

Loud and Clear:  
How America Is Understood Around the World  
Current Problems and Potential Solutions  
By Victoria Wilson



A Senior Thesis  
For the Certificate in Justice and Peace Studies  
04/04/04

<sup>1</sup> L'Echo des Savanes Paris, 2003

## **Table Of Contents**

Introduction: Page 3

Chapter 1: The View From Home: Page 8

Chapter 2: The View From Abroad: Page 17

Chapter 3: Problems and Solutions: Page 27

Conclusion: Page 34

Bibliography: Page 36

“The purpose of foreign policy is to influence the policies and actions of other nations in a way that serves your interests and values. The tools available include everything from kind words to cruise missiles. Mixing them properly and with sufficient patience is the art of diplomacy.” –Madeleine Albright, *Madam Secretary*<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

One evening during the lead-up to the United States invasion of Iraq in spring of 2003, some Belgian students were gathered around the television with their American roommate. A skit came on depicting United States President George W. Bush saying, “C’est ou, l’Iraq?” (Where is Iraq?) This amused the Belgians greatly, and allowed them to turn to their American roommate and say, in perfect seriousness, “He probably doesn’t know where Iraq is!”

“Of course not,” said the American, hoping for a laugh, “My president just likes to invade random countries for fun.”

“Not just for fun, for oil.” insisted the Belgians.

Moments like this illustrate the breakdown in understanding between Americans and many people around the world that intensified over the course of this conflict. It was not limited to students watching television or to presidents talking past each other, nor has the misunderstanding been limited to this particular conflict. Experts and average citizens alike have recently had a hard time maintaining any respect for each other’s policies. A respected professor of International Affairs in a well-established Belgian university taught her students that Bush Jr. was simply going to finish the job that his daddy could not, and asking the UN to pay for it. Another professor warned that the United States could not just cook up whatever trouble it wanted and then ask the rest of the world to wash the dishes.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Albright, Madeleine, Bill Woodward ed. *Madam Secretary* Miramax Books, New York, NY 2003 p. 319

<sup>3</sup> These observations were made by the author at Université Catholique de Louvain in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. I am grateful to my fellow students and professors for providing me with their perspectives of American politics.

In revenge, Americans poured wine into sewers and renamed cafeteria items. Google.com, one of the United States, if not the world's most popular search engines, created a link such that when one tries to search for "French Military Victories" they are instead directed to a long list of defeats.

There is, even as this paper is written, remaining controversy over why exactly the United States proceeded with this invasion. The possible justifications and their respective legitimacies are not the focus of this paper. The important question is how the United States, as the sole world superpower, communicates with its partners and allies as well as the rest of the world, in order to understand how experts in countries that have a long history of military and diplomatic partnership can not only disagree, but be so thoroughly baffled by each other.

From the months after 9/11/01 when the United States invaded Afghanistan until the months preceding the invasion of Iraq, the United States went from a huge coalition of many countries to very few that were willing to condone U.S. policy, let alone participate. On one level, the debate was as follows; everyone agreed that there was a possibility Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Most people agreed that Iraq was also in violation of UN resolution 1441. From this point, the disagreement was that the US, backed by the UK and some other allies, thought it was time to use military force, and France, Belgium, Germany, and most of the rest of the world thought the UN weapons inspectors should continue their job instead. But no one really believed the disagreement was that simple or even so recent, and so both sides began proposing other reasons for their allies/opponents' behavior.

“The French couldn’t win a war if they wanted to” and “the Americans will invade any country at will just to control their oil” were statements that could be seen at the tip of the iceberg of what came to be known as Anti-Americanism, and disdain for “Old Europe.” All of this was further complicated by feelings about terrorism that were rather passionate post 9-11 and a European distaste for war in any form possibly dating back to WWII.

There is a long list of publications from both sides of the Atlantic in 2002 and 2003 that propose explanations for this recent increase in tension between the United States and the rest of the world.<sup>4</sup> Several of these make suggestions that should be explored in greater depth. In *Of Paradise and Power* Robert Kagan explains the trans-Atlantic rift through differences in military capabilities, and as a consequence of the United States providing security for much of the rest of the world. For him, it is a question of different world views, albeit relatively recent ones, and the balance of power. Joseph Nye argues in *The Paradox of American Power* that it is imperative for the United States to be multilateral in its decision making, and to rely more on its “soft power” than on military might in order to not be actively hated and opposed by the rest of the world. This speaks both directly to behavior during the Iraqi conflict, but also to the broader trend of U.S. foreign policy decision making.

In France, Jean-Francois Revel argues in *L’Obsession Anti-Americaine* that international perceptions of the United States are sometimes inaccurate, and tries to explain why. Larger philosophies of liberalism versus socialism play against each other every time two sides of the Atlantic meet. Phillippe Roger traces the routes of French anti-Americanism back hundreds of years in *L’Ennemi Americain*, and considers it to be

---

<sup>4</sup> For a list of some of these please refer to the bibliography.

an inevitable result of their relative positions in the world. He blames events and policy more than philosophy, but again, it is a long term difference that is unlikely to be resolved or changed for the better.

All four of these authors offer valuable insights into the lack of understanding between the United States and other countries that has become so intense surrounding the American lead invasion of Iraq. The French authors' work was reviewed and praised in the prestigious *American Journal of Foreign Affairs* and the Americans were well received and widely read in the francophone world as well as at home. In spite of this functioning exchange of ideas on the subject, the tension persists. It is important at least to understand why, if not to overcome it completely.

Politicians like to debate the actual severity of this problem currently, and sometimes go so far as to deny that there even is one. The Pew Global Attitudes Project gives a more precise idea of how people around the world think of the United States. They have published a report entitled *A Year After the Iraq War* which included the results of a survey conducted in February of this year of nine countries to give a coherent picture of attitudes in Europe, the Arab world and the United States. The results show a growing divide between the United States and even its allies.<sup>5</sup>

One solution proposed by the United States government comes in the form of public diplomacy, the modern day version of the Cold War's US Information Agency as integrated into the State Department. It seeks to educate public opinion abroad about the United States policies and motivations, and is currently being revamped. The Council of

---

<sup>5</sup> Kimelman, Donald. (Director of Information Initiatives, The Pew Charitable Trusts) "The Pew Global Attitudes Project: Giving World Publics a Greater Voice" and "A Year After the Iraq War: Excerpts" *The Ambassadors REVIEW*. Published by the American Council of Ambassadors, Washington, DC. Spring 2004

Foreign Relations has published a report by an independent task force, which highlights the findings and current strategy both for the public and private sectors. This report has interesting suggestions in light of the perspectives offered above.

