

CHATHAM HOUSE

The Royal Institute of
International Affairs



OXFORD JOURNALS
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

American Power: From 'Compellance' to Cosmopolitanism?

Author(s): Mary Kaldor

Source: *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Jan., 2003, Vol. 79, No. 1 (Jan., 2003), pp. 1-22

Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of the Royal Institute of International Affairs

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3095538>

REFERENCES

Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

https://www.jstor.org/stable/3095538?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Royal Institute of International Affairs and Oxford University Press are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*

American power: from 'compellance' to cosmopolitanism?

MARY KALDOR

'American democracy requires the repression of democracy in the rest of the world.' So spoke an Asian human rights activist in a democracy seminar in Krakow. I pondered this sentence when I read it in an op-ed article last summer.¹ On the face of it, it seemed so paradoxical. After all, America is the 'Crusader State'—a state based on an idea rather than a national identity: and that idea is democracy. Moreover, it is a state committed not only to preserving the idea within America but to extending it across the rest of the world.² And yet, when I thought about it, the sentence did express what appears to the rest of the world to be the introverted nature of current American foreign policy. Seen from the outside, the 'war on terrorism' seems to be less about defeating terrorism than about staging a performance to meet the requirements of American democracy. What matters is the appearance, the spectacle, not what happens on the ground—except in so far as what happens on the ground seeps through into the performance.

In all the discussions, especially in Europe, about the new American empire, this aspect seems to be missing—the difference between appearance and reality, the mimetic character of American foreign policy. When Robert Kagan talks about American power and European weakness, or when the former French foreign minister Hubert Védrine refers to *hyperpuissance*, they assume that billions of dollars spent on defence, or numbers of weapons or men under arms, can be translated into power.³ Power means the ability to influence others, to control events elsewhere, to impose our will on others: what Thomas Schelling called 'compellance'.⁴ But, in practice, American power is much less effective than is generally assumed, at least on its own. If America were truly an empire, surely it would be able to extend democracy to other regions, to impose its

¹ Jeffrey C. Goldfarb, 'America versus democracy? Losing young allies in the war against terror', *International Herald Tribune*, 21 Aug. 2002.

² See Walter A. McDougall, *Promised land, crusader state: the American encounter with the world since 1776* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

³ Robert Kagan, 'The power divide', *Prospect*, Aug. 2002; Hubert Védrine, with Dominique Moisi, *France in the age of globalization* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2001).

⁴ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966).

system on the rest of the world? The United States has the capability to be immensely destructive, but much less capability to do ‘compellance’. From the point of view of American policy-makers, however, this may not matter. The policy they pursue may be rational in terms of American domestic concerns: in attempting to dominate the American political landscape, in winning or nearly winning elections.

In this article, I argue that there is a mismatch between American domestic concerns—in particular, how the world is perceived inside America—and the reality in the rest of the world. To put it another way, American political culture and institutions were shaped by the experiences of the Second World War and the Cold War, and the ideology of that period continues to exert a powerful influence on American perceptions and American foreign policy; and yet it is badly suited to the changed world which we now inhabit. The American foreign policy-makers continue to stage a drama drawn from the past, even though the enemies and the technologies have changed. And they will continue to do so as long as this performance satisfies the American public, whatever the consequences for the rest of the world—unless reality begins to hit home, as it did briefly (and intensely) on 11 September 2001.

In developing the argument, I will start by describing what has changed, and why traditional approaches no longer work; in particular I will emphasize the changed meaning of sovereignty in the context of globalization, and the changed functions of military force primarily as a consequence of increased destructiveness. I will then set out four different policy approaches to the current conjuncture, based on different assumptions about the meaning of sovereignty and the nature of military power; and I will argue that America’s ability to do ‘compellance’ can be restored only within a multilateral framework, underpinned by humanitarian norms. In the final section, I will speculate on the ways in which reality might impinge on American policy-makers; in particular, the ways in which the need, at the least, to contain terrorism might propel a changed agenda.

The changing global context

A decade ago, a number of scholars were predicting American decline. The United States, they said, as the world hegemon, was becoming overstretched in the same way that earlier empires had declined under the burden of military power. Just as Britain was overtaken by the United States in the mid-twentieth century, so, it was predicted, Japan and western Europe would lead in the next phase of capitalism.⁵ Today, no one talks about the decline of America. Rather, the predominant debate, in scholarly and political circles alike, concerns unipolarity and whether this is conducive to stability or dangerous. So what

⁵ See e.g. Paul Kennedy, *The rise and fall of the great powers: economic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987); Robert Gilpin, *War and change in world politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

happened in between? Was it just the collapse of the Soviet empire, the only challenger to the United States? Or is there some deeper explanation?

