – and of the flows of profits from overseas investments – was closely bound up with British sea power. [10] To take another example, Hitler was an intensely ideological ruler, whose long term aim was to secure dominance of the Eurasian land mass for a racially purified Germany, but economic considerations played a powerful role in both military strategy (the decisions to start the Second World War, to extend it to the Soviet Union, and to attempt to take Stalingrad were heavily influenced by fears about raw material shortages) and in Hitler's vision of a colonised Russia as the solution to the economic contradictions of German capitalism. [11] Today also it is important to understand that the Marxist theory of imperialism analyses the forms in which geopolitical and economic competition become interwoven under capitalism, and does not simply reduce one to the other.

US strategy after the Cold War

The origins of the 'unprecedented – and unequalled – strength' of which the Bush administration boasts lie, of course, in the end of the last phase of inter-imperialist competition, the Cold War (1945–1990). The revolutions in East and Central Europe in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 left the US as the leading military power. They also gave US capitalism access to regions that had previously been closed off to it by the Cold

War partition of the world into rival superpower blocs, most notably Central Asia, both a site of important energy reserves and strategically placed at the boundary between Russian and Chinese spheres of influence. Nevertheless, the disintegration of the Stalinist system did not abolish rivalries among the Great Powers. Unruffled by the triumphalist talk of the ‘end of history’ and a second American century, a number of Marxists argued that, now that the relative discipline imposed by the bipolar structure of international politics during the Cold War had been removed, the world was entering a period of intensified geopolitical competition and therefore of greater instability and danger than had prevailed before 1989. [12]

More specifically, the US faced two potential sources of challenge. The first came from within the Western capitalist bloc. Germany and Japan had been firmly subordinated to US political and military leadership throughout the Cold War, but they had developed into major economic rivals to US capitalism. US relative economic decline in the face of this challenge was one of the main driving forces behind the world economy’s entry into a new era of crises at the end of the 1960s. [13]

Liberated from the restraints demanded by unity against the Eastern bloc, Germany and Japan might increasingly assert themselves geopolitically and develop into world powers threatening US hegemony. Though it was a newly reunified Germany that flaunted its independence from Washington (for example, by engineering the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991–1992 in defiance of the efforts by the administration of the elder Bush to keep the federation together), Japan’s penetration of US markets and its growing investments in the American homeland made it seem the greater threat. George Friedman of the security consultancy firm Stratfor even co-authored a book in the early 1990s that announced **The Coming War With Japan**.

The second group of potential rivals came from outside the Western bloc. Russia, though impoverished and descending into social and political chaos, remained a Great Power, armed with

thousands of nuclear warheads, sprawling across Eurasia, encompassing or bordering on vast energy reserves. More threatening still was China. The rapid economic growth that China has clocked up since its rulers embraced market Stalinism in the 1980s might seem to vindicate *laissez-faire* capitalism, but it also gave them the resources with which to build China up as a major military power in the most geopolitically unstable region in the world. [14] Indeed, as the Japanese economic challenge receded in the course of the 1990s, China loomed ever larger as the major long term threat facing US capitalism. The leading American analyst of international relations John Mearsheimer wrote recently:

Another way of illustrating how powerful China might become if its economy continues growing rapidly is to compare it with the United States. The GNP of the United States is \$7.9 trillion. If China's per capita GNP equals [South] Korea's, China's overall GNP would be almost \$10.66 trillion, which is about 1.35 times the size of America's GNP. If China's per capita GNP is half of Japan's, China's overall GNP would then be roughly 2.5 times bigger than America's. For purposes of comparison, the Soviet Union was roughly one half as wealthy as the United States during most of the Cold War ... China, in short, has the potential to be considerably more powerful than even the United States. [15]

On the basis of this projection, Mearsheimer goes on to construct a grim scenario for north east Asia and indeed the world:

Not only would China be much wealthier than any of its Asian rivals ... but its huge population advantage would allow it to build a far more powerful army than either Japan or Russia could. China would also have the resources to acquire an impressive nuclear arsenal. North east Asia ... would be a far more dangerous place than it is now. China, like all previous potential hegemon, would be strongly inclined to become a real hegemon, and all its rivals, including the United States, would encircle China to try to keep it from expanding. [16]

Others, such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser to President Jimmy Carter (1977–1981), are much more

sceptical about China's capacity to develop into a serious challenger to US hegemony, particularly when predictions involve (as Mearsheimer's arguably do) 'the mechanical reliance on statistical projections'. [17] All the same, Brzezinski has been among the most forceful to argue that the challenge facing the US ruling class since the end of the Cold War has been to preserve its leadership of the Western capitalist states and to extend it to incorporate the other Great Powers. The main geopolitical success of the Clinton administration (1993–2001) was that it succeeded in maintaining a reorganised US hegemony in Eurasia. This was greatly facilitated by the economic background. For most of the 1990s the US economy enjoyed a boom that grew in strength in the course of the decade. [18] Meanwhile the German economy stagnated for most of the 1990s, while Japan suffered the most serious deflationary slump experienced by any major capitalist state since the 1930s. This relative shift in the balance of economic power in favour of the US was reinforced by the Clinton administration's selective use of military power. The NATO bombing campaigns against Serbia over Bosnia in 1995 and – on a much greater scale – over Kosovo in 1999 served to underline the dependence of the European Union on American political leadership and military muscle to overcome crises even in its own back yard in the Balkans.

The expansion of NATO into East and Central Europe which took effect during the 1999 Balkan War performed a triple function:

1. it both maintained the position of the US, established during the Cold War, as the leading power in Western Europe and extended it eastwards;
2. it legitimised the penetration of the economically and strategically crucial zone of Central Asia by a US-led NATO now authorised

to undertake ‘out of area’ operations;

3. it amounted to a new strategy of encirclement directed towards a Russia that US policy-makers had concluded was unlikely somehow to metamorphose into a prosperous liberal democracy and would therefore have to be contained. [19]

The first test of the new NATO against Serbia was at best equivocal in its results, since the bombing campaign (which caused little serious damage to the Yugoslav army) was only one of the factors that prompted Milosevic to abandon Kosovo – Russian refusal to back him and pressure to strike a deal probably played a at least as important a role. But the Balkan War was the occasion on which the ideology of humanitarian intervention was most forcefully invoked, particularly by Blair, in order to assert the right of the ‘international community’ – in this case the US and its European allies – to override national sovereignty and wage war ostensibly at least to punish violations of human rights by ‘rogue states’. [20]

On the face of it, then, the Clinton administration pursued a multilateralist strategy. The real motives behind this strategy were, however, much more clearly exposed by Brzezinski, who was one of the main architects of NATO expansion. In **The Grand Chessboard** he presented this policy as one facet of a much broader approach to maintain US dominance through a continent-wide policy of divide and rule. Openly using the language of imperial power (‘America’s global supremacy is reminiscent in some ways of earlier empires’), Brzezinski advocated US coalition-building in order to incorporate and subordinate potential rivals such as Germany, Russia, China and Japan:

In the short run, it is in America’s interest to consolidate and perpetuate the prevailing geographical pluralism on the map of Eurasia. That puts a premium on manoeuvre and manipulation in

order to prevent the emergence of a hostile coalition that would eventually seek to challenge America's primacy, not to mention the remote possibility of any one particular state seeking to do so. By the middle term [the next 20 years or so], the foregoing should gradually yield to a great emphasis on the emergence of increasingly important but strategically compatible partners who, prompted by American leadership, might help to shape a more co-operative trans-Eurasian security system. Eventually, in the much longer run still, the foregoing could phase into a global core of genuinely shared political responsibility. [21]

It is important to understand, however, that despite this emphasis on coalition building (and Brzezinski's willingness to envisage some genuinely co-operative relationship among the Great Powers in the very remote future), the Clinton administration's strategy was not in any simple sense a multilateralist one. Promoting the expansion of NATO and the EU was a means of maintaining US hegemony in Eurasia, not an alternative to US primacy. Clinton and his advisers were what one American conservative calls 'instrumental multilateralists':

Americans prefer to act with the sanction and support of other countries if they can. But they're strong enough to act alone if they must. [22]

The US initiated the 1999 Balkan War under the aegis of NATO, without reference to the United Nations Security Council. The Clinton administration had already flouted the UN when it launched a bombing campaign against Iraq in December 1998 with the support of Britain and Kuwait. Madeleine Albright, Clinton's peculiarly inept and arrogant Secretary of State, justified an earlier cruise missile attack on Iraq by saying:

If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We stand tall. We see farther into the future. [23]

It was this kind of imperialist hubris that led that veteran servant of the US state Samuel Huntington to warn:

In acting as if this were a unipolar world, the United States is also becoming increasingly alone in the world ... While the United States regularly denounces various countries as 'rogue states', in

the eyes of many countries it is becoming the rogue superpower. [\[24\]](#)

The Bush doctrine: 'pre-emptive retaliation'

The rogue superpower is now on the rampage. The terrorist atrocities of 11 September 2001 represented what another American political scientist, Chalmers Johnson, called 'blowback' – the reaction that US imperial power was provoking, particularly in the Middle East, had now cost the lives of thousands of innocent US civilians. [\[25\]](#) But the attacks on New York and Washington gave the administration of the younger Bush much greater scope than it had previously enjoyed to pursue a global strategy that was qualitatively more unilateralist than that of its predecessors.