There are many competing theories about how to achieve world peace, and this thesis is not one of them. It is also not an argument in favor of one type of foreign policy or another, or any single political theory or philosophy. As a student of Justice and Peace, I am simply trying to understand how countries that have worked well together in the past, could, in a moment of crises, be so intolerant of each other. In the face of terrorism, religious fundamentalism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, we do not need to fight with our friends.

## Chapter 1: The View From Home

In “America’s Crisis of Legitimacy,” Robert Kagan claims, “The great transatlantic debate over Iraq was rooted in deep disagreement over world order.”<sup>6</sup> According to Kagan, the disagreement over whether or not Iraq should be invaded stemmed not from different opinions of the capabilities of weapons inspectors, but rather from different world views and their respective principle beliefs about that which confers legitimacy on international action.

There is no question that America has the most power in terms of military capabilities anywhere in the world, but does that very fact give the United States the authority to use that power whenever and however it sees fit? Many Europeans say no. America seems to be saying yes. Kagan recognizes the severity of this political schism between continents. He wonders, “What if their differences over world order infect the rest of what we have known as the liberal West? Will the West still be the West?”

Kagan considers this problem relatively new. Europe was willing to confer military legitimacy on the US as long as the cold war made the Soviets a threat. With the end of this perceived threat, many Western Europeans consider themselves relatively safe. The weapons of mass destruction that trouble the United States will not be aimed at them. To the Europeans, the US’s power unbounded is more worrisome than anything else.

When European security was one of the United States chief concerns, the Europeans themselves had some say in the execution of it. Now that the United States

---

<sup>6</sup> Kagan, Robert. “America’s Crisis of Legitimacy” *Foreign Affairs* March/April 2004 Vol 83 N. 2. Adapted from the afterward of the paperback edition of *Of Paradise and Power* pg. 65

has moved on to other battles, the Europeans do not want to be left out of the decision making process. For Kagan, the United States decision to invade Iraq was the ultimate wake up call for the Europeans; they had lost control of the behemoth. This loss of control of the direction of world events has been of far greater concern to the Europeans than anything the United States might actually decide to do. They not only demand that the United States seek some kind of international legitimacy, but also propose to provide it. “The United States needs Europe, argues Javier Solana, the secretary-general of the EU council, because Europe is “a partner with the legitimacy that comes through the collective action of a union of twenty-five sovereign states.”<sup>7</sup>

The problem for the US, as Kagan sees it, or the reason that they should take the Europeans’ concerns seriously is that the United States does need to find legitimacy somewhere. The UN Security Council, he argues, has never been the place, as it was paralyzed throughout the cold war and was bypassed in the first place by the Europeans in response to Kosovo. At the time, they argued that preventing genocide was more important than gaining broad international support before violating the sovereignty of a member nation. Since Europe was willing to ignore the Security Council for their purposes of intervention in Kosovo, it has become difficult for Europeans to argue that there can be no legitimacy without it. Kagan is concerned that even if the United States did abide by the Security Council’s directives, they would often be paralyzed in the face of truly necessary action by unfriendly regimes and dictators.

The United States did have a coalition when it invaded Iraq which did include some European powers. So exactly how many allies must the United States have in order to be legitimate? It turns out that Kagan does support turning to old allies such as

---

<sup>7</sup> Kagan, 72

France and Germany for help. While he disagrees with the advocates of multilateralism who claim that the United States will be unable to go it alone militarily or economically without these allies, Kagan concedes that, “It is doubtful whether the American people will continue to support both military actions and the burdens of postwar occupations in the face of constant charges of illegitimacy by the United States’ closest democratic allies.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, he prefers turning to France and Germany largely because the American people will not want to do otherwise, not because there is some sort of inherent legitimacy in working with those two countries, or because the United States needs to do so.

The best way for the two different sides of the Atlantic to work together is to admit that their goal is to achieve liberal democracy wherever possible, even if it is at the cost of the occasional state’s sovereignty, in other words, for the United States to “advance the cause of liberalism” rather than merely defend its own interest. This means working for liberal democracy as an end in itself, not just a means to security, while taking account of the interests and fears of the liberal democracies in Europe. The problem with Kagan’s argument here is that this would mean sending a clear and consistent message to the world by not working with dictators at all and acknowledging that the United States, and hopefully all of NATO, will not support any regime at the cost of freedom to the people who are governed by that regime. But even this approach may not make Europe agree with the United States’ goals for global security. The problem is this: “the United States cannot enlist Europe’s cooperation if the two regions disagree over the nature of today’s global threats and the means to counter them.”<sup>9</sup> Since

---

<sup>8</sup> Kagan, 85

<sup>9</sup> Kagan, 86

Europeans largely do not view themselves as the intended target of terrorists, they see no reason to go about invading countries pre-emptively and are therefore unlikely to support military activities that the United States considers vital to its own security. This means that while American voters are unlikely to support continually acting in ways that France and Germany consider illegitimate, taking care of their own security and the regional stability that they enforce around the world may mean that they have no other choice. Kagan is of the opinion that it would be more dangerous for the United States to succumb to the European view of the world and ignore real threats than to act unilaterally without their approval.

In the end, Kagan does not consider an alliance with France or Germany to be fundamentally necessary for the United States. This means that, for better or worse, we do not need to take seriously the concerns of those countries that have always been our allies, because we do not need them as much as we think they need us. In fact, the only reason not to shun them entirely is the unwillingness of American voters to support the burdens of the entire world's security all by themselves. Kagan admits the potential fraction of the West, but does not appear to be too worried by this prospect.

Kagan says the transatlantic divide is caused by fundamentally different world views that are based on different levels of military and economic power, which result in different security concerns. These differing world views cannot be changed without a significant shift in the balance of that power. Given that as long as the United States remains a superpower the divide is somewhat irreparable, we should do our best to maintain friendship, but not sacrifice our security in order to do so.