It is worth revisiting the arguments of those who predicted America's decline because of their arguments about the relationship between phases of capitalism and security frameworks.⁶ They argued that different phases of capitalist growth were ushered in by war, which determined the shape of the regulatory framework. Thus the Napoleonic wars led to the first phase of industrialization, underpinned by the Concert of Europe and later the interimperial order, together with Britain's financial hegemony. Then came two world wars and a new phase of industrialization, characterized by mass production and mass consumption and known as Fordism. Global economic growth based on the Fordist model was underpinned by the Cold War order and the hegemonic role of the United States in the non-communist world.

What was happening in the 1970s and 1980s was the decline of Fordism, evident in the saturation of the markets for cars, the rising oil price, the boredom of workers with the routines of mass production. Declining international competitiveness and the growing cost of overseas defence and foreign economic and military assistance led many people to conclude that the American era was coming to an end. Japan and western Europe, it was argued, less burdened by military spending and other overseas commitments, would take the lead in the new phase of capitalist evolution, based on information technology.

In fact, the favourable environment generated in the 1990s in the United States as a consequence of deregulation and the investment boom has given America the leading edge in the so-called new economy. But it would be wrong to conclude that this explains the new role of the United States. I believe that we are still in a transitional phase and that the outcome of the 'war on terror' will determine the future regulatory framework of the new economy. The situation at the beginning of the twenty-first century can be compared with the early 1930s. In his classic book on the Depression, Charles Kindleberger argued that the huge productivity increases resulting from the introduction of mass production were not matched by changes in the structure of demand, and he explained this mismatch in terms of the continued dominance of Britain and the pound sterling.⁷ It was not until after the Second World War that a global institutional framework was established for the 'golden age' of Fordist economic growth. (It was not necessarily the best institutional framework, but it worked.) Today, as in the 1920s, dramatic increases in productivity brought about by computers and by new communication technologies have not been matched by corresponding shifts in the pattern of global demand. Like the 1920s, it can be argued, the boom of the 1990s was a false boom brought about by inflated expectation, by sheer excitement about the promise of the new technology.⁸

⁶ See e.g. Joshua Goldstein, *Long cycles: prosperity and war in the modern age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

⁷ Charles P. Kindleberger, *The world in depression 1929–1939* (London: Penguin, 1987).

⁸ For a brilliant exposition of this argument, see Carlota Perez, *Technological revolutions and financial capital: the dynamics of bubbles and golden ages* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 2002).

The problem today is how to construct the institutional framework that can guarantee the spread of the new economy, and so lead to a new golden age. Unlike the 1930s, this is not about whether hegemony passes from the United States to another state or group of states; rather, it is about the character of the new institutional framework. As long as American foreign policy-making remains embedded in the Cold War framework, it can be argued, this will provide a constraint on future economic development and the decline thesis could still turn out to be true. In other words, the old Cold War model of hegemony is in eclipse, and at this moment we face a choice about the appropriate model for the future. America will continue to be dominant in any future model because of its size and wealth; but its dominance will be different from that of the past. In particular, this new phase of capitalist development is different from Fordism in certain important ways, and any new institutional framework would have to take these differences into account.

The changed meaning of sovereignty

The first difference has to do with the changed meaning of sovereignty. Fordism was associated with big government, with high levels of welfare and military spending, and with the growth of the public sector. The Cold War framework allowed for the liberalization of international trade and capital, and for a great extension of state intervention at home. The new economy is associated with globalization, by which I mean the increasing interconnectedness of economies, politics, and societies, and with the withdrawal of the state from a range of activities as a consequence of liberalization and privatization. Interconnectedness, as those who write about globalization point out, is an uneven process involving homogeneity and diversity, integration and fragmentation, as well as decentralization and individuation.⁹

I agree with those who argue that globalization does not mean the demise of the state but rather its transformation. However, the direction of that transformation is as yet unclear. The factors that will shape it include:

- The difficulty of sustaining closed societies or spheres of influence. In a sense the 1989 revolutions can be explained in these terms. The Soviet Union could not maintain control over Central Europe in the face of the growing interpenetration of societies as a consequence of increases in travel and communication. Both liberalization of trade and the increasingly transnational character of civil society make it difficult for traditional authoritarian leaders to insulate their societies from the rest of the world. This is why there are only a handful of apparently stable authoritarian regimes in the world today.