The administration's disdain for coalition-building was revealed in its attitude to NATO. On 12 September 2001 the North Atlantic Council invoked, for the first time in its history, article five of the 1949 treaty establishing NATO and declared that the attacks on the US were attacks on all the alliance's member states. Bush pocketed this declaration of solidarity along with a UN Security Council resolution, but the Pentagon didn't bother to use NATO in its war against Afghanistan. NATO, which barely two years before had been Washington's preferred instrument of intervention in the Balkans, was now treated with the same contempt that had become habitual in American dealings with the UN. The *National Security Strategy* devotes a mere three paragraphs to it.

This preference for unilateral action reflected in the first instance the serious symbolic blow that US power had suffered on 11 September. After the spectacular attacks on its financial capital and military headquarters, the US state had to be seen to be striking back itself, not dialling 911 for the international police. US power had been violated – US power had to be seen

taking revenge. Pentagon chiefs had in any case made clear their impatience with NATO's cumbersome procedures during the 1999 Balkan War. But since the fall of Kabul in November 2001 it has become clear that the Bush administration is using the 'war on terrorism' to justify a much more aggressive geopolitical strategy, deploying military power to eliminate some threats and intimidate everyone else.

The first step came with the substantial extension of war aims announced by Bush in his State of the Union address on 29 January 2002. Reaffirming that 'our war on terror is just beginning', Bush announced that, in addition to directly attacking terrorist networks, 'our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction', and named Iran, Iraq and North Korea as 'an axis of evil'. [26] Under-Secretary of State John Bolton subsequently extended the net, identifying Libya, Syria and Cuba as 'state sponsors of terrorism that are pursuing or who have the potential to pursue weapons of mass destruction'. [27]

But the full dimensions of the administration's strategy only became clear when Bush announced what the **Financial Times** called 'an entirely fresh doctrine of pre-emptive action' in a speech at West Point on 1 June 2002. [28] Bush said:

For much of the past century, America's defence relied on the Cold War doctrines of deterrence and containment. In some cases, those strategies still apply. But new threats also require new thinking. Deterrence – the promise of massive retaliation against nations – means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies.

We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systematically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialise, we will have waited too long [*applause*].

Homeland defence and missile defence are part of stronger security, and they're essential priorities for America. But the war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge [applause]. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act [applause]. [29]

This 'Bush Doctrine' of (as one administration official put it) 'pre-emptive retaliation' is enshrined in the *National Security Strategy*: 'While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self defence by acting pre-emptively'. [30] The first test of this doctrine is Iraq. US policy in the Middle East after the 1991 Gulf War was one of what was called 'dual containment', designed to isolate both Iran and Iraq. In the case of Iraq, a combination of economic sanctions and bombing raids was intended to keep the Ba'ath regime of Saddam Hussein weak and on the defensive. By the late 1990s the policy was falling apart diplomatically, since both permanent Security Council members such as France and Russia and the Arab states were showing an increasing interest in strengthening their economic and diplomatic links with Iraq. To maintain the isolation of Iraq, the US and Britain were forced increasingly to take unilateral action, in particular through an intensified bombing campaign. [31]

As recently as 2000 Condoleezza Rice (then a Stanford professor advising the Bush campaign) was arguing for a continuation of this policy. Referring to 'rogue states' such as Iraq and North Korea, she wrote:

These regimes are living on borrowed time, so there need to be no sense of panic about them. Rather, the first line of defence should be a clear and classical statement of deterrence – if they do acquire WMD [weapons of mass destruction] their weapons will be unusable because any attempt to use them will bring national obliteration. [32]

Challenged recently about these remarks, Rice joked feebly that ‘academics can write anything’, and appealed to the awful warning of 9/11. [33] The argument is hardly persuasive. The conflation constantly made by Bush and Blair between regimes such as Saddam’s and the Al Qaida terrorist network ignores the fact that absolutely no serious evidence linking Iraq to 11 September has been produced. Nothing that has happened since the attacks on the US has altered the fact that any state that mounted a nuclear, chemical or biological strike against America would be committing national suicide. And, of course, the focus on WMD ignores both the massive nuclear arsenals maintained by the US and the other leading powers, and the development of nuclear weapons by states closely aligned to Washington such as Israel and Pakistan. To understand the Bush Doctrine we need to take a closer look at the Bush administration itself.

Bush II: the Republican right take the helm

The administration of the younger Bush tended initially to be presented as a continuation of his father’s. The same view is expressed in the commonplace claim that the planned war on Iraq is a settling of an old family score. Interpretations of this kind are fundamentally mistaken. [34] Though much of the top personnel of the present administration – notably Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld – served under the elder Bush between 1989 and 1993, ideologically Bush II harks back to the era of Ronald Reagan, president during the last phase of the Cold War between 1981 and 1989. It was Reagan who denounced the Soviet Union as an ‘evil empire’, and authorised the CIA and the Pentagon to back right wing guerrilla movements against Third World nationalist regimes such as Nicaragua, Angola and Afghanistan that the US deemed to be on the wrong side in the Cold War. [35] The arch-cynic Henry

Kissinger admiringly summed up Reagan's foreign policy thus: 'The high-flying Wilsonian language in support of freedom and democracy was leavened by almost Machiavellian realism ... the Reagan Doctrine amounted to a strategy for helping the enemy of one's enemy – of which Richelieu would have approved' (one of the beneficiaries of this strategy proved to be Osama Bin Laden). [36]

Bush Jr. has clearly modelled his personal style on that of Reagan – the folksy great communicator who concentrated on getting the big issues right (from the perspective of the Republican right). More importantly, the central axis of his administration is defined by the politics of Reaganism. The elder Bush was a product of the East Coast establishment: the tone of his foreign policy was set by his Secretary of State, James Baker, who carefully constructed a broad coalition based on the authority of the UN Security Council to wage the last war against Iraq, and who withheld a \$10 billion US loan guarantee to Israel to force the right wing prime minister Yitzhak Shamir to take part in the Madrid peace conference with the Palestine Liberation Organisation. [37]

Cheney, Secretary of Defence under Bush Sr., was then a relatively isolated figure. In March 1992 a Pentagon Defence Policy Guidance document was leaked to the **New York Times**. Its main thrust anticipated the younger Bush's *National Security Strategy*: 'Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival...that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union ... Our strategy must now refocus on precluding the emergence of any potential future global competitor.' [38] One of the authors of the document (which was repudiated by the first Bush administration) was Paul Wolfowitz, today Rumsfeld's deputy. According to Frances Fitzgerald, Rumsfeld himself was 'Cheney's Washington mentor and his friend for over 30 years. As [President Gerald] Ford's Chief of Staff and later as his Secretary of Defence, Rumsfeld had moved the Ford administration [1974–1977] sharply to the right and

frustrated [Secretary of State] Kissinger's attempt to conclude the SALT II treaty' reducing the superpowers' nuclear arsenals. [39]

Today Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz form the core of a group of right wing Republican intellectuals that is setting the agenda of the Bush administration. Others include Condoleezza Rice at the National Security Council, John Bolton, Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Affairs, and Richard Perle, the legendary right wing 'prince of darkness' under Reagan, who is now chairman of the advisory Defence Policy Board. As Fitzgerald puts it, 'What had been a minority position in the first Bush administration had become a majority position in the second.' [40] Now it is Colin Powell, as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Bush Sr, the architect of the 1991 Gulf War, who is isolated when he argues for coalition building. Powell's approach had some influence in the immediate aftermath of 11 September, but increasingly he is being sidelined by the right wing unilateralists. What is their agenda?

The right's outlook is, as James Fallows puts it, 'defined by pessimism, optimism, and impatience with procedure'. [41] The pessimism is chiefly represented by the belief that America's present supremacy may soon be challenged by the emergence of new peer competitors. This assessment was strikingly expressed by Wolfowitz in an essay he wrote under Clinton. There he compared the post-1989 triumphalism about the victory of liberal capitalism and the 'end of history' to the view widely held at the end of the 19th century that economic growth and international integration had made war obsolete:

The end of this century resembles the end of the last in another important way, one that puts a question mark over the great hopes for continued peace and prosperity as we enter the 21st century. Alongside the remarkable and peaceful progress that was taking place at the end of the last century, the world was grappling with – or, more accurately, failing to manage – the emergence of major

new powers. Not only was Japan newly powerful in Asia, but Germany, which had not even existed before the end of the 19th century, was becoming a dominant force in Europe.

Today the same spectacular economic growth that is reducing poverty, expanding trade and creating new middle classes is also creating new economic powers, and possibly new military ones as well. This is particularly true in Asia ... The emergence of China by itself would present sizable problems; the emergence of China along with a number of other Asian powers presents an extremely complicated equation. In the case of China, there is the obvious element of its outsider status. To hark back to the last turning of a century, the obvious and disturbing analogy is [with] the position of Germany, a country that felt it had been denied its 'place in the sun', that believed it had been mistreated by the other powers, and that was determined to achieve its rightful place by nationalistic assertiveness. [42]

It is this world-historical vision that informs the Bush team's preoccupation with asserting US military power in order to block the emergence of challengers. As Zalmay Khalilzad, one of Cheney's staff in the early 1990s and now Special Assistant to the President for Near East, South West Asian and North African Affairs, put it, 'It is a vital US interest to be willing to use force if necessary' in order to 'preclude the rise of another global rival for the indefinite future'. [43] A commission (including Wolfowitz among a gallery of Republican ideologues) that was set up by the right wing *Project for the New American Century* to review US defence strategy warned in 2000:

At present the United States faces no global rival. America's grand strategy should aim to preserve and extend this advantageous position as far into the future as possible. There are, however, potentially powerful states dissatisfied with the current situation and eager to change, if they can, in directions that endanger the relatively peaceful, prosperous and free condition the world enjoys today. Up to now, they have been deterred by the capability and global presence of American military power. But as that power

declines, relatively and absolutely, the happy conditions that follow from it will inevitably be undermined. [44]