There is much that Kagan does not deal with in his argument. While the United States might be able to go it alone economically and militarily, would they not be worse off in both cases if they did? Also, while it is clear that both the United States and Europe have, according to Kagan, good reasons for their differing world views, is it not still possible that neither, and this includes the US, is right one hundred percent of the time? Are there not some global public goods that require international cooperation, and in the name of these might it not be a good idea to establish a secure international protocol for resolving conflicts that everyone, including the superpower must abide by? These are the concerns addressed by Joseph Nye, in *The Paradox of American Power*.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Nye, Joseph S. Jr *The Paradox of American Power Why the World' Only Superpower Can't Go it Alone*. Oxford University Press, New York, NY 2002.

In “Pourquoi l’Amérique doit rejoindre le monde,” an article that Nye wrote for the American francophone newspaper *France-Amerique* based on his book, Nye applies his argument in *The Paradox of American Power* directly to the breaking of the transatlantic partnership that occurred over the conflict in Iraq. He says that events in Iraq illustrate the debate about whether the threat of terrorism is so great that the United States should act alone, or only with the support of international institutions like the UN, even if it uncomfortably restrains them to do so.

“La menace est-elle si grande que l’Amérique doive agir seule ou les Etats-Unis doivent-ils agir uniquement avec le soutien des institutions internationales, même si cela bride le pays?” “Is the threat so large that America must act alone, or must the United States act only with the support of international institutions, even if that restricts the country?”<sup>11</sup>

Where Kagan thinks that this debate has its roots in fundamentally different world views, Nye characterizes it as being about whether the United States is seen as an arrogant inconsiderate nation by the rest of the world, considering only that which is in its own interests, or as a team player that considers global cooperation to be the highest goal.

Nye differs from Kagan in that he considers it absolutely necessary for the United States to have Western European countries as partners in its endeavors. United States military power is unparalleled, but if the events of September 11, 2001 proved anything, it is that military power is no longer enough.

The United States had no trouble winning the wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq, but peace in both of these countries has been harder to come by. The United States needs

---

<sup>11</sup> Nye, Joseph S. Jr. “Pourquoi l’Amérique doit rejoindre le monde” *France-Amerique* 4-10 Octobre 2003  
Translated by Valerie Bellot.

help in the occupation and reconstruction of these countries, and it is only by cooperating with allies that the United States will receive this help. More important though, is the fact that the war on terrorism has not been won. While it is relatively easy for the United States to topple the government of any country it chooses, terrorist organizations are harder to kill. Nye points to the information revolution as part of what makes terrorists able to avoid the United States military so easily. They do not depend on any one country's government for survival. Even after the fall of the Taliban, al Qaeda had other places find refuge. Hunting terrorists requires the cooperation of as many countries as possible, but certainly the cooperation of liberal European democracies. Terrorism is high on the United States agenda, but there are other international public goods that also require cooperation. The stability of international financial markets, the war on drug smuggling, the conservation of natural resources and the protection of the environment, climate change, contagious diseases and epidemics such as AIDS and SARS, cooperation on trade issues and the upholding of treaties, are all in the interest of liberal democracies everywhere. The United States rejection of the Kyoto protocols is one example of what Europeans see as arrogant behavior by the United States. If the US appears unwilling to cooperate on the environment, why should other countries cooperate on those issues that are important to the US?

Nye is of the opinion that in the case of Iraq, the United States should have gathered a much larger international coalition before proceeding. He admits that the effect of multilateralism can be that it constrains US power, but he evaluates it differently than Kagan does saying that it does not entirely constrain the United States from acting when necessary, and as a general rule, having multilateral support works in the US's

interest. He says, “Les attaques du 11 Septembre ont démontré que la révolution et la mondialisation des informations ont changé la politique mondiale de telle sorte que les Américains ne peuvent pas atteindre tous leurs objectifs internationaux en agissant seuls.” “The attacks of September 11 have shown that the revolution and globalization of information have changed world politics so that the Americans can not achieve all their international objectives by acting alone.”<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly, assuming the United States does have an interest in gaining the support of Western European liberal democracies such as France and Germany, Nye and Kagan have similar recommendations for how to get that support. Nye specifically talks about “soft power” which means aligning one’s interests with those of others, and having less need for the “carrot and the stick” or using military and economic means, “hard power” to achieve national goals. Perhaps this is what Kagan was recommending when he advised advancing the cause of liberalism, this being what he perceived as the common ground between the United States and Europe. So how do we go about it?

Nye talks about soft power first and foremost as listening to other nations rather than just talking, and showing them through forums, treaties, and other negotiations that the United States is indeed paying attention to their concerns.

Soft power according to Nye is the ability to entice and attract, which can often lead to acquiescence or imitation.<sup>13</sup> He goes on to say, “Soft power arises in large part from our values. These values are expressed in our culture, in the policies we follow inside our country, and in the way we handle ourselves internationally....The government sometimes finds it difficult to control and employ soft power. Like love, it is hard to

---

<sup>12</sup> Nye, “Pourquoi l’Amérique doit rejoindre le monde.”

<sup>13</sup> Nye, *Paradox of American Power*, 9

measure and to handle and does not touch everyone, but that does not diminish its importance. As Hubert Vedrine laments, Americans are so powerful because they can ‘inspire the dreams and desires of others, thanks to the mastery of global image through film and television and because, for these same reasons, large numbers of students from other countries come to the United States to finish their studies.’ Soft power is an important reality.”<sup>14</sup> Soft power means getting others to want what you want, in which case they will easily do what you want them to do, rather than having to bribe or force them. If we are perceived as a prosperous, free, and open country, others will want to emulate that, and will follow our leadership to do so. Thereby we will further the cause of liberalism.

This all sounds well and good, once the rest of the world believes how wonderful the United States is, there should be no problem getting them to do whatever we want. Unfortunately it is not quite that simple. The exchange of ideas through film, television, and all things American, is facing some opposition abroad as it is. This opposition is commonly known as “anti-Americanism.” It stands for the resistance by anyone not American to all that which either comes from or represents the values, culture, and ideas of the United States. Advancing the cause of liberalism will only work if other countries will admit that liberalism is in fact the name of the cause they wish to advance. It appears we must therefore investigate the sources of this opposition if we plan to overcome it.