⁹ David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton, *Global transformations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999); Anthony Giddens, *Runaway world: how globalisation is reshaping our lives* (London: Profile Books, 1999).

- The growing importance of new layers of political institutions—global, regional and local. The growing interconnectedness of political institutions, by means of treaties and international agreements, and the growing complexity of decision-making in the new economy have greatly increased the number of political decision points. These new institutions are in the process of generating new overlapping and sometimes contradictory loyalties—multiple ‘communities of fate’, as David Held puts it.¹⁰
- Growing awareness of and growing resistance to the influence of events that take place far away. With the advent of the so-called new media, new imagined communities are displacing traditional patriotism. On the one hand, an emerging human consciousness has provided a basis for the new human rights regime and the popular reactions to massive human rights violations or to genocide. On the other hand, the construction of transnational networks has stimulated new or revived ethnic and religious identities that cross boundaries.

Essentially, these factors imply a move away from absolute control of territory and from geopolitics, that is to say, the control of foreign territory in the national interest. Sovereignty is increasingly conditional, dependent upon both domestic consent and international respect. In traditional authoritarian states, the impact of globalization may result in state ‘failure’ or ‘weakness’. In other states, it may mean deeper insertion within a multilateral framework of global governance. Both the notion of humanitarian intervention—the idea, which gained ground during the 1990s, that humanitarian concerns override the norm of non-intervention—and ‘new wars’ based on identity politics, which aim to establish new absolutist exclusive statelets, can be viewed as responses to the current global conjuncture.

The changed functions of military forces

The second difference has to do with the decline of military power; that is to say the declining ability of states to use military force for ‘compellance’. The growing destructiveness of all weapons means that superior military technology rarely confers a decisive advantage in conflicts between armed opponents. Moreover, it is not just ‘weapons of mass destruction’ that can inflict mass destruction: the attacks of 11 September were equivalent, both in physical destruction and numbers of casualties, to a small nuclear weapon. Nowadays, it is extremely difficult to control territory militarily and to win an outright military victory.

This proposition, I believe, was already becoming true at the end of the Second World War. Schelling’s argument about ‘compellance’ derived from the discovery of nuclear weapons; the question he asked was whether military force loses its utility in a world of mutual vulnerability, where nuclear weapons

¹⁰ Held et al., *Global transformations*.

can inflict mass destruction. Nuclear weapons, it can be argued, became emblematic of the destructive nature of war. The allies did win a decisive victory in the Second World War, but only after 50 million people had died. The success of deterrence in the postwar period, it can be argued, is attributable less to nuclear weapons per se than to the unthinkability of another war on the scale of the Second World War. Indeed, the Soviet Union did not have a separate concept for deterrence; their concepts of *ustrashenie* (intimidation) and *sderzhivanie* (restraining or holding back) referred to the possibility of war in general.¹¹ It can be argued that these concepts, both deterrence and the Soviet equivalents, were ways of keeping alive the memory of what happened in 1939–45.

In the Second World War, platforms (particularly tanks and aircraft, but also submarines), using internal combustion engines and fuelled by oil, enabled the combatants to break the stalemate of the First World War, where the use of artillery and machine guns on both sides had prevented any territorial advances. In contrast to that earlier conflict, the Second World War was a war of offence and of manoeuvre. Since 1945, however, with developments in information technology—and, indeed, improvements in the destructiveness and accuracy of all types of weapons, including small arms, artillery and missiles—the platforms that were typical of the Fordist era have also become increasingly vulnerable. The Iran–Iraq war of the 1980s was much more like the First World War than the Second.

It is argued that the one area where superior military technology conveys an advantage is in the air. The Americans do have the capacity to destroy or evade all known air defences. Through the use of precision guided munitions (PGMs) and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), they can destroy targets at long distance with a high degree of accuracy, as we saw in the Gulf War, the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. But this is not the same as controlling territory or achieving outright military victory. In the Gulf War, the United States and its allies did succeed in liberating Kuwait with a massive deployment of force; if undertaken today, it would occupy some 80 per cent of American army divisions because of the decline in active duty manpower.¹² In the former Yugoslavia, US air attacks could not prevent the acceleration of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo; as Wesley Clark, then SACEUR, put it at the time, ‘air power alone cannot stop para-military murder on the ground.’¹³ One of the problems was that it was very difficult to lure Serb forces into the open where they were vulnerable to air attack, as was done to the Iraqis in the Gulf War. In the end, Milosevic capitulated, Kosovo was liberated, and the refugees returned home; but the experience left a legacy of hatred within Kosovo and undoubtedly contributed to the persistence of embittered anti-Western nationalism in Serbia

¹¹ See David Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the arms race* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983).