The drive to maintain US hegemony is thus informed by a sense of potential long term weakness. But it is also undergirded by a confidence that in part derives from the outcome of the Cold War. As Fallows puts it:

The confidence lies in the conviction that if the United States confronts ‘evil’ enemies, it can win. The proof is, of course, the Soviet Union’s fall. Ronald Reagan came to office calling not for détente but for outright victory over the ‘evil empire’. Ten years later the empire was gone. Nearly all the members of today’s defence leadership were part of Reagan’s team. The memory of that success lies behind George W. Bush’s promise that terrorists will be not just contained, like drug traffickers, but beaten, like Nazis and Soviets. [45]

This confidence is reinforced by the successes the US military have enjoyed in the post Cold War era, and in particular by the role of air power in securing victory against Iraq in 1991, Yugoslavia in 1999 and Afghanistan in 2001. [46] Even before 11 September Rumsfeld was struggling to force through a transformation of the American military against the resistance of the Pentagon. This involved using the so called ‘Revolution in Military Affairs’ made possible in particular by the development of information technology to reorganise the US armed forces into relatively small specialised units, supported by a variety of forms of air power employing precision guided munitions. In a key speech in January 2002 Rumsfeld compared the assault on Mazar-e-Sharif by the Northern Alliance and US Special Forces during the Afghan war to the Nazi *Blitzkrieg* in 1939–1941:

What was revolutionary and unprecedented about the *Blitzkrieg* was not the new capabilities the Germans employed, but rather the unprecedented and revolutionary way they mixed new and existing capabilities. In a similar way the battle for Mazar was a transformational battle.

Coalition forces took existing military capabilities from the most advanced laser-guided weapons to antique 40 year

old B-52s – and also to the most rudimentary, a man on horseback. And they used them in unprecedented ways, with devastating effect on enemy positions, on enemy morale, and, this time, on the cause of evil in the world. [47]

The same faith in US military prowess is reflected in Richard Perle’s assertion that as few as 40,000 US troops would be needed to overthrow Saddam: ‘I would be surprised if we need anything like the 200,000 figure that is sometimes discussed in the press. A much smaller force, principally special operations forces, but backed by some regular units, should be sufficient.’ [48] After toppling the Taliban the Bush team believe they can do anything.

America versus Europe

It is this belief that informs what Fallows describes as their ‘impatience with procedure’. In the first place, they are even less willing than their Republican or Democratic predecessors to pay lip service to international institutions. John Bolton accurately summed up this attitude when he said, ‘There is no such thing as the United Nations. There is an international community that can be led by the only real power left in the world, and that is the United States, when it suits our interests and when we can get others to go along.’ [49]

This stance represents a shift in emphasis rather than a break with the past. As we have already seen, the Clinton administration was ready enough to bypass the UN and take unilateral action when it deemed it necessary. But the younger Bush’s administration is much more open in the disdain it expresses for the other leading capitalist states in Western Europe and East Asia. It quickly ran into a series of conflicts with the European Union over the Kyoto protocol, trade (in particular the US imposition of steel tariffs) and US opposition to the International Criminal Court. The underlying contempt

felt by the Republican right for the Europeans was frankly expressed by Perle, who, as an unpaid adviser to the administration, can afford to be indiscreet. Asked about whether the US needed EU backing to overthrow Saddam, he replied:

The same phenomenon that leads the Europeans to tolerate Saddam Hussein – that is they accept whoever is in power – will lead them to support the successor regime to Saddam. They will change quickly ... They'll do what is in their own interest. I mean, they're jamming the hotels in Baghdad now to sign contracts that will take effect when the sanctions are lifted. They'll be in the same hotels looking for the same contracts with the next regime. [50]

Sometimes this contempt for Europe develops into outright hostility, as was very effectively evoked by Anatol Lieven, a British journalist well connected with the Republican right, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11:

Not long after the Bush administration took power in January, I was invited to lunch at a glamorous restaurant in New York by a group of editors and writers from an influential American right wing broadsheet. The food and wine were extremely expensive, the decor luxurious but discreet, the clientele beautifully dressed, and much of the conversation more than mildly insane. With regard to the greater part of the world outside America, my hosts' attitude was a combination of loathing, contempt, distrust and fear: not only towards Arabs, Russians, Chinese, French and others, but towards 'European socialist governments', whatever that was supposed to mean. This went with a strong desire – in theory at least – to take military action against a broad range of countries across the world. [51]

Lieven quotes a leading Republican politician who asked, 'Who says we share common values with the Europeans? They don't even go to church.' Robert Kagan, Lieven's colleague at the conservative Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has developed a somewhat more sophisticated analysis, according to which the American preference for unilateralism and the European commitment to multilateralism flow from 'the power gap' between the two sides:

Today's transatlantic problem ... is not a George Bush problem. It is a power problem. American military strength has produced a propensity to use that strength. Europe's weakness has produced a perfectly understandable aversion to the exercise of military power. Indeed, it has produced a powerful European interest in inhabiting a world where strength doesn't matter, where international law and international institutions predominate, where unilateral action by powerful actions is forbidden, where all nations regardless of their strength have equal rights and are equally protected by commonly agreed-upon international rules of behaviour. Europeans have a deep interest in devaluing and eventually eradicating the brutal laws of an anarchic, Hobbesian world where power is the ultimate determinant of national security and success. [52]

Kagan argues that these consequences of the differences in material power between the US and Europe were reinforced by the development through the process of European integration of multilateral institutions encouraging the reconciliation of national interests. But the taming of inter-state rivalries within Europe depended on the US military umbrella:

By providing security from outside, the United States has rendered it unnecessary for Europe's supranational government to provide it ... The current situation abounds in ironies. Europe's rejection of power politics, its devaluing of military force as a tool of international relations, have depended on the presence of American military forces on European soil. Europe's new Kantian order could flourish only under the umbrella of American power exercised according to the rules of the old Hobbesian order. American power made it possible for Europeans to believe that power was no longer important. [53]

On the basis of this thesis Kagan criticises the idea, put forward by Francis Fukuyama and followers such as the British diplomat Robert Cooper, that with the 'end of history' advanced capitalism has entered a 'postmodern', 'posthistorical' era in which war is obsolete within this bloc, even though it may still be a threat in the 'modern' or even 'pre-modern' parts of the world. [54] *Europe* may indeed have gone beyond history, Kagan argues, but:

... although the United States has played the critical role in bringing Europe into Kantian paradise, and still plays a key role in making that paradise possible, it cannot enter this paradise itself. It mans the walls but cannot walk through the gate. The United States, with all its vast power, remains stuck in history, left to deal with the Saddams and the ayatollahs, the Kim Jong IIs and the Jiang Zemins, leaving the happy benefits to others. [55]

This self image of the US as a sentry selflessly shouldering the military burden required to keep Europeans gambolling in a postmodern paradise would naturally breed resentment. Some of the underlying tensions burst to the surface when, faced with defeat in the September 2002 federal elections, the German chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, swung the Social Democratic Party firmly in opposition to a US attack on Iraq. After the German justice minister compared Bush to Hitler, Condoleezza Rice said, ‘An atmosphere has been created that is ... poisoned.’ [56] While Schröder was celebrating his narrow victory in Berlin, Donald Rumsfeld pointedly used the occasion of a NATO meeting in Warsaw to repeat the complaint. Richard Perle went even further, declaring that the best thing Schröder could do to restore US-German relations would be to resign. [57]

Free market imperialism

Their world-historical perspective leads the Bush team to conclude that a window of opportunity has opened in which they can use the US’s present military superiority to improve the long term position of US capitalism. 11 September and the ‘war on terrorism’ have provided the occasion for this effort, but the US is after much bigger game than the elusive Bin Laden and his Al Qaida network. A key section of the Bush administration’s *National Security Strategy* warns:

We are attentive to the possible renewal of old patterns of great power competition. Several potential great powers are now in the

midst of internal transition – most importantly Russia, India, and China.

While insisting that these powers share common interests and values with the US, the document directs a very specific warning at Beijing:

... a quarter century after beginning the process of shedding the worst features of the Communist legacy, China's leaders have not yet made the next series of fundamental choices about the character of the state. In pursuing advanced military capabilities that can threaten its neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region, China is pursuing an outdated path that, in the end, will hamper its own pursuit of national greatness. In time, China will find that social and political freedom is the only source of that greatness. [58]

In other words, the consensus that Bush and his advisers are seeking among the Great Powers is one on the US's terms. This is true in the military sphere. Only Uncle Sam is allowed to develop 'advanced military capabilities'. The Republican right's commission on defence strategy affirmed:

... what should finally drive the size and character of our nuclear forces is not numerical parity with Russian capabilities but maintaining American strategic superiority-and, with that superiority, a capability to deter possible hostile coalitions of nuclear powers. US nuclear superiority is nothing to be ashamed of; rather, it will be an essential element in preserving American leadership in a more complex and chaotic world. [59]

In the light of such statements it is hardly surprising that Russia and China should fear that the scrapping of the ABM treaty and the construction of the National Missile Defence system by the Bush administration are designed to give the US a nuclear first-strike capability that would perpetuate US supremacy. Claiming 'rapid progress' in the development of National Missile Defence, Paul Wolfowitz boasted in October 2002, 'The US is finally free to pursue missile defences without the artificial constraints of an outdated 30 year old treaty with a country that no longer exists.' [60] The administration's *Nuclear Posture Review*, leaked early the same year, listed Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, Iraq,

Syria and Libya as potential nuclear adversaries and proposed the integration of nuclear and conventional capabilities – for example, the addition of nuclear warheads to bunker-buster weapons intended to kill enemy leaders such as Saddam Hussein. [61]

Meanwhile the war on terrorism provided the US with an opportunity to establish a string of military bases in Central Asia – a region closed to it during the Cold War – and to return its troops to the Philippines, where US bases were closed in the early 1990s. [62] The *National Security Strategy* emphasises that this is no temporary development: ‘To contend with uncertainty and to meet the many security challenges we face, the United States will require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and north east Asia, as well as temporary access arrangements for the long distance deployment of US forces.’ [63] No one could blame China’s rulers if they saw these moves as the first stage in a strategy of encirclement directed at them.