---

<sup>14</sup> Nye, *Paradox*, 9

## Chapter 2: The View From Abroad

From one European perspective, anti-Americanism is primarily the fault of those who engage in it, not of those at whom it is directed. Yes, it is reactionary to be sure, but Jean-Francois Revel is reluctant to give the United States all the credit for creating an international system which breeds this resentment. For him, the Europeans got themselves into the relative world position they currently occupy and they have been fully responsible for their own sentiments and philosophies with respect to that position. Europeans, rather than being victims of American superiority, have the power to extricate themselves, at least intellectually, whenever they wake up to the fact that it is by far in their own best interests to do so. While it has been particularly prevalent in the past few years, anti-American sentiment in Europe has quite a history of its own. It has been a symptom of differences between the two continents during all international events. In *L'Obsession anti-Américaine: Son fonctionnement ses Causes ses Inconsequences*, Jean-Francois Revel links current anti-American sentiment world-wide back to communist sentiment during the cold war.<sup>15</sup> He sees the prevalence of this present day sentiment as the ultimate manifestation of the battle between liberalism and socialism. Revel says,

“La fonction principale de l’anti américainisme était, elle est encore aujourd’hui, de noircir le libéralisme dans son incarnation suprême. Travestir les Etats-Unis en société répressive, injuste, raciste, presque fasciste était un moyen de clamer: voyez ce que donne la mise en oeuvre du libéralisme!”<sup>16</sup> “The principal function of anti-Americanism was, and is still today, to blacken liberalism in her supreme

---

<sup>15</sup> Revel, Jean-François. *L'Obsession Anti-Américaine Son fonctionnement, ses causes, ses conséquences*. Plon, Paris, 2002

<sup>16</sup> Revel, 30.

incarnation. To portray the United States as a society that is repressive, unjust, racist, and almost fascist is a way to claim ‘see what the implementation of liberalism gives you!’”

He is claiming that the function of anti-Americanism is to portray liberalism as a repressive, unjust, racist, and almost fascist regime by accusing the United States, its supreme incarnation, of all these qualities. It is not hard to imagine why communists might have a vested interest in this portrayal of the United States, nor why even socialists might be strongly inclined to agree. A more difficult question is why self-professed liberals and allies of the United States would clamor so loudly to paint it this way. This is the fundamental paradox of anti-Americanism.<sup>17</sup>

Today, any type of sentiment about the United States is necessarily linked to feelings about globalization in general, and the very existence of one sole world superpower. According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, his national security advisor, US President Jimmy Carter said that to be a world superpower a country needed to be the best economically, technologically, militarily, and culturally.<sup>18</sup> While the first three unquestionably go to the United States, the fact that its cultural supremacy might be debatable makes it a popular topic of debate. Cultural protectionism, as exemplified in part by the boycotting of American products, brands, art, and reluctance to use English words especially in France stems from a fear, regardless of how well founded, that superpower might lead to uniformity and unilateralism. This is part of the paradox. Europeans do not wish to be dominated by American institutions, social customs, and culture, and yet, it is their own demand for access to American films, stock markets, and

---

<sup>17</sup> Revel, 35

<sup>18</sup> Revel, 37

security that brings all these aspects of American society to Europe in the first place. Revel points out that for those Europeans who regret their reliance on American enforced “collective security” it is important to remember that it was their desire for American intervention in WWI and WWII, wars of European making that brought the United States to the height of power it currently enjoys in the first place.<sup>19</sup> Revel makes the point that accurate journalism about the United States is readily available for the most part to those overseas, primarily provided by Americans, who do not hesitate to criticize their own country.<sup>20</sup> Those who feel threatened by or simply dislike the United States would be better served by making cool headed accurate criticisms of the country, but instead are inclined to make irrational and biased claims that, while fueling the fire satisfactorily, do nothing to advance their cause.

“Lorsque l’examen et l’analyse, devant les aspects négatifs comme devant les aspects positifs, manquent de vérité autant que d’impartialité, ils gonflent sans doute ceux qui s’y adonnent d’une illusion de revanche et de la jouissance onirique d’une supériorité factice. Mais, dans le domaine de l’action, qui est celui de la politique, ils contribuent à les affaiblir encore davantage.”<sup>21</sup> “As soon as examination and analysis of positive as well as negative aspects lacks truth as much as impartiality, it inflates without a doubt that which gives it an illusion of revenge and the ironic joy of superiority. But, in the domain of action, which is politics, this only serves to weaken it even further.”

One popular claim anti-Americans love to make is that the United States is completely governed by materialism, that no other values hold sway, and that the result

---

<sup>19</sup> Revel, 62

<sup>20</sup> Revel, 100-101

<sup>21</sup> Revel, 101

of this is a few extremely rich people among many who are poor, leaving American society violent and racist. This is seen to be the fault and failing of liberalism. When contrasted with the far more civilized equality that is promoted by Marxist socialism, liberalism as embodied in the United States is judged by many Europeans to be almost brutal in its lack of concern for citizens. They feel that,

“C’est une société entièrement gouvernée par l’argent...l’amerique est la jungle par excellence du libéralisme et du capitalisme sauvages...les riches y sont de plus en plus riches et de moins en moins nombreux, cependant que les pauvres, dont la foule en revanche ne cesse de grossir, sont de plus en plus pauvres...la violence règne partout...la racisme est ancre au coeur de la société.”<sup>22</sup> “It is a society entirely governed by money...America is a jungle of liberalism and savage capitalism...the rich are richer and fewer, while the poor are more numerous and poorer...violence reigns everywhere...racism is anchored at the heart of society.”

These may be sentiments that are not wholly disagreed with domestically in the United States, but Revel takes issue with the way in which they are presented abroad. He goes on to take specific examples of these claims made by the French or other European politicians and then takes them apart to show that they are either largely inaccurate or at least hypocritical.

The claims by some Europeans that the prevalence of English and American culture in the world has threatened other cultures may be somewhat well founded. Revel acknowledges this, but argues that globalization has certainly made Europe better off overall, citing improvements in international business and communication, benefits

---

<sup>22</sup> Revel 143

which are reaped as much if not more in Europe than in the United States. He understands desires not to compete technologically with the United States, but argues that those who wish not to for fear of validating American progress end up only making themselves all the more reliant on that progress.<sup>23</sup> Economic isolationism is not the answer. For Revel, the claims that socialists make about liberalism are false, and Europeans, as primary beneficiaries of American liberalism, would do well to recognize it before they shoot themselves in the foot.