¹² For this argument, see Philip Bobbit, *The shield of Achilles: war, peace and the course of history* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), p. 249.

¹³ General Wesley Clark, Press conference, 1 April 1999; www.nato.int/Kosovo/press/p990401c.htm, p. 9 of 14.

today.¹⁴ In the case of Afghanistan, the American effort succeeded in toppling the Taliban, with the help of the Northern Alliance and, at a crucial moment, some of the Pashtun warlords. In the critical battle for Mazar-I-Sharif, Taliban forces were stranded in the open, and, altogether in the course of the war, thousands of Taliban troops were killed from the air. But the war effort did not succeed in capturing Osama bin Laden or many al-Qaeda leaders, or in stabilizing Afghanistan.

Military commentators suggest that reluctance to use troops on the ground is a consequence of the risk aversion of American leaders. In the case of Afghanistan, in particular, it is argued that had more American troops been committed to the battle for Tora Bora (December 2001), or later to Operation Anaconda (an operation in March 2002 in the Shah e Kot valley where al-Qaeda operatives were hiding), Osama bin Laden would not have got away, even though many more Americans might have died.¹⁵ But it is not at all clear whether ground forces could be any more effective. Ground superiority is much harder to achieve than air superiority. Would the Americans have been more efficient than the Afghan fighters in Tora Bora? The Russians and the Israelis, for example, are not casualty averse. The Russians are losing two to three Russian soldiers a day in Chechnya, but they are still not able to defeat the rebels. They have been immensely destructive: Grozny is reduced to rubble, and there has been massive population displacement; but they have not brought stability to the region. The Israelis are better trained, equipped and paid than the Russians, and claim to be operating within the laws of war and trying to avoid civilian casualties. Yet they cannot defeat the intifada or stabilize Palestine.

What if ground troops are used in a war against Saddam Hussein? Military planners in the Bush administration are arguing that they have learned the lessons of Afghanistan and that ground troops will have to be used and casualties accepted.¹⁶ There is, of course, a possibility that Saddam Hussein is so unpopular that such a war will be very short and the security forces closest to him will collapse; in other words, intervention might provoke a political solution. There is also a possibility that the war will be long, and that, in the period after bombing begins and before ground troops enter the country, Saddam Hussein will try to kill as many of his opponents as possible; he already has plans to use chemical weapons, for example, against the Shiites in the south. The unpredictable consequences of a long war on Iraq's neighbours and on the long-term possibilities for stabilization may well turn out to substantiate the arguments about the difficulties of 'compellence'.

To argue that military compellence is very difficult nowadays against an armed opponent is not to say that military forces have no rational functions;

¹⁴ In the autumn 2002 Serbian elections, the radical nationalist Seselj, who had advocated expelling all Kosovars from Kosovo, and even, at one point, infecting them with the AIDS/HIV virus, obtained 23 per cent of the vote.

¹⁵ See Michael O'Hanlon, 'A flawed masterpiece', *Foreign Affairs* 81: 3, May-June 2002.

¹⁶ See e.g. David A. Fulghum, 'Iraq strike has focus but there's no timetable', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 5 Aug. 2002.

rather, that the classic function of capturing territory militarily reached its end point in the Fordist era. First of all, military forces can be used against civilian populations. This is the typical strategy of what I call 'new wars', where a combination of state and non-state actors tries to gain political control over territory by killing or expelling dissenters or those of a different religion or ethnicity. In general, these are wars fought in the name of exclusive identities based on religion or ethnicity. The goal is to sow 'fear and hatred' so that the local population supports the project of an exclusive ethnic or religious state. Battles between armed opponents are very rare; almost all violence is inflicted on civilians. Terrorist attacks on symbolic targets like the centre of global capitalism (the World Trade Center) or a place of secular entertainment (the Sari nightclub in Bali) have similar goals: they spread fear and insecurity, they polarize society, they convey a dramatic message about modernity.

Second, a country's military forces still represent a symbol of the nation, especially among current and former superpowers like the United States, Russia or Britain. Modern state-building was so bound up with war and the development of modern military forces that our idea of statehood is inextricably linked to military rituals, uniforms and even war. Hence the deployment of military forces serves important domestic political functions: helping to instil a sense of pride and loyalty, underscoring domestic cohesion. It is commonplace nowadays to argue that some military adventures, for example current Russian threats against Georgia, are best explained in terms of forthcoming domestic elections. Just as Bush has widespread support for the war on terror, so Putin used the second Chechen war to gain power—and so, it can be argued, the current Middle East conflict helps sustain Sharon's political support.