It is important, however, to see that the Bush administration’s grand strategy is aimed not simply at maintaining US geopolitical pre-eminence, but at imposing the Anglo-American model of free market capitalism on the world. Bush’s preface to the *National Security Strategy* begins by affirming, ‘The great struggles of the 20th century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom – and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise.’ Bush goes on to avow the intention ‘to create a balance of power that favours human freedom: conditions in which all nations and societies can choose for themselves the rewards and challenges of political and economic liberty’. One chapter of the document is devoted to outlining neo-liberal policies that will ‘ignite a new era of global growth through free markets and free trade’. The document also notes, ‘The US national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national success.’ It is indeed a

peculiar kind of internationalism that leaves peoples free to choose the ‘single sustainable model of national success’ – US-style *laissez-faire* capitalism. A new era of Great Power competition can be avoided so long as potential challengers such as Russia and China sign up to ‘common values’ – which means, of course, American liberal capitalist values. [64]

The left-liberal economist Robert Wade has painted a striking picture of the extent to which the structure of the world economy since the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in the early 1970s has favoured the interests of US imperialism:

Suppose you are a modern day Roman emperor, leader of the most powerful country in a world of sovereign states and international markets. What international political economy do you create so that, without having to throw your weight around too much, normal market forces bolster the economic pre-eminence of your country, allow your citizens to consume much more than they produce, and keep challengers down?

You want autonomy to decide on your own exchange rate and monetary policy, while having other countries depend on your support in managing their own economies. You want to be able to engineer volatility and economic crises in the rest of the world in order to hinder the growth of centres that might challenge your pre-eminence. You want intense competition between exporters in the rest of the world to give you an inflow of imports at constantly decreasing prices relative to the price of your exports ...

What features do you hard-wire into the international political economy? First, free capital mobility. Second, free trade (except imports that threaten domestic industries important for your reselection). Third, international investment free from any discriminatory favouring of national companies through protection, public procurement, public ownership or other devices, with special emphasis on the freedom of your companies to get the custom of national elites for the management of their financial assets, their private education, healthcare, pensions, and the like. Fourth, your currency as the main reserve currency. Fifth, no

constraint on your ability to create your currency at will (such as a dollar-gold link), so that you can finance unlimited trade deficits with the rest of the world. Sixth, international lending at variable interest rates dominated in your currency, which means that borrowing countries in crisis have to pay you more when your capacity is less. This combination allows you to consume far more than they produce (and it periodically produces financial instability and crises in the rest of the world). To supervise the international framework you want international organisations that look like co-operatives of member states and carry the legitimacy of multilateralism, but are financed in a way that allows you control. [65]

This is a description of what Peter Gowan calls the Dollar-Wall Street Regime (DWSR) through which successive US administrations from Nixon onwards have sought to organise global financial markets for the past 30 years. [66] It is overstated in three respects. First, Gowan in particular gives too conspiratorial an account of how the DWSR developed: accident (for example, the far from predictable success of the Thatcher government's privatisation programme) and innovations made by financial actors played an important part in the story. Moreover, as Robert Brenner has emphatically argued, the centrality of a dollar unanchored in gold to the international financial system has not always worked to the advantage of US capitalism. The September 1985 Plaza Accord among the leading capitalist states produced a fall in the dollar that proved crucial to the recovery of US international competitiveness. But what Brenner calls 'the reverse Plaza Accord' ten years later, when the Clinton administration switched to a strong-dollar policy designed to revive the depressed Japanese economy, laid the basis for the profitability crisis in US manufacturing industry that developed in the late 1990s. [67] Second, the US-dominated institutions that run the DWSR – what Wade calls the US Treasury-IMF-Wall Street complex – are to some extent providing 'public goods' that benefit all the advanced capitalist

economies, not just US capitalism: thus European multinationals like Suez have played a leading role in profiting in both North and South from the privatisation of water demanded by the neo-liberal Washington Consensus. Third, what this indicates is that European and Japanese capitalism, even if still relatively marginal geopolitical actors, are major economic players whose interests and demands cannot simply be ignored by Washington and Wall Street.

Now that euphoria surrounding the US boom of the late 1990s has evaporated, and the elements of speculation and straightforward fraud are being exposed, the claims made for the US ‘New Economy’ – that its performance had taken it ‘beyond history’, as Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, put it – have deflated along with the Wall Street bubble. Brenner points out that US productivity growth during the boom ‘was not decisively better than that of its leading rivals. Whereas between 1993 and 2000 manufacturing labour productivity improved at an annual average rate of 5.1 percent, manufacturing labour productivity in western Germany and France grew at the annual average rates of 4.8 percent (through 1998) and 4.9 percent respectively.’ [68] Richard Layard extends the comparison to economies as a whole:

In the past ten years output per hour worked has grown faster in euro-zone countries than in the US, and in France and Germany it is now as high as it is in the US. Even on a per capita basis, output has grown as fast in the euro-zone as in the US – over the past ten years and over the past three. [69]

According to the IMF, in 2001 not only Germany and France but also Italy had higher output per hour than the US! [70]

The US’s huge military lead over the other powers should not be allowed to conceal the fact that the economic contest, particularly with the EU, is much more evenly balanced. [71] The implication is that the current US supremacy depends on a highly contingent and transitory set of circumstances. It is precisely for this reason that US administrations have had to

fight hard to maintain their hegemony – first of Western capitalism, now on a global scale – over the past generation. The Bush administration is seizing advantage of the present conjuncture in order to shift the terms further in the favour of US capitalism. But – to borrow the title of Gowan’s book – this is a gamble, not a racing certainty.

‘Regime change’ and the politics of oil

The immediate priority for the Bush team is not, however, to confront any of the US’s major rivals, but forcibly to remove Saddam Hussein. This enterprise plays two main functions. First, a successful US war against Iraq would serve as a warning to others: if overwhelming US force can remove the recalcitrant ruler of a minor Middle Eastern power, then Washington’s potential peer competitors had better watch their step. Secondly, bringing down Saddam would play a more specific role in an ambitious programme that at least some on the Republican right harbour for reordering the entire Middle East.

‘What people are not adequately grasping here is that after Iraq they’ve got a long list of countries to blow up,’ defence consultant John Pike says of Richard Perle and his ilk. ‘Iraq is not the final chapter – it’s the opening chapter.’ [72] High on their list of targets is Saudi Arabia. In July 2002 Perle caused an uproar when he introduced Laurent Murawiec, a RAND corporation analyst and former follower of Lyndon LaRouche, the notorious conspiracy theorist who moved effortlessly from the far left to the far right of US politics, to brief the Defence Policy Board. This elite advisory body listened in amazement as Murawiec explained that Saudi Arabia was the ‘kernel of evil’ and ‘should be counted among “our enemies”, and that, if necessary, the US should threaten Islam’s two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina, which are located inside Saudi Arabia’. [73]

In the ensuing furore Rumsfeld and Perle were quick to dissociate themselves from these ravings. But Murawiec's views are shared by others on the Republican right. According to Michael Leeden of the American Enterprise Institute, the 'terror network – from Al Qaida to Hezbollah, from Islamic Jihad to Hamas and various Palestine Liberation Organisation groups – is as potent as it is because of the support given by four tyrannical regimes, which I term the "terror masters": Iran, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia.' Leeden doesn't actually propose that the US goes to war against Saudi Arabia. He argues that Washington's first target should be Iran, which 'created, trained, protected, funded and supported the world's most deadly terrorist group – Hezbollah': presumably killing Israeli soldiers is a more heinous crime than massacring US civilians. [74] Nevertheless for what has been a key ally of the US in the Arab world ever since the 1940s suddenly to be placed in the same category as three of Washington's least favourite rogue states is an astonishing reversal.

Three factors are involved in this shift. First, there is 11 September. The Bush administration itself sought to skate over Bin Laden's roots in the Saudi ruling class and the Saudi origins of most of the 9/11 hijackers, but many on the Republican right have been much more open in holding Saudi Arabia to account: 'The Saudis are active at every level of the terror chain, from planners to financiers, from cadre to footsoldier, from ideologist to cheerleader,' Murawiec told the Defence Policy Board. [75] Relatives of 9/11 victims have launched a trillion dollar lawsuit against several Saudi institutions and three members of the Saudi royal family for financing terrorism. A more honest accounting would have pointed the finger at the US government – and in particular the Reagan administration – for, in close alliance with Saudi Arabia, financing, training and arming Islamist guerrillas to fight in Afghanistan during the last phase of the Cold War. But in the distorted prism of the right wing Republican

worldview, 11 September has helped to shift Saudi Arabia into the axis of evil.