When it comes to talking about the war on terror specifically, Revel agrees with Kagan more than Nye. He says that if Europeans tend not to feel as threatened as Americans by terrorism, it is perhaps because their capacity for military intervention has considerably decreased while that of America has increased, creating between the two unions a gap difficult to bridge.<sup>24</sup> This harkens back to Kagan's analogy; when you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail. When you do not, nothing does. This also makes it easy for other countries to blame the United States when things go wrong. Revel, like Kagan, is not entirely opposed to the United States taking unilateral action either. He points out that Europeans are rather inconsistent in their political views and requests of the United States, pointing specifically to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one instance where nothing the United States does or does not do is entirely approved of by Europe. He does however, acknowledge the fear that "La mondialisation libérale est en train de se réaliser sous une forme exactement inverse: celle d'une mondialisation policière, d'un contrôle total d'une terreur sécuritaire."<sup>25</sup> "The liberal globalization is leading to the exact opposite of liberty, a global police force of totalitarian security." In other words,

---

<sup>23</sup> Revel 210

<sup>24</sup> Revel 215

<sup>25</sup> Revel 240

while the United States may in fact be justified on certain occasions in taking unilateral action, especially if its allies refuse to take a consistent position on certain issues, we must beware the consequences that may result over time if one country is primarily responsible for the security of all.

Some might say that these opinions are held internally in the United States as well, so one might ask the question, why are there no socialists, or at least no socialist political party, in the United States. Revel points out that in the United States universal suffrage came about relatively early on in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, giving low-skilled and unskilled laborers and immigrants a voice in the political community. The perception of social mobility, “the American dream” helped absorb the call for any kind of revolution.<sup>26</sup> New Deal institutions like welfare, Medicare, Medicaid, and social security have provided the assistance for the poor that requires socialist advocacy in other countries, thus making American liberalism closer to European socialism than many Europeans care to admit.

The important point that Revel makes about anti-Americanism in Europe is that it is created, fueled, and sustained by Europeans. Europeans created the continent-wide conflicts during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that called the United States out of its previous relative state of isolationism, and led to its becoming the leading military power in the world, and the responsible party for most of the regional stability around the globe. Europeans’ need for economic aid and assistance at the end of those conflicts set the stage for the American economy’s leadership of the world. Now, it is Europeans who are no longer happy with their status as next-to-best who feel threatened by American power and primacy. Most Europeans subscribe to socialism, and they feel that way of life may be

---

<sup>26</sup> Revel 288-289

threatened by the power and prevalence of liberal capitalism as executed by the United States. Rather than come up with constructive criticisms for the United States, or consistent requests for policy changes, Europeans have thrown their rationality to the wind and resorted to the passionate exhortation that America is just plain bad. According to Revel, it is not because Americans or their government do or do not do anything specifically to which Europeans object, nor is there any one aspect of their character that should be changed. Europeans do not hate Americans because they are loud, rude, or arrogant. In fact, as most European tourists in America or American tourists in Europe will tell you, Europeans do not hate Americans at all, per se. Nevertheless, anti-Americanism is a disinformation campaign by European intellectuals and leaders that does nothing to help the relationship between the United States and Europe, and as such, we must look for ways to improve it. Joseph Nye suggests the use of soft power. Is this enough? Might it be the very source of the problem in the first place? Can it help? Revel says that it is not for lack of access to correct information about the United States that Europeans insist on telling themselves lies about America. How then, should we go about telling the truth?

Anti-American sentiment is not a new phenomenon, even since the 1970s. Philippe Roger traces it all the way back to the very origins of the United States in his book, *L'Ennemi Américain: Généalogie de l'anti-Américanisme Français*.<sup>27</sup> Ever since the French Revolution, there has been a feeling in France that Americans were ungrateful for the help the French provided during the American Revolution. In spite of the fact that there has never been an outright war between the two countries, the animosity has persisted, and while it has changed in form and intensity over time, each generation has continued the dialogue on its own in a way that has tended mostly to only get worse. What makes Anti-Americanism hard to end is the fact that it is not an opposition simply to one political action or another. Roger says,

“ Le lien entre antiaméricanisme et politique paraît plus complexe, puisque, d’une part, antiaméricanisme entre en composition avec les discours politiques les plus idéologiquement hostiles et que, d’autre part, il se déploie souvent en dehors de tout agenda ou objectif politique repérable. »<sup>28</sup> « The link between anti-Americanism and politics is complicated by the fact that, on one hand, anti-Americanism comes with political discourses that are the most ideologically hostile, while, on the other hand, it often enters into the conversation without any agenda or political objective whatsoever.”

If Americanism is the appreciation of all values and products that are seen as American, Anti-Americanism can be defined as a rejection of these. It is largely produced or elaborated upon by the intelligentsia, but, as Roger says, “Le “public” Français a graduellement adoptée l’argumentaire polémique et la stéréotype négative

---

<sup>27</sup> Roger, Philippe. *L'Ennemi Américain: Généalogie de antiaméricanisme Français*. Editions du Seuil, Paris, 2002

<sup>28</sup> Roger, 19

produits par l'intelligentsia.”<sup>29</sup> “The French public has gradually adopted the controversial arguments and the negative stereotypes produced by the intelligentsia.” In other words, what started as a philosophical opposition to American values, and the “American way of life” that was envied at points in French history such as the 1950s, gradually became a whole society’s way of looking at the United States. This perspective, which fermented over years of dissatisfaction with any number of political realities or situational discrepancies which we shall not entirely dissect here, has spread throughout Europe and around the world as a way of coping with and responding to the United States’ position in the world.