Third, there is a role for military forces in containment, especially in new wars. It may not be possible to win outright victory, but the implication of equal destructiveness is that the advantage passes to the defender. Thus it is possible to envisage defensive non-escalatory military operations designed to defend civilians where the new warriors threaten them. These operations cannot win or even stop wars; but they can reduce fear and insecurity and create a breathing space where political solutions can be discussed. Essentially, this was, for all its flaws and mistakes, the British strategy in Northern Ireland and also, more recently, in Sierra Leone. Techniques like safe havens, humanitarian corridors, pioneered in Bosnia but not effectively carried out, could be conceived as part of a strategy of containment. To be effective, such a strategy does require risking casualties; this is one reason why the strategy failed in Bosnia, and indeed in Somalia. But it does not require the same level of risk as, for example, in the case of offensive war. At present, such risks are borne by human rights activists and journalists but rarely by soldiers. Thus, in Afghanistan, more foreign journalists were killed than Americans in combat (although more Americans were killed if you include those killed by friendly fire).

Table 1: Different visions of America’s role in the world

	<i>Idealist</i>	<i>Realist</i>
Unilateralist	Spectacle war	Neorealists and anti-imperialists
Multilateralist	Cosmopolitans	Co-operative security

Alternative visions of American power

Different visions of America’s role in the world are defined according to assumptions about sovereignty and about military power. The distinction between idealists and realists can be explained in terms of conceptions of sovereignty. The realists hold to a traditional conception of sovereignty. For them, international relations consists of sovereign units each pursuing its individual self-interest; what happens inside these sovereign units is irrelevant. The job of the state is to protect itself from external enemies; tyrants matter only in so far as they are also potential aggressors. The idealists, on the other hand, hold that sovereignty is conditional and that there are values and norms, for example human rights, which override claims to sovereignty.

The distinction I make between unilateralists and multilateralists applies primarily to the use of military forces. Unilateralists share a belief in the efficacy of military power. By and large, those who favour multilateral approaches start from the assumption that relations among states can no longer be settled by military force. It is, however, possible to be unilateralist in the military field and multilateralist as regards the economy. Unilateralists tend to favour a liberal world economy, especially in respect of free trade and capital movements, but they reserve the right to behave unilaterally sometimes, as for example in the case of steel tariffs.

In what follows, I describe four different visions of America’s role in the world based on different assumptions about sovereignty and military power, as shown in the table 1.

Spectacle war

The first vision is that of the Bush administration, which I call ‘spectacle war’.¹⁷ By ‘spectacle war’ I mean the kind of long-distance high-technology air war described in the previous section. I call this type of war a ‘spectacle’ to emphasize its imaginary nature from the point of view of Americans. These wars do not risk American casualties and, indeed, do not even require additional taxes; American citizens merely have to watch the war on television and applaud. James Der Derian uses the term ‘virtuous war’ in order to combine both the

¹⁷ The term was first used by Michael Mann in ‘The roots and contradictions of modern militarism’, *States, war and capitalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), pp. 166–87.

virtual character of the war and the notion of virtue, the idea that the war is being fought in a noble cause.¹⁸ 'Virtuous war relies on virtual simulation, media manipulation, global surveillance and networked warfare to deter and if need be to destroy potential enemies. It draws on just war doctrine (when possible) and holy war doctrine (when necessary).'¹⁹

The origins of 'spectacle war' can be traced back to the Cold War framework. During the Cold War, deterrence had a similar imaginary form.²⁰ Throughout the period of the Cold War, both sides behaved as though they were at war, with military build-ups, technological competition, espionage and counter-espionage, war games and exercises. This activity was an important way to remind people of the Second World War and, on the American side, to sustain a belief in the American mission to defend the world against evil through the use of superior technology. Technological developments responded to what planners imagined the Soviet Union might acquire—the so-called worst-case scenario. This introverted planning, as I have argued elsewhere, meant that American and Soviet technological change was best explained as though they were both arming against a phantom German military machine that continued to evolve in the planners' imaginations, rather than against each other.²¹ For example, air power was always central to the American conception of deterrence, and this derived from the wartime experience of strategic bombing. Intercontinental missiles developed in the 1950s and 1960s were envisaged as an extension of strategic air power. The Soviet Union never had a separate air arm and did not engage in strategic bombing in the 1939–45 war; instead, it regarded missiles as an extension of artillery.