Secondly, to a much greater extent than was true of earlier generations of US conservatives, many contemporary right wingers unconditionally support the state of Israel. Perle, for example, is a director of the **Jerusalem Post**, and sought to use his influence in Israel in a clumsy attempt to sabotage the 2000 Camp David talks. Support for Israel reinforces the Republican right's preoccupation with Iraq, long seen as a major threat by Israel. As Perle noted in 1996, removing Saddam is 'an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right'. [76] Republican right wingers (including Christian fundamentalists who see Palestine as the land god gave the Jews in the Old Testament) tend to share the hostility to the Middle East peace process expressed by Likud leaders such as Ariel Sharon and Binyamin Netanyahu. They therefore detest conservative Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt for the pressure they put on Washington to force Israel back to the negotiating table. According to Anatol Lieven, 'Murawiec advocated sending the Saudis an ultimatum demanding not only that their police force co-operate fully with US authorities, but also the suppression of public criticism of the US and Israel within Saudi Arabia – something that would be impossible for any Arab state.' [77]

The right's alternative to negotiating with the Palestinians is forcibly to reshape the Arab world. At the height of the Jenin crisis in the spring of 2002 William Kristol and Robert Kagan argued that Bush should not allow himself to become 'so immersed in peace-processing' that he forgets 'the road that leads to real peace and security – the road that runs through Baghdad'. [78] Overthrowing Saddam would be the beginning of a process of 'rollback' – like the US-engineered counter-revolutions in Central America and the collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe during the 1980s – that would spread liberal democracy throughout the Arab world. According to the **Wall Street Journal**, 'Liberating Iraq from Saddam and sponsoring

democracy would not only rid the region of a major military threat. It would also send a message to the Arab world that self determination as part of the modern world is possible.’ If this democratic upheaval replaced the House of Saud with an anti-American government, this ‘would force a decision on whether to take over the Saudi oilfields, which would put an end to OPEC’. [79]

Condoleezza Rice has expressed a similar sense that Washington can use its military power to extend the boundaries of liberal capitalism:

... if the collapse of the Soviet Union and 9/11 bookend a major shift in international politics, then this is a period not just of grave danger, but of enormous opportunity ... This is, then, a period akin to 1945 to 1947, when American leadership expanded the number of democratic states – Japan and Germany , among the great powers – to create a new balance of power that favoured freedom. [80]

The real underplot to such triumphalist fantasies of imposing liberal democracy on the Middle East is provided by the third and most decisive factor in the Republican right’s thinking on the region – oil. It is the fact that Saudi Arabia contains the world’s largest oil reserves that has bound the US and Saudi ruling classes together since the Second World War. The Bush administration, with its close links to the fossil fuel corporations – Mike Davis has described it as ‘the executive committee of the American Petroleum Institute’ – is particularly concerned about US long term access to energy supplies. [81] In May 2001 Washington released the National Energy Plan, drafted (with the help of Enron) by a team headed by Dick Cheney. Michael Klare writes:

In essence, the Cheney report makes three key points:

- The United States must share an ever-increasing share of its oil demand with imported supplies. (At present the United States imports about 10 million barrels of oil a day, representing 53 percent of its

total consumption; by 2020, daily US imports will total nearly 17 million barrels, or 65 percent of consumption.)

- The United States cannot depend exclusively on traditional sources of supply like Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Canada to provide this additional oil. It will also have to obtain additional supplies from new sources, such as the Caspian states, Russia, and Africa.
- The United States cannot rely on market forces alone to gain access to these added supplies, but will also require a significant effort [on] the part of government officials to overcome resistance to the outward reach of American energy companies.

In line with these three principles, the Cheney plan calls on the Bush administration to undertake a wide range of initiatives aimed at increasing oil imports from overseas sources of supply. In particular, it calls on the president and secretaries of state, energy and commerce to work with leaders of the Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan to boost production in the Caspian region and to build new pipelines to the West. It also calls on US officials to persuade their counterparts in Africa, the Persian Gulf and Latin America to open up their oil industries to great US oil company involvement and to send more of their petroleum to the United States.

In advocating these measures, the Cheney team is well aware that US efforts to gain access to increasing amounts of foreign petroleum could provoke resistance in some oil-producing regions. By 2020, the report notes, America ‘will import nearly two of every three barrels of oil [it consumes] – a condition of increased dependency on foreign powers that do not always have America’s interests at heart’. [\[82\]](#)

What Klare calls this ‘strategy of global oil acquisition’ helps to explain many of the actions of the Bush administration – plans for a big increase in oil imports from Russia, the development of

US military bases in the Caspian region, US officials' support for the unsuccessful right wing coup in Venezuela last April, the US-backed government military offensive in Colombia. But it also underlines the strategic importance of the oil states of the Middle East. As we have seen, the relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia is deteriorating – on both sides. In August 2002 the **Financial Times** reported that ‘disgruntled Saudis’ had withdrawn as much as \$200 billion from the US in recent months, helping to push the dollar down. Among the reasons cited were anger at US support for Israel and the calls made by right wing commentators for Saudi assets in the US to be frozen:

Calls are now coming out of Riyadh, including in the press close to the government, urging a review of the strategic relationship with the US. A less public debate among Saudi Arabia's elite is whether to punish the US by pricing oil in euros rather than dollars. [83]

Saudi Arabia has played a critical role in OPEC, using its huge reserves to persuade other members of the cartel to keep production and prices at a level that maintains revenue but doesn't bite too deep into the profits of the Western corporations. Neither do they want to encourage investment in less efficient oil-bearing regions not controlled by OPEC. But even if the Saudi royal family continue to pursue this course, their oil isn't enough to fuel US capitalism. Iraq has the world's second largest oil reserves. A post-Saddam Iraqi government, placed and maintained in power by US arms, would at best be a feeble creature, like Karzai's puppet regime in Afghanistan – indeed, there are signs that the administration is planning to install its own military government to run Iraq during a lengthy ‘democratic transition’ modelled on the post-war occupation of Germany and Japan. [84]

Some oil experts believe that a US-dominated Iraq would pull out of OPEC. At the very least, it would pump up production, which has been depressed by the lack of investment in the oil industry since 1991 and the UN embargo, pushing down oil prices. **The Economist** comments on such scenarios:

Will the flood of Iraqi oil occur? It is possible. Any future government in Iraq, needing vast amounts of money to rebuild the country, will try to expand the oil sector as fast as it can. At least some oil executives believe that this bonanza could draw much foreign capital into Iraqi oil production. Even if the new government did not break ties with OPEC, as the United States might like, it would probably argue – bearing in mind the years of UN supervision of its oil exports – for a lengthy exemption from quotas. OPEC, RIP?

It might seem, then, that knocking out Mr Hussein would kill two birds with one stone: a dangerous dictator would be gone, and with him would go the cartel that for years has manipulated prices, engineered embargoes and otherwise harmed consumers. [85]

The Economist goes on to argue that various obstacles stand in the way of this outcome – Saudi Arabia might refuse to play its usual role as producer of last resort, and not increase output to stop oil prices going through the roof in the event of a Middle East war, Iraq's oil infrastructure is now so ramshackle that it would take years and large infusions of foreign investment to achieve a substantial increase in production, and so on. But even when these provisos are taken into account it is clear that one of the major stakes in a war with Iraq is the control this would give the US over the world's second largest oil reserves. Not only would this ease concerns about the US's long term access to oil, it would also increase Washington's leverage over allies and rivals such as Germany and Japan that are even more dependent than the US on imported oil. Once again we see how economic and geopolitical considerations are inextricably interwoven in the grand strategy of US imperialism.

Bush I vs. Bush II: the debate within the ruling class

The Bush Doctrine and the administration's plans to attack Iraq have provoked a remarkably open and intense debate at the top of the US ruling class. The most striking thing about this is that it has pitted the first Bush administration against the second. In August 2002 James Baker and Lawrence Eagleburger, successively Secretaries of State under Bush Sr., publicly opposed unilateral US action against Iraq. They were joined by Brent Scowcroft, National Security Adviser to the elder Bush, who summed up the critics' case:

... the central point is that any campaign against Iraq, whatever the strategy, cost and risks, is certain to divert us for some indefinite period from our war against terrorism. Worse, there is a virtual consensus in the world against an attack on Iraq at this time. So long as that sentiment persists, it would require the US to pursue a virtual go it alone strategy, making any military operations correspondingly more difficult and expensive ...

Possibly the most dire consequences would be the effect on the region. The shared view in the region is that Iraq is principally an obsession of the US. The obsession of the region, however, is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. If we were seen to be turning our backs on that bitter conflict – which the region, rightly or wrongly, perceives to be clearly within our power to resolve – in order to go after Iraq, there would be an explosion of outrage against us. We would be seen as ignoring a key interest of the Muslim world in order to satisfy what is seen to be a narrow American interest.

Even without Israeli involvement, the results could well destabilise Arab regimes in the region, ironically facilitating one of Saddam's objectives. At a minimum, it would stifle any co-operation on terrorism, and could even swell the ranks of the terrorists. [86]

The critics were joined by senior figures in the Clinton administration such as Madeleine Albright and Richard Holbrooke, as well as by veterans of earlier presidencies such as Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski. Kissinger criticised the Bush Doctrine, telling the Senate Committee on Foreign

Relations, 'It cannot be either the American national interest or the world's interest to develop principles that grant every nation an unfettered right of pre-emption against its own definition of threats to its national security.' [87] The old war criminal hadn't been afraid to take pre-emptive action during his time in office – for example when the US invaded Cambodia in May 1970. What he was worried about was the danger of publicly adopting a doctrine of pre-emptive action, which, far from intimidating rivals, might encourage them to follow the same example.

