

# Benevolent Global Hegemony

by James George Jatras



Every once in a great while, an article appears in a mainstream publication that lets the cat out of the bag, by spelling out ideas that have long been dominant in public life but are usually seen only in vague or implicit form. One such appeared in the July/August 1996 edition of *Foreign Affairs*. Entitled "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," it was intended as a blueprint for a Dole administration, and no doubt also a claim for high appointment for its authors, William Kristol and Robert Kagan, both editors of the neoconservative *Weekly Standard*. It could best be summed up as an appeal for America to become the embryo of a world empire.

The American role in the post-Cold War international order, according to Kristol and Kagan, should be "benevolent global hegemony." After defeating the "Evil Empire," the United States

enjoys strategic and ideological predominance. The first objective of our foreign policy should be to enhance that predominance by strengthening America's security, supporting its friends, advancing its interests, and standing up for its principles around the world. The aspiration to benevolent hegemony might strike some as morally suspect. But a hegemon is nothing more or less than a lead-

er with preponderant influence and authority over all others in its domain. That is America's position in the world today.

Other powers, they argue, notably Russia and China, will bristle at American hegemony, but we should take their displeasure "as a compliment."

Predictably, the authors call for a military buildup unconnected to any identifiable military threat. They call for "citizen involvement," in effect, a militarization of the populace (in a complete perversion of the traditional citizen-soldier concept) and their seduction into the imperial enterprise: to "close the growing separation of civilian and military cultures in our society," to "involve more citizens in military service," to "lower the barriers between civilian and military life."

Perhaps most disturbing about the Kristol/Kagan call to greatness is how they define our interests. "Americans," they write, "have never lived in a world more conducive to their fundamental interests in a liberal international order, the spread of freedom and democratic governance, [and] an international economic system of free-market capitalism and free trade." Of course, this has nothing to do with how we will preserve the traditional moral and economic interests of our own people or with keeping other powers out of our traditional empire in this hemisphere—what we usually mean by national interests—and everything to do with the blessings we will supposedly bestow upon the rest of benighted humanity, assumed to be, as Kipling put it, half devil and half child.

They continue: "American hegemony is the only reliable defense against a breakdown of peace and the international order.

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The appropriate goal of American foreign policy, therefore, is to preserve that hegemony as far into the future as possible.” In sum, hegemony for hegemony’s sake: we are obligated to take up the white man’s burden, to take on the Sisyphean task of preserving the existing international order, seemingly forever. In fairness to the Republicans, it should be noted that there is greater uneasiness on the GOP right about this trend than there is on the Democratic left, whose noninterventionism seems to have evaporated with the demise of communism. Note the *New York Times*’ piece (December 19, 1996) on Madeleine Albright’s “Munich Mindset” by Owen Harries, editor of the *National Interest*. Harries takes Albright to task for her “enthusiasm for action [of an] apparently indiscriminate nature,” her seeming to “favor intervention generally and on principle,” and her viewing the world as “an endless series of Munich-like challenges.” Whatever one might think of Colin Powell, one can only agree with Harries that the question she once put to the general—“What’s the point of having this superb military that you’re always talking about if we can’t use it?”—is nothing less than simpleminded. Harries’ warning fell on deaf ears as Albright was unanimously confirmed as Secretary of State by the Senate, 99 to nothing. For those who lament the demise of bipartisanship: Madame Albright meet Messrs. Kristol and Kagan, or for that matter, Jeane Kirkpatrick. This is now the norm—Tweedledee Anthony Lewis, Tweedledum William Safire. Make no mistake, whatever ordinary Americans might think, the political, media, and intellectual elites, regardless of their party affiliation, are firmly behind America’s global enterprise.

It is hard to believe that just a few decades ago, before 1914, the Western World—Europe, Christendom—little doubting its obvious superiority, cultural as well as technological, over all other peoples, exercised direct authority over virtually the entire world, over all other civilizations. The only serious exception was Islam, as represented by the Ottoman Empire, which was widely seen to be on its last legs; the Christian peoples of the Balkans had lately thrown off the Turkish yoke, and prospects loomed for the reconquest of Anatolia and the Levant.