The advent of information technologies generated a debate about the future direction of military strategy in the 1970s and 1980s. The so-called military reform school argued that the use of PGMs had made the platforms of the Fordist era now as vulnerable as people were in the First World War and that the advantage had shifted to the defence. High attrition rates in the Vietnam and Middle East wars as a result of the use of hand-held missiles seemed to confirm that argument. The advocates of traditional American strategy argued that the offensive manoeuvres of the Second World War were now even more important since the use of area destruction munitions could swamp defensive forces and missiles, and UAVs could replace vulnerable manned aircraft. The consequence was the AirLand Battle strategy of the 1980s, with its centrepiece, 'deep strike', to be carried out by the then new Tomahawk cruise missiles, at that time armed with nuclear warheads.

During the 1990s, this thinking was taken a stage further with the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). For RMA enthusiasts, the advent of information

¹⁸ See James Der Derian, *Virtuous war: mapping the military–industrial–media–entertainment network* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001).

¹⁹ James Der Derian, '9/11: before, after and between', in Craig Calhoun, Paul Price and Ashley Timmer, eds, *Understanding September 11* (New York: New Press, 2002), p. 180.

²⁰ See Mary Kaldor, *Imaginary war: understanding the East–West conflict* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

²¹ *Ibid.*, chs 11, 12.

technology is as important in revolutionizing warfare as was the discovery of the stirrup or the internal combustion engine. RMA war is spectacle war; it is war carried out at long distance using computers and new communications technologies. The cruise missile, in particular, is the 'paradigmatic' weapon of the RMA.²² After the end of the Cold War, US military spending declined by one-third, but this mainly affected personnel. Military research and development (R&D) declined by much less than military spending as a whole, and this allowed for the development both of follow-ons to traditional Cold War platforms and of the new technologies associated with the RMA. An important aspect of the new technologies is the improvement in virtual war gaming, which further underscores the imaginary nature of spectacle war. Increasingly, the Defense Department has recruited Hollywood producers to help invent future worst-case scenarios, giving rise to what James Der Derian describes as MIME-NET, the military-industrial-entertainment network.²³

For the Bush administration, the term 'defence transformation' has come to supplant RMA as the new jargon. As one enthusiast for defence transformation has put it:

However jerky the transmission belt, the qualities of the modern American economy—its adventurousness, spontaneity and willingness to share information—eventually reach the American military. Just as the teenager who grew up tinkering with automobile engines helped to make the motorised armies of WWII work, so do the sergeants accustomed to playing video games, surfing web pages, and creating spread sheets make the information-age military of to-day effective.²⁴

Donald Rumsfeld claims that defence transformation 'is about more than building new high-tech weapons—although that is certainly part of it. It is also about new ways of thinking and new ways of fighting.'²⁵

Yet it is hard to escape the conclusion that information technology is being grafted on to traditional assumptions about the ways in which military forces should be used and to traditional institutional defence structures. The very use of video gaming feeds in the assumptions of the gamers who have been schooled in the Cold War framework. The events of 11 September allowed President Bush to ask for a big increase in defence spending—which had already begun to rise again in 1998 as the new and expensive systems developed during the 1990s came to fruition. During his election campaign, Bush had suggested that it might be possible to skip a generation of weapons systems to save money and focus on the cutting-edge technologies like PGMs and UAVs (both of which were in short supply in Afghanistan). In fact, the 2003 budget is sufficient to accommodate everything—the F22 fighter, for example, which replaces the F15,

²² See Lawrence Freedman, *The revolution in strategic affairs*, Adelphi Paper 318 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1998).

²³ In the aftermath of 11 September, the military have recruited the University of Southern California's Institute of Creative Technology to involve Hollywood in imagining terrorist worst-case scenarios. See Der Derian, '9/11: before, after and between'.

²⁴ Elliott A. Cohen, 'A tale of two secretaries', *Foreign Affairs* 81: 3, May–June 2002, p. 39.

²⁵ Donald H. Rumsfeld, 'Transforming the military', *Foreign Affairs* 81: 3, May–June 2002, p. 21.

which already enjoys air superiority over any known enemy.²⁶ The expensive programme for National Missile Defense will also go ahead. It is unlikely to work, but that isn't the point: the point is rather to underscore the vision of American defence; to provide the appearance of defence against incoming missiles and, therefore, a psychological insurance for unilateral military action.