Nevertheless, the debate between the Bush administration and its critics tended to be more about tactics than objectives. Holbrooke, for example, endorsed the goal of 'regime change' in Iraq, but argued:

The road to Baghdad runs through the United Nations Security Council. This simple truth must be recognised if the Bush administration wants the international support that is essential for success in Iraq. To build such support, a new Security Council resolution is necessary, one that authorises the use of force if Saddam Hussein refuses to allow an airtight weapons inspection regime – no-notice inspections anywhere, anytime. Such a resolution would provide those nations (Turkey, Britain) that want to support an effort to remove Saddam a vital legitimising cover for action, and put pressure on those (Germany, France, Saudi Arabia) that are wavering or opposed. [88]

Essentially this would amount to a return to the strategy of the first Bush administration in the lead-up to the 1991 Gulf War – using UN authority to legitimise the US's exercise of military power or, as Robert Kagan puts it, 'the unilateralist iron fist inside the multilateralist velvet glove'. [89] Scowcroft and Brzezinski argued along very similar lines. [90] In the event, the administration moved some way in this direction with Bush's speech to the United Nations General Assembly after the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. But Bush and his advisers made it clear that they saw a new Security Council resolution as a prelude to military action against Saddam rather than, as France and Russia hoped, an alternative. Bush taunted the UN with the

fate of the League of Nations, which was unable to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War, and warned:

We will work with the UN Security Council for the necessary resolutions. But the purposes of the United States should not be doubted. The Security Council resolutions will be enforced...or action will be unavoidable. And a regime that has lost its legitimacy will also lose its power.

The UN could either rubber-stamp Washington's war or sit by and watch the US and Britain attack Iraq anyway. [91]

Behind the ruling class critics' arguments lay an appreciation of the realities of power in the Middle East and on a global scale. The US's strategy in the Middle East has depended on a series of alliances with key states – on the one hand Israel and on the other hand conservative Arab regimes, most importantly in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Israel is a valuable ally: its very isolation in the region and its massive US-supplied armoury make it a reliable counterweight to any indigenous regime that threatens to flout US interests. But, as the critics pointed out, exclusive reliance on Israel would leave US interests dangerously exposed to massive popular hostility in the region. The first Bush administration made great efforts to keep Israel out of the 1991 Gulf War (against Ariel Sharon's vehement opposition), knowing that Israeli involvement would undermine the position of its Arab allies in the coalition against Saddam. [92]

This strategic understanding is sometimes reinforced by material interests deriving from the close economic links that still bind the US and Arab ruling classes together. Bush Sr and Baker are both members of the Carlyle Group, a shadowy private investment company that has significant Saudi involvement. As fate would have it, the Carlyle Group had a meeting in Manhattan on 11 September 2001: so pillars of the US establishment stood side by side with one of Osama Bin Laden's half-brothers, watching the Twin Towers crumble in flames and dust.

US imperialism also cannot operate on a global scale without allies. For all its military and economic muscle, its geographical position places it offshore to the Eurasian land mass where the bulk of the world's population and wealth is concentrated. To project military power, the US needs allies and clients willing to provide it with bases in Europe and Asia. Even the weaker Eurasian capitalist classes have their own resources and interests – their co-operation cannot simply be extracted through coercion, but must be won through bribes and persuasion. As Brzezinski in particular tends to stress, coalition building is indispensable to maintaining US domination of the Eurasian continent.

The Bush team are impatient with the compromises and delays required to construct and maintain the necessary coalitions. They are far from simply gung-ho, but they believe that the US's present supremacy offers a unique opportunity to see off potential rivals. But even if the present administration puts greater stress on unilateral action and coercion than its predecessors, it cannot escape the limits on US power. Thus when Sharon warned that Israel would not, as it did during the 1991 Gulf War, accede to US demands not to retaliate against any Iraqi attack, Rumsfeld stepped in very quickly to demand Israeli restraint in the event of a future war with Iraq. 'It would be in Israel's overwhelming best interest not to get involved,' he said. [93] Even the Republican right have to weigh the political risks involved in antagonising the Arab world.

Conclusion

It should be clear that it is oversimplistic to dismiss the present administration's plans as irrational, as the historical sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein did when he denounced Bush as 'a geopolitical incompetent. He has allowed a clique of hawks to induce him to take a position on invading Iraq from which he

cannot extricate himself, one that will have nothing but negative consequences for the United States – and the rest of the world.’ [94] As I have tried to show, the Bush team’s plan is based on an accurate reading of the long term economic and geopolitical threats facing US capitalism, and involves the decision to exploit 11 September and the US’s current military supremacy to shift the global balance of economic and political power further to its advantage. If the strategy contains irrational elements – above all arising from the growing links between the US and Israeli rights – it does not follow that the entire approach is just a *Dr Strangelove* style adventure. Contested though the strategy may be within the ruling class, it represents one take on how best to advance the global interests of US capitalism.

All the same, the stakes in the coming war with Iraq are very high. In narrow political terms, failure – or perhaps even a decision to back down from attacking Iraq – would reduce Bush to a lame duck. Blair has gone out so far out on a limb in support of war on Iraq that military debacle could bring him down. In larger terms, Anatol Lieven writes, ‘War with Iraq is ... part of what is in essence a strategy to use American military force to continue offloading onto the rest of the world the ecological costs of the existing US economy – without the need for any short term sacrifices on the part of US capitalism, the US political elite or US voters.’ [95] The Bush administration’s strategy sums up the reasons that have drawn millions into the anti-capitalist movement since the Seattle protests of November 1999 – above all, the imperialistic expansion of the capitalist system that threatens to destroy the planet through war and environmental destruction.

But, as we have seen, this war drive has split the US ruling class and isolated the US from the other leading powers. This is an astonishing reversal of the situation that prevailed after the attacks on New York and Washington, when the Parisian daily *Le Monde*, a longstanding critic of US foreign policy, proclaimed, ‘We are all Americans.’ At the popular level, anti-

Americanism is now stronger around the world than it was before 9/11 – so long as anti-Americanism is understood not as hatred of ordinary Americans or of American culture, but as opposition to the global policies pursued by the US state and corporations. Even within the United States Bush's unilateralism has very limited popular support. In a recent survey of American public opinion 65 percent supported war on Iraq only with the approval of the UN and the support of America's allies, and 77 percent supported strengthening the UN. Only 17 percent agreed that 'as the sole remaining superpower the United States should continue to be the pre-eminent world leader in solving international problems'. [96]

These divisions can evoke two kinds of mistaken reaction. On the one hand, Walden Bello, one of the leading critics of capitalist globalisation, has welcomed the split between the US and Europe as:

... a positive step for most of the world. It opens up the possibility that Europeans will begin to grapple in a positive way with the problems of injustice and poverty in the developing world by addressing the structures of Western domination that are largely responsible for *[sic]*. It paves the way for innovative global alliances that can be beneficial for most of the world, including the eventual formation of a Europe-Africa-Latin America-Asia alliance against US hegemony.

Of course, Europe has had its own set of oppressive practices, such as the Common Agricultural Policy, which is one of the biggest causes of agricultural disruption in the developing world. Its corporations are often as exploitative as American corporations. And its restrictions on migrants are often more draconian than Washington's. However, the need to seek allies in countering Washington's unilateralism may serve as an incentive to begin to reform these institutions. [97]

Bello's belief that the EU can be an ally against US imperialism is likely to find a resonance on that wing of the anti-capitalist movement – represented particularly by the leadership of

ATTAC France – that wants to rebuild the power of the nation-state as a counterweight to capitalist globalisation. But this kind of strategy accepts the existence of a world divided into competing nation-states. Whether its authors intend it or not, it therefore assumes that the logic of imperialist rivalry is unavoidable, and seeks to build up a counterweight to the existing hegemon – as Bello puts it, ‘a Europe-Africa-Latin America-Asia alliance against US hegemony’. But the problem with the present world isn’t that it is dominated by the US. If the EU were to challenge US primacy this wouldn’t fundamentally improve on the present situation. Indeed, by diverting yet more resources to the military and unleashing a new arms race, it would make the world even more unjust and dangerous than it already is.

On the other hand, Perry Anderson, the editor of **New Left Review**, on the basis of an analysis of US strategic thinking very similar to that developed here, regards the divisions within the Western ruling classes and the widespread opposition to US unilateralism as largely irrelevant. Contemptuously dismissing ‘the outpouring of protest among the Atlantic intelligentsia’, he stresses the continuity between the military interventions based on the doctrine of ‘international community’ and human rights relied on by the elder Bush, Clinton and Blair, and the war being planned under the new Bush Doctrine:

The Gulf, Balkan and Afghan wars, we are given to understand, were one thing. These were expeditions that commanded the emphatic support of this stratum ... But an American attack on Iraq is another matter, the same voices now explain, since it does not enjoy the same solidarity of the international community, and requires an unconscionable doctrine of pre-emption. To which the Republican administration has no difficulty replying, in Sade’s words: *Encore un effort, citoyens* [One more effort, citizens]. Military intervention to prevent the risk of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo violated national sovereignty and flouted the UN charter, when NATO so decided. *So why not military intervention to prevent the risk of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, with or*

without the nod of the UN? The principle is exacting the same: the right – indeed the duty – of civilised states to stamp out the worst form of barbarism, within whatever national boundaries they occur, to make the world a safer and more peaceful place? [98]

The Achilles' heel of much of the opposition to the war in Iraq, Anderson implies, is its commitment to the United Nations:

A month or two of sustained official massaging of opinion on both sides of the Atlantic is capable of working wonders. Despite the huge anti-war demonstration in London this autumn, three quarters of the British public would support an attack on Iraq provided the UN extends its figleaf. In that event, it seems quite possible the French jackal will be in at the kill as well ... Overall, European acquiescence in the campaign can be taken for granted. [99]