Over the years, there have been moments when it seemed as though anti-Americanism was on the decline. At a point, it was said that the wide-spread popularity of American brands such as Nike, and Coca-Cola, as well as the high consumption by youth of American music and movies meant that anti-American attitudes were on the decline. Roger warns against being lulled by this argument, as a poll by a major French newspaper found by polling 18-24 year olds in 1999, 55% of whom thought the cultural influence of the United States was too large, “Consommation n’est pas adhesion...porter des Nike n’empêche pas de vouloir niquer l’Amérique.”<sup>30</sup> “Consumption is not acceptance... wearing Nike does not prevent the desire to [screw] the United States.” In other words, while consumers who reject the United States may reject American brands and products, the inverse is not necessarily true. If these brands and products are popular, it does not necessarily reflect well on the image of the United States. This is important to keep in mind as Americans and American companies try to sell their goods abroad. On

---

<sup>29</sup> Roger, 580

<sup>30</sup> Roger 582

the one hand, any American salesperson would be benefited by an overall positive image of the United States. On the other hand, it may be easier for them to simply keep their minds on their products, and either disassociate themselves with their country, or even to mock their country, in order to better mesh with local attitudes and desires.

In the end, for Roger like Revel, anti-Americanism hurts those who engage in it more than it actually hurts Americans. He highlights a variety of catalysts throughout history that have contributed to the debate, and emphasizes that philosophic motivations have changed over the years but never gone away. His hopes for his own work were to illuminate anti-Americanism more than to eliminate it, but he echoes the famous Washingtonian sentiment saying, “La nation qui se livre a des sentiments habituels d’amour ou de haine envers une autre devient en quelque sorte esclave. Elle est esclave de sa haine ou de son amour.”<sup>31</sup> “The nation that allows itself habitual sentiments of love or hate towards another becomes a sort of slave. It becomes a slave to its hate or its love.”

Europe, according to both Europeans Revel and Roger is the victim of anti-Americanism far more than America. It is in Europe’s best interest for this sentiment to disappear. Americans Nye and Kagan both see it as a problem that the United States must deal with, or suffer dire consequences on the world stage. Whatever the causes of anti-Americanism, and whoever the victims, it is clear that no one benefits, and the United States government will be less effective on the global arena if the vast majority of public opinion, especially that of its allies, is against it. This is where public diplomacy steps in.

---

<sup>31</sup> Roger, 584

### Chapter 3: Problems and Solutions

Exactly how bad is public opinion of the United States abroad? In their survey, “A Year After the Iraq War: Excerpts” as published in *The Ambassadors REVIEW* the Pew Global Attitudes Project reports that,

“A year after the war in Iraq, discontent with American and its policies has intensified rather than diminished. Opinion of the United States (US) in France and Germany is at least as negative now as at the war’s conclusion, and British views are decidedly more critical. Perceptions of American unilateralism remain widespread in European and Muslim nations, and the war in Iraq has undermined America’s credibility abroad. Doubts about the motives behind the US –led war on terrorism abound, and a growing percentage of Europeans want foreign policy and security arrangements independent from the United States. Across Europe, there is considerable support for the European Union to become as powerful as the United States.”<sup>32</sup>

This brief summary points to a severe overall worsening of public opinion of the United States abroad. Not only do countries disagree with the actions taken by the United States, but they are beginning to feel that the United States is not an ally they can depend on, nor a country they wish to see continue to dominate the global security stage. As of May 2003, 76% of people in France supported an independent European Foreign Policy,

---

<sup>32</sup> Kimelman, Donald. (Director of Information Initiatives, The Pew Charitable Trusts) “The Pew Global Attitudes Project: Giving World Publics a Greater Voice” and “A Year After the Iraq War: Excerpts” *The Ambassadors REVIEW*. Published by the American Council of Ambassadors, Washington, DC. Spring 2004

and only 43% viewed the US favorably.<sup>33</sup> Majorities in Morocco, Jordan, Pakistan, and Turkey feel that the “war on terrorism” is more accurately described as an effort by the United States to control middle eastern oil and to dominate the world.<sup>34</sup> These results point to the fact that the United States image is worsening, and that the message that the superpower wishes to send is not anywhere near the one most people abroad are hearing. Where Americans think they are promoting democracy, many people around the world think Americans are overreacting to terrorism, and making the Iraqi people worse off as a result. This may in fact be a question of policy choices, and those are not choices we shall evaluate here, but there is also some question of communication with the world that must be addressed. How should the United States get its message out to the world? How can we make sure that the message America sends is one that will be understood and well received? How can we make sure that American leaders have a clear idea of how their message is being received, and how can they be sure they are receiving accurate reactions of foreign publics and people in general? These are some of the questions to which Public Diplomacy may be the answer.

---

<sup>33</sup> “A Year After the Iraq War” 53

<sup>34</sup> “A Year After the Iraq War” 53

In 2003 the Council on Foreign Relations sponsored an Independent Task Force called, *Finding America's Voice: A Strategy for Reinventing Public Diplomacy*.<sup>35</sup> The principle finding of the task force was that,

“Beyond the threat of a direct attack by al Qaeda and those influenced by that movement, the United State is now facing a more fundamental loss of goodwill and trust from publics around the world. The Task Force argues that this loss has damaged America’s ability to protect itself and to attain its foreign policy goals, and that in the run-up to the U.S.-led war in Iraq, botched diplomacy on all sides left a legacy of resentment, fear, and anxiety. Included in the report are polling data showing an Arab world that fears the United States as a threat to its way of life, a Europe that largely does not trust the United States and wants to pull further away, and dwindling support for the U.S. –led war on terror.”<sup>36</sup>

The task force does not emphasize whether or not this is a new trend or simply an intensifying of an old one, but it does say that the United States cannot afford to ignore the public opinion that opposes it world wide any longer. While anti-Americanism in some countries may be a centuries old tradition, it is now a problem too urgent to ignore. The leaders of other countries are responsible to a certain degree to the opinions of their citizens. As one country feeds off another, people all around the world will have certain ideas about America that are not only inaccurate but dangerous. If United States’ unilateral action leads to opposition, that is one thing, but if it inspires fear and resentment around the world, the United States will be ineffective in all its foreign policy

---

<sup>35</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, Independent Task Force, *Finding America's Voice: A Strategy for Reinventing Public Diplomacy* 2003

<sup>36</sup> CFR, v

goals, especially homeland security. The more enemies one has, the more likely one of them is to succeed in harm.