All of this came crashing down in 1914. Due largely to the same arrogance that had fed the rush for empire, and which, with little modification, impels our contemporary neoimperialists, the European powers embarked upon an orgy of autogenocide that probably has never been equaled at any time on any continent. And not content with that, they gave it another go 20 years later, and, at the conclusion of their second world war, they embarked upon the Cold War. The result is a civilization that is a shadow of its former self, crippled, wounded—perhaps fatally—that is culturally, morally, religiously moribund. Perhaps most telling, it is demographically moribund: when people refuse to produce offspring at even replacement level, this is sure evidence that the disease is terminal.

We are still living in the wreckage left from World War I. It is generally acknowledged that among its results was the spawning of two very similar, crassly materialistic, antitraditional ideologies, each of which had found a home in one of the defeated empires: Bolshevism in Russia and, largely a reaction to communism, National Socialism in Germany. The activities of these two states—twins, in many ways—and the other powers’ concerns about them, were primarily the occasion of World War II; the activities of the twin that survived and expanded its

power in that conflict, the Soviet Union, were the occasion of the ensuing Cold War. This much is obvious.

But what is not generally acknowledged, and what perhaps is only now becoming obvious, is that the war did not produce (and by produce I mean serve as a catalyst, not cause: the roots are much deeper) just two such ideologies but three: the twins were actually triplets. While the third child of the war superficially resembled the old empires that had gone to war in 1914—there was still a king in London, the Third Republic continued to sputter along in France—what was missing was even the pretense that civilization rested upon the old certainties, primarily religious in origin, without which, it had been assumed, ordered and moral life was impossible. Men were no longer ashamed to admit they were atheists; after all, if God really existed, how could He have permitted that slaughter? The antitraditional impulse that had been growing for decades, perhaps centuries, before 1914, vastly accelerated after the war and, bit by bit, subtly but inexorably, established itself in academia, the media, and in government. Today it holds untrammelled sway over virtually all formerly Christian countries. What had once been apostasy had become the ruling religion.

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As evidence, consider the celebrated article by Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” in the June 1993 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Huntington’s thesis is that in the post-Cold War world the clash of ideologies (which had superseded, in turn, clashes among nation-states, dynasties, and religions) would itself be superseded by a clash of civilizations, which he designates as Western, Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, etc. Despite some serious flaws in his presentation, I think the overall thrust is correct. Consider, however, what Huntington sees as the distinguishing core concepts of the West: individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state. These are criteria (identical to those assumed by Kristol and Kagan, and all of them amenable to manipulation) that could not by any means have described European civilization during most of its long history but are only applicable to its current decrepitude. One would never know that European civilization has been characterized, primarily, by the Christian religion (though divided into a number of communions) and shared ethnic and linguistic origins, specifically the various branches of the Indo-European family: a discernible local ethno-religious culture occupying a defined homeland in the Northern part of the planet.

Finally, with regard to the post-Cold War world, the power

relationship between the European and non-European worlds has almost been completely reversed. The shattered self-confidence of even the victors in World War I made the liberation of their colonies a foregone conclusion, the only real question being one of timing. When the liberation came, during the Cold War, the non-European world generally sided with either the United States or the Soviet Union while the outcome was in doubt, but this only temporarily masked a deeper reality, which is now coming to light: that the non-Western cultures are no longer cowed by Western technical and military superiority. Perceiving our moral weakness and their demographic strength, they increasingly see European wealth and land as a prize to be expropriated: in short, *The Camp of the Saints*, or what my friend has called the candy store with the busted lock. Our hegemonist elites seem to believe that man *does* live by Big Mac alone, and they delude themselves with the specious idea that our culture (by which they mean our movies, our rock music, our fast food) is all the rage from Beijing to Bujumbura. And finally, there is only a dim recognition that in the centuries-old struggle between Cross and Crescent the latter has decisively returned to the offensive after a hiatus of some three centuries.