Anderson's approach is surprisingly ultimatumist for so sophisticated an intellectual. It is true that the ideological justifications for the earlier imperialist wars in the Gulf and the Balkans imply the same claim that national sovereignty can be overridden in the name of supposedly higher liberal-capitalist 'values' that is now being used by Bush and Blair in support of attacking Iraq. But political movements aren't simply governed by the laws of logic. The inconsistency involved in supporting past wars but opposing this one can be resolved in more than one way. It could lead to those holding these views falling back into a general pro-war position. Alternatively, opposition to an attack on Iraq could generalise into a broader anti-imperialist position. The hundreds of thousands who chanted 'Victory to the Viet Cong' in 1968 weren't always revolutionary anti-imperialists. They started out pacifists or liberals or even Tories. The direction most people take in such circumstances depends on the overall constellation of political forces. The fact is that first the war in Afghanistan and now the planned attack on Iraq have provoked much larger movements of opposition, both in Europe and the US, than those against the 1999 bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. This reflects a change in the political climate that Anderson's historical pessimism has failed to register. [100]

If some of the more prominent opponents of the latest Anglo-American adventure failed to oppose earlier wars and retain illusions in the UN, their present stance nevertheless helps to legitimise resistance to Bush's war drive. These illusions in any case matter less than they did during the 1991 Gulf War, when even leading critics of American imperialism such as Noam Chomsky and Tony Benn called for UN sanctions against Iraq. No one would think of proposing this now, after the terrible humanitarian consequences of the past decade's blockade. The experience of a succession of imperialist wars, each waged in the name of human rights to advance primarily US interests, has generated a learning process that has ideologically toughened the core of the anti-war movement. Moreover, a current of anti-imperialist radicalisation now exists that was largely absent in the early 1990s, reflecting the different political contexts – then one of capitalist triumphalism in the wake of the collapse of Stalinism, now one of anti-capitalist resistance inspired by the great protests at Seattle and Genoa, and by the World Social Forums at Porto Alegre.

The opposition to the war in Iraq is indeed extremely ideologically heterogeneous, embracing as it does in Britain mainstream Labour politicians, respectable Islamic clergy, left wing trade union leaders and anti-capitalist youth. But then it was Perry Anderson who once wrote, 'The central problematic of the united front – the final strategic advice of Lenin to the Western working class movement before his death, the first concern of Gramsci in prison – retains all its validity today. It has never been historically surpassed.' [\[101\]](#) Part of the point of the united front tactic is to unite politically diverse forces in action around a limited common objective: within this united front it is the responsibility of revolutionary socialists both to try to make this struggle as militant as possible and to challenge the political illusions that still tie some of the participants to the ruling order. The political climate today, certainly in Britain, is one where, simultaneously, opposition to the war on Iraq is very

broad, but it is the anti-imperialist wing of the movement that is making the running.

Opposition to the 'war on terrorism' has thus served further to radicalise the anti-capitalist movement by giving it an anti-imperialist edge. The potential exists for building the greatest international anti-war movement since the era of the Vietnam War. What is at stake in these struggles is the development of a movement that targets not just the Bush administration and its war drive but the imperialist system itself, with its roots in the capitalist logic of exploitation and accumulation.

Notes

I am grateful to Sam Ashman and John Rees for their comments on this article in draft, and to Sebastian Budgen and Chris Harman for their help in providing material.

1. G. Baker, *Bush's Tough Stand*, **Financial Times**, 31 March 2001.

2. **The National Security Strategy of the United States of America**, September 2002, www.whitehouse.gov, pp. 1, 30. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

3. A. Lieven, *The Push to War*, **London Review of Books**, 3 October 2002, p. 8.

4. T. Blair, *Doctrine of International Community*, speech at the Economic Club of Chicago, 22 April 1999, www.fco.gov.uk. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.] For a critique, see A. Callinicos, **Against the Third Way** (Cambridge, 2001), ch. 3.

5. C. Rice, *Campaign 2000 – Promoting the National Interest*, **Foreign Affairs**, January/February 2000 (online edition), www.foreignpolicy2000.org. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

6. E. Luttwak, **Strategy** (Cambridge MA 2001), p. 89. Luttwak, a brilliant and idiosyncratic US conservative, first developed his version of the concept in **The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire** (Baltimore 1976).

[7.](#) N. Bukharin, **Imperialism and World Economy** (London 1972). Of course, economic rivalries among states predate the epoch of imperialism: access to the loot of empire was a crucial stake in the struggles between the European powers from the 16th century onwards. But only in the case of Holland and later England did the contestants operate from capitalist economic bases – something that gave them an important advantage over their absolutist rivals. In a sense, what happened in the 19th century was that the Anglo-Dutch model was generalised in the context of mass industrialisation and the increasing organisation of capital. See A. Callinicos, *Bourgeois Revolutions and Historical Materialism*, in P. McGarr and A. Callinicos, **Marxism and the Great French Revolution** (London 1993). The contemporary relevance of the Marxist theory of imperialism is further explored in A. Callinicos, *Marxism and Global Governance*, in D. Held and A. McGrew (eds.), **Governing Globalization** (Cambridge, 2002); and A. Callinicos, **An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto** (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 50-65.

[8.](#) See Ahmed Rashid's account of the recent economic and geopolitical conflicts over Afghanistan, **Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia** (London 2000). The great critic of US imperialism Gore Vidal has recently advanced a cautious version of the conspiracy theory that focuses on Washington's apparent ineptitude on 11 September itself: *The Enemy Within*, **The Observer**, 27 October 2002.

[9.](#) For a systematic analysis, see J. Rees, [*Imperialism: Globalisation, the State and War*](#), **International Socialism** 93 (Winter 2001).

[10.](#) P Kennedy, **The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914** (London 1980).

[11.](#) See, for example, I. Kershaw, **Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis** (London 2000), ch. 5, and pp. 400-407, 517, 528-530.

[12.](#) See especially A. Callinicos *et al.*, **Marxism and the New Imperialism** (London 1994); and G. Achcar, *The Strategic Triad*, reprinted in T. Ali (ed.), **Masters of the Universe?** (London 2000).

[13.](#) See C. Harman, **Explaining the Crisis** (London 1984), ch. 3, and R. Brenner, *The Economics of Global Turbulence*, **New Left Review** (I) 229 (May/June 1998).

[14.](#) See, for example, K.E. Calder, **Asia's Deadly Triangle** (London 1997).

[15.](#) J.J. Mearsheimer, **The Tragedy of Great Power Politics** (New York 2001), p. 398.

[16.](#) **Ibid.**, p. 400. Mearsheimer argues that hegemony can only be obtained at a regional and not a global level: the US, like Britain before it, is an 'offshore balancer' that, protected by the seas, seeks to prevent regional hegemony emerging in Europe and Asia – see **ibid.**, chs. 2, 4 and 7. This excessively restrictive conception of hegemony springs in part from the fact that Mearsheimer equates hegemony with absolute political domination: 'A hegemon is a state that is so powerful that it dominates all the other states in the system' – **ibid.**, p. 40. Apart from anything else this definition ignores the economic dimension of power (except as the source of politico-military strength – see **ibid.**, ch. 3). But capitalist states do not only pursue geopolitical objectives, but also tend to advance the interests of the capitals based in their territory. I use the term 'hegemony' to refer to the capacity, always relative and contested, of the most powerful state in the world system to get other states to support its geopolitical and economic objectives. For a critical assessment of Mearsheimer's analysis, see P. Gowan, *A Calculus of Power*, **New Left Review (II) 16** (July/August 2002).

[17.](#) Z. Brzezinski, **The Grand Chessboard** (New York 1997), p. 159 – see generally **ibid.**, ch. 6. Henry Kissinger, by contrast, though sharing a fundamentally similar overall appreciation of America's geopolitical position to Brzezinski's, believes that 'China is on the road to superpower status' – H. Kissinger, **Diplomacy** (New York 1994), p. 826.

[18.](#) C. Harman, *Beyond the Boom*, **International Socialism 90** (Spring 2001); and R. Brenner, **The Boom and the Bubble** (London 2002).

[19.](#) J. Rees, *NATO and the New Imperialism*, **Socialist Review 232**, June 1999; G. Achcar, *Rasputin Plays at Chess*, and P. Gowan, *The Euro-Atlantic Origins of NATO's Attack on Yugoslavia*, both in T. Ali (ed.), **op. cit.**

[20.](#) A. Callinicos, *The Ideology of Humanitarian Intervention*, in T. Ali (ed.), **op. cit.**

[21.](#) Z. Brzezinski, **op. cit.**, pp. 10, 198. Brzezinski's 'geostrategy' for Eurasian domination is heavily influenced by Halford Mackinder, the academic geographer and Unionist MP who developed at the beginning of the 20th century a conception of Eurasia as the 'World-Island' central to the struggle between the Great Powers. See H.J. Mackinder, **Democratic Ideals and Reality** (London 1919).

[22.](#) R. Kagan, *Multilateralism, American Style*, **Washington Post**, 13 September 2002.

[23.](#) Quoted in C. Johnson, **Blowback** (New York 2000), p. 217.

[24.](#) S.P. Huntington, *The Lonely Superpower*, **Foreign Affairs**, March/April 1999 (online edition), www.foreignpolicy2000.org. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

[25.](#) See Johnson's astonishingly prophetic critique of US imperialism in C. Johnson, **op. cit.**

[26.](#) *The President's State of the Union Address*, 29 January 2002, www.whitehouse.gov. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

[27.](#) J. Bolton, *Beyond the Axis of Evil*, 6 May 2002, www.state.gov. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

[28.](#) R. Wolff, *The Bush Doctrine*, **Financial Times**, 21 June 2002.