Public diplomacy is the way that the United States presents itself to the world. It, “encompasses how we express our policies to people who might not understand and agree with them, as well as the vehicles we use to reach those people.”<sup>37</sup> In response to growing hatred and ill will towards the United States, this may be our best defense. The task force sites two instances of United States foreign policy that drew criticism from around the world. These are the rejection of the Kyoto Protocols on climate change, and the International Criminal Court. They suggest that while the United States may have done what was in its best interest, it might have been better advised to articulate its objections to these initiatives more clearly, and to suggest improvements that would make them acceptable, and to communicate that effort to the public more clearly rather than to give the appearance of simply walking away. Moments like these illustrate the larger problem. The United States needs to improve its communication efforts and skills, and perhaps public diplomacy can help. The task force insists, in a way that Nye would strongly agree with, that partnerships with other countries have never been more crucial for the United States than they are now. In order to obtain the cooperation that we inevitably need, we must win the hearts and minds of the people who can insist that their leaders provide it.

“The United States can reach these people by listening to their needs and perspectives, by initiating a genuine dialogue, and by taking into account their cultural

---

<sup>37</sup> CFR, v

and political realities as Washington formulates its foreign policies. It is to these ends that the Task Force and its strategy are dedicated.”<sup>38</sup>

The Task Force has found that anti-Americanism is on the rise, that it is compromising America’s safety and constraining its movements, that public diplomacy is treated as an afterthought, that the US government underutilizes the private sector, that US foreign policy is often communicated in a way that breeds resentment, and that the US is allocating too few funds to public diplomacy programs.<sup>39</sup> It recommends rethinking how the United States formulates, strategizes, and communicates foreign policy, primarily by making foreign policy more sensitive to public diplomacy concerns and building America’s ability to listen to foreign publics. It also recommends building new institutions to bolster public diplomacy efforts, improving the practice of public diplomacy, including engaging the private sector, fostering more meaningful relationships with foreign journalists, creating bridges between US and foreign society, and of course, improving funding.<sup>40</sup>

The Task Force asserts that the United States has underperformed on public diplomacy and must do better in the future, but could this really fix the problem? Does anti-Americanism come from foreign opposition to specific United States military, economic, and other policy decisions? If so, than how much of a difference can communication really make? Or does anti-Americanism come from decades if not centuries of different world views, philosophies, and general goals for one’s country? Perhaps it is some combination of the above. The Pew Global attitudes survey reflects a larger trend of falling support for the United States around the world, outside of the “A

---

<sup>38</sup> CFR, 5

<sup>39</sup> CFR, 6-8

<sup>40</sup> CFR 8-16

Year After the Iraq War” report. In 2003, only 31% of French citizens polled had a favorable view of the United States. Seventy-five percent opposed the war in Iraq, and 67% thought that in U.S. –European diplomatic and security ties their country should be more independent. The numbers were similar for other countries in Western Europe.<sup>41</sup> How successful any new initiative can be depends partly on how deeply entrenched these feelings are. If they are based on a centuries old opposition to liberalism, then perhaps we must also address the way we as liberals interact with the world. If, as some may suspect, they are made more intense by recent events, than perhaps there is some hope for improvement simply through better communication. In any case, public diplomacy is more likely to help the situation than to hurt, even if it is not a complete solution to the problem.

One recommendation that the Task Force makes that is particularly interesting is the expansion of the role of the private sector in public diplomacy. The Task Force cites better flexibility, creativity, resources, technology and skills of the private sector as resources which could help their cause. While private sector actors do often represent specific interests, they bring a different set of capabilities and tools to the table. One of these is a very different type of credibility, simply by virtue of the fact that the voice of the private sector is that of individual citizens, rather than that of the United States government. While debate should continue about how linked private sector and State department efforts should be, one idea from the task force is for an independent not-for-

---

<sup>41</sup> The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, “America’s Image Erodes, Europeans want Weaker Ties” March 18, 2003

profit “Corporation for Public Diplomacy”<sup>42</sup>. This private sector entity for Public Diplomacy has already come to life as Business for Diplomatic Action, Inc.

Keith Reinhard is the chairman of DDB Worldwide, a leading United States advertising company. He has founded the private sector task force “Business for Diplomatic Action, Inc.” (BDA) whose mission is to mobilize U.S. based multinational corporations to better communicate universal values, increase social capital and build lasting, enriching partnerships with local communities around the world.<sup>43</sup> BDA envisions a, “new brand of diplomacy based on listening carefully and acting responsibly, rather than “selling” a pre-conceived point of view.”<sup>44</sup> What they have realized is that American brands and companies are suffering around the world from an “image problem.” They are seen as arrogant, corrupt and exploitive. In order to combat this, BDA’s goal is to do research that allows companies to lead the way to better understanding of the concerns, hopes and dreams of the world. It hopes to develop lasting partnerships with local communities all around the world to help improve education, technology, and infrastructure in the communities where US companies work and sell. The plan is to use BDA’s unique position as a private entity to achieve these goals with more flexibility than a governmental bureaucracy can in the hopes that this may lead to a more favorable view of American business and even the United States as a country on the global stage.

---

<sup>42</sup> CFR 37

<sup>43</sup> DDB Worldwide, “Business for Diplomatic Action” Mission Statement, February 2004

<sup>44</sup> BDA, Inc. Mission Statement

## **Conclusion**

In a world where terrorism, fanaticism, and weapons of mass destruction pose real threats to the safety and security of every country in the world, especially the United States, it is important not to allow miscommunications to prevent longtime friends and allies from working together. Public diplomacy as used by both the public and private sectors may be the tool that allows us to prevent the complete breakdown of our foreign partnerships. It should be further developed and more effectively implemented in the near future. America needs to use public diplomacy to show its respect for humanity, for citizens of all countries around the world, and to emphasize its commitment to working with others to achieve mutual goals, because the current global opinion of the United States is negative, and is rapidly worsening.

This dim view of the United States is partially born of a centuries old dissatisfaction which has been aggravated over the years by events and policy decisions that culminate in current frustration world wide. Global evaluation and eventual rejection of perceived American values has led to a simple feeling of dislike which is harmful to those who participate in it as much as to those at whom it is directed. Globalization is partly responsible, and as products, markets, language, culture, and information bring geographically distant people closer together we can expect this clash of perceived differences to become harder and more harmful to everyone, unless it is modified. Part of this means re-evaluating the execution of policy, and changing the way in which the United States uses its power to achieve its objectives in a way that is less threatening or intimidating to those countries with whom America hopes to cooperate. There is an

undeniable inequality in the balance of military and economic power in the world right now, and this discrepancy produces different approaches to potential threats, international negotiations and diplomacy that must be recognized and taken into account at all times. Disagreements need to be addressed directly. There is no reason for any nation to be reduced to insults and mockery at the hands of an ally for lack of articulate conversation. Professors, experts, average citizens, and presidents of all countries can and must acknowledge each others' views respectfully in order to cooperate effectively. Students on exchange programs who gather to watch television with their foreign peers and colleagues are one of the greatest examples of successful international relations and any traveler abroad in any country is the greatest way for people to freely have these necessary conversations with each other. Whenever the United States or any other country has a message to communicate to the rest of the world, and every country constantly does, it should be understood, at all times and with out any static, loud and clear.