When future generations look back on today, they will see that the United States' emergence as the world's only superpower is one of the biggest and cruelest practical jokes in history. For if there is one country that is utterly incapable of perceiving its interests and constructively acting upon them, it is the United States. This is due partly to our national temperament and institutions. Some of these may have their roots in the founding of the country, but the focus here is on contemporary characteristics that are relevant to the political elite's ability to manipulate a people into supporting a globalist agenda. For example, of any European or derivative people, Americans are most ignorant of their own history and know even less about other peoples. Historical knowledge is mainly limited to ethnic or hyphenated Americans, who are familiar with their own distinctive tribal renditions: black Americans, who know that we had slavery and Jim Crow; and some white Southerners, who can recite in minute detail the particulars of the great Lost Cause. Other than that, the American store of history consists of the latest O.J. story, some sports statistics, and the complete lyrics to the theme songs to *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *Gilligan's Island*. We have forgotten who we are, and when our hegemonist elites decide to bomb or starve some other people, we do not know who, let alone where, these people are.

Until the Civil War, American national consciousness was primarily regional and local; shared ethnic origins in the British Isles was assumed. In retrospect, we can now say the heyday of a unified American identity was the interval between the end of Reconstruction and the end of World War II; that identity was defined by ethnicity (Northwest European) and religion (Protestant), as well as by shared historical experience. Immigration during this period was almost exclusively European, and to the extent that it increasingly consisted of Eastern and Southern Europeans and non-Protestants, the immigrants were expected to Americanize, that is, dress, talk, and act like WASPs. Today, we give lip-service the WASP principles upon which this Republic was built while vilifying as racist the notion that WASP ethnicity has any relationship to American nationality. The result is progressive Balkanization: the multiculturalism of the left and the pluralism of the neoconservatives, which, as Joe Sobran has noted, are pretty much the same

thing. In short, we have accepted the notion that the United States is not the home of a distinct people but a community of shared ideals, as interpreted by the elites—ideals that are available for export.

Unlike European countries, we have never had a monarch, a nobility, an established church. We really do believe in every man a king. Among the consequences is the fact that such elites as we do have tend to exercise their power not by open appeal to their legitimate authority (because they cannot) but by manipulation of images: Joseph Goebbels, meet Madison Avenue. We are suckers for the claim that any social institution based on privilege, tradition, or, worst of all, discrimination must be destroyed. When the internationalist elites call for making the world safe for democracy, they are singing our song. We are ever ready to "level the playing field" on behalf of the little guy, the underdog, or the victim, a propensity artfully mobilized first by the Croats and then even more effectively by the Muslims in the Yugoslav war. In its extreme, this phenomenon takes the form, as Joe Sobran has described it, of an inversion of sympathies, an altruistic identification with the other against one's own: the alien against the native, the non-European against the European, the non-Christian against the Christian.

Americans like to bask in their self-image of rough-and-ready, free-living individualism: Don't tread on me. However accurate that might have been at one time, it is not so now. Despite the fact that Americans are increasingly suspicious of their public institutions and are increasingly aware that their laws are made not by elected representatives but by nonelected judges and bureaucrats, it would seldom occur to most Americans to disobey their illegitimate edicts. Indeed, the more fundamentally decent and traditionally-minded Americans are precisely those who are most obedient to commands from on high that undermine their core values. Their respect for the law, ordinarily a virtue, is used against them by the lawless. This phenomenon is particularly evident among Southern families with strong traditions of military service, whose sons (and now daughters) are sent abroad to risk their lives not for the defense of their homeland but for a globalist agenda.

Even as Americans have abandoned Puritanism for hedonism as their guiding principle for good living, they have not given up their assumption that the essential question in any conflict is figuring out who are the white hats and who are the black hats. This tendency, coupled with a naive faith in our own national righteousness—truth, justice, and the American way—plus ignorance of the outside world, plays into the hands of the hegemonist elite.

In general, Congress—members and staff of both established parties—might be seen as occupying a middle ground between the people and the political elite. Some of the inhabitants of Capitol Hill fully share in the dominant internationalist mindset, others are fellow-travelers, and still others attempt to oppose it, usually unsuccessfully. Three influences on Congress, as well as the Executive Branch, deserve mention.