[29.](#) *Remarks by the President at 2002 Graduation Exercise of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York*, 1 June 2002, www.whitehouse.gov. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

[30.](#) **National Security Strategy**, **op. cit.**, p. 6.

[31.](#) For a well informed journalistic account, see A. and P. Cockburn, **Saddam Hussein: An American Obsession** (London 2002).

[32.](#) C. Rice, *Campaign 2000 – Promoting the National Interest*, **op. cit.**

[33.](#) Interview in **Financial Times**, 23 September 2002.

[34.](#) Useful overviews of the administration's outlook will be found in N. Lemann, *The Next World Order*, **The New Yorker**, 1 April 2002 (online edition), www.newyorker.com [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]; *George Bush and the World*, **New York Review of Books**, 26 September 2002; and A. Lieven, *The Push to War*, **op. cit.**

[35.](#) See Fred Halliday's account of the US counter-revolutionary offensive during the 1980s in F. Halliday, **Cold War, Third World** (London 1989).

[36.](#) H. Kissinger, **op. cit.**, p. 774.

[37.](#) A. Shlaim, **The Iron Wall** (London 2001), p. 487.

[38.](#) Quoted in J. Mearsheimer, **op. cit.**, p. 386.

[39.](#) F. Fitzgerald, *George Bush*, p. 81.

[40.](#) **Ibid.**, p. 84.

[41.](#) J. Fallows, *The Unilateralist: A Conversation with Paul Wolfowitz*, **The Atlantic Monthly**, March 2002 (online edition), www.theatlantic.com. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

[42.](#) P. Wolfowitz, *Bridging Centuries: Fin de Siècle All Over Again*, **The National Interest** 47 (1997) (online edition), www.nationalinterest.org. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

[43.](#) Quoted in N. Lemann, **op. cit.**

[44.](#) Project for the New American Century, **Rebuilding America's Defenses** (September 2000), www.newamericancentury.org, p. 1.

[45.](#) J. Fallows, **op. cit.**

[46.](#) For two very different assessments of the military efficacy of strategic air power, compare E. Luttwak, **op. cit.**, ch. 12, and J. Mearsheimer, **op. cit.**

[47.](#) Quoted in R. Wolfe, *Technology Brings Power with Few Constraints*, **Financial Times**, 18 February 2002.

[48.](#) *Saddam's Ultimate Solution/Richard Perle Interview*, 11 July 2002, www.pbs.org. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.] The 40,000 figure is cited in E. Boehlert, *The Armchair General*, **Salon.com News**, 5 September 2002, www.salon.com. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

[49.](#) Quoted in F. Fitzgerald, *George Bush*, **op. cit.**, p. 84.

[50.](#) *Saddam's Ultimate Solution/Richard Perle Interview*, **op. cit.**

[51.](#) A. Lieven, *After the Attacks: America's New Cold War*, **The Guardian**, 28 September 2001.

- [52.](#) R. Kagan, *Power and Weakness*, (2002) www.ceip.org. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]
- [53.](#) **Ibid.** The great 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant sought to define the conditions under which a Europe riven with war could attain ‘perpetual peace’.
- [54.](#) See, for example, R. Cooper, *Reordering the World*, (2002) www.fpc.org.uk. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]
- [55.](#) R. Kagan, *Power and Weakness*, **op. cit.** It is, of course, not true that the EU has transcended national antagonisms: see especially Alan Milward’s classic **The European Rescue of the Nation State** (London 1994).
- [56.](#) **Financial Times**, 21 September 2002.
- [57.](#) *Schröder Should Quit to Heal Ties – US Adviser*, **Reuters**, 1 October 2002, www.alertnet.org. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]
- [58.](#) **National Security Strategy**, **op. cit.**, pp. 26, 27.
- [59.](#) Project for an American Century, **op. cit.**, p. 8.
- [60.](#) **Financial Times**, 25 October 2002.
- [61.](#) W.M. Arkin, *Secret Plan Outlines The Unthinkable*, **Los Angeles Times**, 10 March 2002.
- [62.](#) See, for example, the lead story, *From Suez To The Pacific: US Expands Its Presence Across The Globe*, **The Guardian**, 8 March 2002.
- [63.](#) **National Security Strategy**, **op. cit.**, p. 29.
- [64.](#) **Ibid.**, pp. iv, 17, 1.
- [65.](#) R.H. Wade, *The American Empire*, **The Guardian**, 5 January 2002.
- [66.](#) P. Gowan, **The Global Gamble** (London 1999).
- [67.](#) R. Brenner, **The Boom and the Bubble**, chs. 2 and 4. I have also benefited from hearing a talk by Bob Brenner at Bookmarks bookshop in London on 29 October 2002.
- [68.](#) **Ibid.**, p. 222.
- [69.](#) R. Layard, *Britain Will Pay The Price Of Exclusion*, **Financial Times**, 15 October 2002. The difference between the two measures is

important because workers in the US and Britain work much longer hours than they do on the Continent, so that productivity measured by output per head makes some countries' economic performance look better, and output per hour worked others'.

70. M. Wolf, *Berlin's Turn To Suffer A Trap Of Its Own Invention*, **Financial Times**, 23 October 2002.

71. The economic tensions between the US and Japan are also very real, but they have so far been contained, above all by the longstanding bond of financial interdependence through which Japanese companies and banks hold vast assets in US dollars, simultaneously keeping the yen (and therefore the prices of Japanese exports) relatively low and helping the US to run a huge balance of payments deficit with the rest of the world. See R.T. Murphy, *Japan's Economic Crisis*, **New Left Review (II) 1** (January/February 2000).

72. E. Boehlert, **op. cit.**

73. **Financial Times**, 21 August 2002, and E. Boehlert, **op. cit.**

74. M. Leeden, *The Real Foe Is Middle East Tyranny*, **Financial Times**, 24 September 2002. Conrad Burns, a Republican congressman, argues for partnership with Russia as an alternative source of oil: *America Must Wean Itself Off Saudi Oil*, **ibid.**, 11 October 2002.

75. **Financial Times**, 22 August 2002.

76. Quoted in E. Boehlert, **op. cit.**

77. A. Lieven, *The Push to War*, **op. cit.**, p. 8.

78. W. Kristol and R. Kagan, *Remember The Bush Doctrine*, **Weekly Standard**, 15 April 2002.

79. Quoted in J. Lobe, *A Right-Wing Blueprint for the Middle East*, 4 April 2002, www.alternet.org. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

80. *Remarks by National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice on Terrorism and Foreign Policy*, 29 April 2002, www.whitehouse.gov. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

81. M. Davis, Speech at *Marxism 2002*, London, July 2002.

82. M.T. Klare, *Bush's Master Oil Plan*, 23 April 2002, www.alternet.org. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

- [83.](#) R. Khalaf, *A Troubled Friendship*, **Financial Times**, 22 August 2002.
- [84.](#) D.E. Sanger and E. Schmitt, *US Has A Plan To Occupy Iraq, Officials Report*, **New York Times**, 11 October 2002.
- [85.](#) *Don't Mention The O-Word – Iraq's Oil*, **The Economist**, 14 September 2002.
- [86.](#) B. Scowcroft, *Don't Attack Saddam*, **Wall Street Journal**, 15 August 2002.
- [87.](#) **Financial Times**, 27 September 2002. Leading academic 'realists', who conceive the international system as an anarchy driven by the struggle for power among states, are also dubious about the administration's strategy. John Mearsheimer, for example, writes, 'The best way to crush Al Qaida is not to build a worldwide empire based mainly on military force, but instead to lower America's military profile around the globe while improving its image in the Islamic world' – *Hearts and Minds*, **The National Interest**, 69 (2002), p. 16. See also K.M. Waltz, *The Continuity of International Politics*, in K. Booth and T. Dunne, **Worlds in Collision** (London 2002).
- [88.](#) R. Holbrooke, *High Road To Baghdad*, **The Guardian**, 29 August 2002.
- [89.](#) R. Kagan, *Multilateralism American Style*, **op. cit.**
- [90.](#) For Brzezinski's views, see, for example, *Right and Wrong Ways To Wage A War*, **International Herald Tribune**, 19 August 2002.
- [91.](#) *Remarks by the President in Address to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, New York*, 12 September 2002, www.whitehouse.gov. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.] See Anatol Lieven's perceptive analysis, *America Has Put The UN In A No-Win Situation*, **The Guardian**, 13 September 2002.
- [92.](#) A. Shlaim, **op. cit.**, pp. 472-484.
- [93.](#) **Financial Times**, 21 September 2002.
- [94.](#) I. Wallerstein, *Iraq War: The Coming Disaster*, **Los Angeles Times**, 14 April 2002.
- [95.](#) A. Lieven, *The Push to War*, **op. cit.**, p. 8.
- [96.](#) *Worldviews 2002 Survey of American and European Attitudes and Public Opinion*, 2 October 2002, www.worldviews.org. [Note by

ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

97. W. Bello, *Unravelling of the Atlantic Alliance?*, 25 September 2002, www.focusweb.org. [Note by ETOL: This link has not been checked.]

98. P. Anderson, *Force and Consent*, **New Left Review (II) 17** (September/October 2002), p. 28.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

100. See P. Anderson, *Renewals*, **New Left Review (II) 1** (January/February 2000); and G. Achcar, *The “Historical Pessimism” of Perry Anderson*, **International Socialism 88** (Autumn 2000).

101. P. Anderson, *The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci*, **New Left Review (I) 100** (1976–1977), p. 78. For some contemporary reflections on the united front, see A. Callinicos, *Unity in Diversity*, **Socialist Review 262**, April 2002.