## Bibliography

Albright, Madeleine, Bill Woodward ed. *Madam Secretary* Miramax Books, New York, NY 2003

Council on Foreign Relations, Independent Task Force, *Finding America's Voice: A Strategy for Reinventing Public Diplomacy* 2003

DDB Worldwide, "Business for Diplomatic Action" Mission Statement, February 2004

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. *The Paradox of American Power Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go it Alone*. Oxford University Press, New York, NY 2002.

Nye, Joseph S. Jr. "Pourquoi l'Amérique doit rejoindre le monde" *France-Amerique* 4-10 Octobre 2003 Translated by Valerie Bellot

Kagan, Robert. "America's Crisis of Legitimacy" *Foreign Affairs* March/April 2004 Vol 83 N. 2. Adapted from the afterward of the paperback edition of *Of Paradise and Power*

Kimelman, Donald. (Director of Information Initiatives, The Pew Charitable Trusts) "The Pew Global Attitudes Project: Giving World Publics a Greater Voice" and "A Year After the Iraq War: Excerpts" *The Ambassadors REVIEW*. Published by the American Council of Ambassadors, Washington, DC. Spring 2004

Roger, Philippe. *L'Ennemi Américain: Généalogie de antiaméricanisme Français*. Editions du Seuil, Paris, 2002

Revel, Jean-François. L'Obsession Anti-Américaine Son fonctionnement, ses causes, ses conséquences. Plon, Paris, 2002

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* Simon and Schuster, New York NY, 1996

The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "America's Image Erodes, Europeans want Weaker Ties" March 18, 2003

### Additional Annotated Sources (Books)

Ajchenbaum, Yves Marc. Dirigé en Collaboration avec Le Monde. Les Etats-Unis, gendarmes du monde. Le Monde et E.J.L. 2003. – A collection of essays organized by a leading French newspaper on US involvement in world conflicts.

Balibar, Etienne. L'Europe, L'Amérique, La Guerre. Editions La Decouverte, Paris, 2003. – A study of negotiations and mediations between the United States and Europe by a professor at both a Parisian and Californian university.

Colliard, Claude-Albert et Dubois, Louis. Institutions Internationales. Dalloz, Paris, 1995. – A French text book on international organizations and institutions, their organizations and functions.

Faure-Dufourmantelle, Alain. Dieu maudira-t-il l'Amérique? F.-X. de Guibert, Paris, 2003 – A book describing US foreign policy as hypocritical, especially towards France.

Hassner, Pierre et Vaisse, Justin. Washington et Le Monde, Dilemmes d'un Superpuissance. Collection CERI/Autrement, Paris, 2003. – An attempt to explain to a foreign audience that inherently expects logical explanations for policy, the complexity of the decision making process in Washington.

Michel, Louis. L'axe du Bien. Editions Luc Pire, Bruxelles, 2003. – A book by the Vice-Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, on his hopes and expectations for transatlantic cooperation.

Reynie, Dominique.(sous la direction de) Les Européens en 2003. Fondation Robert Schuman. Odile Jacob, Paris, 2003. – A book of polls and statistics of European Public Opinions on various political issues both within and outside the European union.

### **Contributions from other Sources**

Smith, Julianne. “Instruments for Peace Building and Conflict Prevention, Learning from other actors for the EU.” SWP-CPN Selected Contributions, Nr. 6 1999. – CPN is a network of academic institutions, NGOs and independent experts, associated with the European Commission. The goal of this exercise is to study a broad range of actors in peace building and conflict prevention outside of the EU. The study focuses on the US Department of State, Department of Defense and Agency for International Development.

Peterson, Peter G. “Public Diplomacy and the War on Terrorism » Foreign Affairs New York, September/October 2002 - This article is adapted from the chairman's preliminary summary of the report of the Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations.

Harwood, John. « U.S. Shortcomings In Public Diplomacy Predate Bush Team » Wall Street Journal Print Media Edition: Eastern edition, New York, N.Y., Mar 5, 2003 Article compares how this administration compared with others have gone about trying to explain themselves to the world.

Ross, Christopher. « Pillars of Public Diplomacy » Harvard International Review Cambridge, Summer 2003 - The public diplomacy and international communications of the United States must reflect a basic set of principles and practices- the seven pillars of public diplomacy - to meet its mandate "to inform, engage, and influence" foreign publics.

Satloff, Robert. « How to win friends and influence Arabs » The Weekly Standard Washington, Aug 18, 2003 - Satloff comments on the rebuilding process employed by the State Department to figure out how to win Arab and Muslim friends.

France-Amerique –Edition Internationale du Figaro New York, NY (various issues)

Davenport, David. « The New Diplomacy » Policy Review December 2002. – A study of the formation of the International Criminal Court and the influence of non state and small state actors.

« Views of a Changing World 2003 » The Pew Research Center June 3, 2003 – A study of public opinion polls on a variety of political issues around the world, but especially on reactions to the war in Iraq.

« America's Image Further Erodes, Europeans Want Weaker Ties » The Pew Research Center. March 18, 2003. – A study of America's image among the publics of its allies.

Lynch, Colum. "International War Crimes Tribunal Approved" The Washington Post. Thursday, April 11, 2002 – Describes an action taken by non-state actors and small states despite large state disapproval.

Binnendijk, Hans and Kugler, Richard. "Transforming European Forces." Survival Autumn 2002, pg 117-132 International Institute for Strategic Studies. – A study on the possible future of the NATO Alliance

Kagan, Robert. "Power and Weakness" Policy Review. No. 113 June 2002. – The future of transatlantic relations.

L'Echo des Savanes Paris, 2003. – A French comic magazine with articles depicting relations between France and the United States.