Among the two most potent foreign lobbies on Capitol Hill are those pleading the causes of Israel and the pro-Western Muslim states, notably Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf oil monarchies. It is often wrongly assumed that these lobbies are mutually antagonistic, when in fact their interests, while certainly not identical, are often congruent. This congruence was most evident during the Persian Gulf War and has affected America's pro-Muslim policy in the Balkans. The latter reflects the obvious sympathies of our Muslim client states, the cynical

but skillful manipulation (as the Israeli analyst Yohanan Ramati has pointed out) by Croatian and Muslim propaganda of holocaust themes to mobilize American Jewish opinion, and the desire of some Israeli policymakers to be in accord with American support for friendly, pro-Western Islamic states. Summing up this orientation in the *New York Times* (January 2, 1996), in an op-ed with the revealing title of "The Third American Empire," Jacob Heilbrunn and Michael Lind, both editors at the *New Republic*, wrote:

The fact that the United States is more enthusiastic than its European allies about a Bosnian Muslim state reflects, among other things, the new American role as the leader of an informal collection of Muslim nations from the Persian Gulf to the Balkans. The regions once ruled by the Ottoman Turks show signs of becoming the heart of

a third American empire.

Perhaps partly a function of historical and geographic illiteracy, most American policymakers seem to have trouble with the notion of a world characterized by several competing powers, similar in many respects to that of pre-1914, though today the powers are mostly non-European. Additionally, there is a heavy element of inertia, particularly among those associated with the defense establishment: postcommunist Russia may not be the Soviet Union, but it is the best we can come up with. Awareness that the Cold War was itself the latest unfortunate installment of the fratricidal intra-Christian, intra-European self-immolation (which, with the toll of both world wars and internal repression by totalitarianism, has cost us tens of millions of the best people our civilization has produced) is almost nonexistent; on the contrary, the thrust of American policy is not to unify Europe but to set it at daggers against itself yet again.

As a rule, each country in Europe feels entitled to look down its nose on its immediate neighbor to the east. Several countries, notably Russia, Poland, Germany, and Croatia, like to flatter themselves with the notion that they are Europe's eastern bulwark against the Asiatic hordes. The Poles consider the Russians barbarians, the Germans believe they are superior to all Slavs, the French see Germans as the uncouth Hun, and, in British eyes, the wogs begin at Calais. In America, this phenomenon manifests itself in the vague notion that the "West" is synonymous with a host of Goodthink concepts (enlightenment, progress, democracy, etc.) and the "East" with their antitheses. An important reinforcement of this notion was the supposition, during the Cold War, that communism was somehow more natural to Eastern Europeans (i.e., "Bohunks") than it is to people that are more like us. There is also an identifiable bias among American elites, particularly in the media, against national cultures based on Eastern Orthodox Christianity and perhaps against Orthodoxy itself. The upshot is that in the conflicts that define the line between the European and non-European world—notably in the Balkans, in the Caucasus, and in Central Asia, where Orthodox nations are in conflict with Islam—the hegemonist elite is almost uniformly hostile to the Christian, European side. NATO expansion up to Europe's East/West fault line, with Orthodox countries excluded, should be seen in the same light.

As both Alain Besançon (*The Rise of the Gulag: Intellectual Origins of Leninism*) and Igor Shafarevich (*The Socialist Phenomenon*) have shown, among the characteristic features of modern ideologies, of socialism in particular, is a completely closed, circular system of thought. Indeed, it might be more correct to refer to a nullification of thought, an antidote to rational discourse and description of social and political phenomena. What appeared instead was epitomized by Marxism-Leninism, a dualistic pseudo-reality where words and concepts are given a special ideological significance distinct from their normal real-world meanings and which insists that the real world conform to the ideological vision. Ideology does not appear fully mature, like Athena springing from the forehead of Zeus, but rather, as Besançon observed, becomes apparent when

it has attained its pure, developed form, [having] gone through a historical cycle. The history of ideology could

## The Machine

by Richard Moore

Dictator? You'd abort him?  
Offend those who support him?  
The rich, accepting offers,  
benefit, fill his coffers,

liking the gourmet wines  
bought with their wells and mines,  
laborers free to hide  
in plundered countryside . . .

He's found The Golden Fleece.  
It arms, pays his police  
and keeps haters and hated  
terrorized, lubricated.

The Nations with a frown  
cry, Naughty! Pull him down!—  
would take apart and clean  
that beautiful machine

they helped him build: their hollers  
get them more oil, more dollars.  
Some spoilsport grunts and kicks it.  
If it ain't broke, don't fix it.