'Spectacle war' is also linked to a powerful moral crusade. There was always an idealist strain in American Cold War thinking. Bush's 'Axis of Evil' echoes Ronald Reagan's 'Evil Empire'. The Bushites believe, or appear to believe, that America is a cause, not a nation, with a mission to convert the rest of the world to the American dream and to rid the world of terrorists and tyrants. For them, sovereignty is conditional for other states, but unconditional for the United States because the United States represents 'good'. Hence the United States can act unilaterally; it can reject treaties like the Climate Change Protocol, the Land Mines Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and, above all, the International Criminal Court because America is right; but others do not have the same option. This view was expressed by Assistant Secretary of State Richard Haas:

What you are seeing in this administration is the emergence of a new principle or body of ideas ... about what you might call the limits of sovereignty. Sovereignty entails obligations. One is not to massacre your own people. Another is not to support terrorism in any way. If a government fails to meet these obligations, then it forfeits some of the advantages of sovereignty, including the right to be left alone inside your own territory. Other governments, including the United States, gain the right to intervene. In the case of terrorism, this can even lead to a right of preventive ... self-defense. You essentially can act in anticipation, if you have grounds to think it's a question of when, and not if, you're going to be attacked.²⁷

This dual approach to sovereignty is well expressed in Bush's new security strategy, which argues that it is America's duty to protect freedom 'across the globe'. 'Some worry', says Bush, 'that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right and wrong. I disagree. Different circumstances require different methods, but not different moralities.'²⁸

What is alarming about the new security strategy is that, through the use of new concepts, the administration has claimed an extraordinarily wide mandate for military action. First of all, the enemy is no longer defined. The enemy is anyone who might be a terrorist and who might acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD). During the 1990s, great efforts were expended on imagining new worst-case scenarios and new post-Soviet threats. With the collapse of the Soviet military-industrial complex, US strategists came up with all sorts of inventive new ways in which America might be attacked, through spreading viruses, poisoning water systems, causing the collapse of the banking system,

²⁶ See David Gold, 'US military expenditure and the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review', appendix 6E in *SIPRI Yearbook 2002: armaments, disarmament and international security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁷ Quoted in G. John Kenberry, 'America's imperial ambition', *Foreign Affairs* 81: 3, Sept.-Oct. 2002, p. 52.

²⁸ *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, www.nytimes.com/2002/09/20/politics/20STEXT_FULL.html.

disrupting air traffic control or power transmission. Of particular importance were the idea of state-sponsored terrorism and the notion of 'rogue states' that sponsor terrorism and acquire long-range missiles as well as WMD. These new threats, emanating from a collapsing Russia or from Islamic fundamentalism, were known as 'asymmetric' threats as they involved weaker states or groups developing WMD or other horrific techniques to attack US vulnerabilities to compensate for their conventional inferiority. Since 11 September, these ideas appear to have been substantiated and the notion of the 'enemy' extended even further to those we don't necessarily know; hence the shift from a 'threat-based' approach to a 'capabilities-based' approach. According to Rumsfeld: 'There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things we know that we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know ... Each year, we discover a few more of these unknown unknowns.'²⁹

Second, against these new unknown enemies, the United States has developed new doctrines of 'pre-emption' in place of deterrence and 'proactive counter-proliferation' instead of non-proliferation. According to Bush, deterrence no longer works; that was the lesson of 11 September. 'Traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness.'³⁰ Hence, the United States reserves the right to act pre-emptively, using the tools of 'spectacle war' against those states that are believed to harbour terrorists or possess WMD. Interestingly, the target of US rhetoric seems to switch between states that pose a threat to their own people (tyrants) and those that pose a threat to the United States (through the possession of WMD or through sponsoring terrorists).

This expanded mandate for military action amounts to an agenda for a permanent war much like the Cold War, in which periodic victories sustain public support and the rightness of the cause stifles dissent. If it is the case that military 'compellance' is much more difficult than the Bushites claim, then 'spectacle war' cannot be expected to defeat terrorism. On the contrary, it may stimulate the spread of terrorism, because the strategy itself discredits the claim to political legitimacy. This is so for three reasons. First, the crusade, the 'war on terrorism', raises the profile of the terrorists and dignifies them as enemies rather than criminals. The moment that Bush chose to describe what happened on 11 September as an attack on the United States rather than a 'crime against humanity', he firmly placed the event in a traditional war paradigm. By using the term 'war', Bush constructed a language of polarization, accentuated by his famous sentence 'you are either with us or against us.'³¹ Moreover, the language of 'war on terrorism' has spread throughout the world, legitimizing a range of local 'wars on terrorism' (in Chechnya, Palestine, Kashmir and Karabakh, to name but a few).

²⁹ Quoted in Kenberry, 'America's imperial ambition', p. 50.

³⁰ *National Security Strategy of the United States*.

³¹ See Michael Howard, 'What's in a name?', *Foreign Affairs* 81: 3, Jan.-Feb. 2002.

Second, the 'global coalition' that the US administration has put together to fight terrorism is an alliance on the Cold War model, where the criterion for membership is support for the United States—not adherence to international principles, as would be the case for a truly multilateral arrangement. The inclusion of undemocratic states (Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan) and states responsible for massive human rights violations (Israel, Russia), undermines the coalition's claim to be pursuing a just cause—as does the use of the 'war on terrorism' to justify increased surveillance and curtailment of rights.³²

Third, because 'spectacle war' does not risk casualties, it loses any claim to legitimacy in the struggle to defeat terrorism. US attacks are accurate, but nevertheless they cannot avoid 'collateral damage' or 'mistakes'; nor can they prevent humanitarian catastrophes as a result of war. In the war in Afghanistan, there were around 1,000–1,300 civilian casualties from 'collateral damage', but thousands more died as a consequence of the worsening humanitarian crisis and some 500,000 people fled from their homes; in addition, some thousands of Taliban and al-Qaeda troops were killed.³³ The experience suggests that American lives are privileged over other lives, thus belying Bush's globalist claims.

In the combination of violence and morality, there is a parallel with al-Qaeda and other religious fundamentalists. I do not want to suggest symmetry. But nevertheless, the parallel is significant because it allows for a process of mutual reinforcement. Religion provides a justification for violence that excludes compromise and overrides rules and procedures. The spectacular nature of attacks like those on 11 September or in Bali are not intended to defeat an enemy, or to be victorious. Rather, they are proof of a struggle between good and evil, ways of mobilizing supporters. It is the struggle itself that matters, the sense of participating in a sacred battle, not victory or defeat. 'What the perpetrators of such acts of terror expect—and indeed welcome,' writes Mark Juergensmeyer, 'is a response as vicious as the acts themselves. By goading secular authorities into responding to terror with terror, they hope to accomplish two things. First, they want tangible evidence for their claim that the secular enemy is a monster. Second, they hope to bring to the surface the great war—a war that they have told their potential supporters was hidden, but real.'³⁴

For Donald Rumsfeld and George W. Bush, the war against the 'unknowns' has something of the same character. 'Spectacle war' seems to confirm the conceptions of cosmic war promoted by al-Qaeda and others and to justify further acts of terrorism. By the same token, their response sustains a permanent crusading war mentality in the United States, drawn from the experience of the

³² For a partial list of these types of actions, see box 1.3 in Marlies Glasius and Mary Kaldor, 'The state of global civil society before and after September 11', in Marlies Glasius, Mary Kaldor and Helmut Anheier, *Global civil society 2002* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³³ See Carl Connetta, *Strange victory: a critical appraisal of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Afghanistan War*, Project on Defense Alternatives, Research Monograph no. 6, 30 Jan. 2002. Estimates of Taliban and al-Qaeda troops killed vary from 4,000 to 10,000.

³⁴ Mark Juergensmeyer, 'Religious terror and global war', in Calhoun et al., eds, *Understanding September 11*, p. 40.

Cold War, which in turn underpins the position of the Republican right and justifies further increases in the defence budget.

Neorealists and anti-imperialists

There has always been a tension in American foreign-policy-making between idealists and realists, between those who believe in the American mission to spread the American Way, and those who argue that America is a great power like any other and must pursue a strategy of survival. For the former, the Cold War was a struggle between good and evil, between democracy and totalitarianism; for the latter, the Cold War was the inevitable consequence of bipolarity—a strategic order that some described as the ‘long peace’.³⁵

I have used the term ‘neorealist’ to describe that strand of opinion that favours the hard-headed pursuit of national interest, in which humanitarian concerns are largely irrelevant. They are unilateralist because they believe in the use of force by the United States, whether or not it is sanctioned by international rules; and, like the Bushites, they act on the assumption that ‘compellence’ is still possible. The neorealists became prominent in the 1970s and 1980s when they argued that the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union could be better managed. Famously, when Nixon and Kissinger went to Moscow in 1992 to negotiate the first SALT Treaty, they ignored the Jewish refuseniks demonstrating at the Kremlin gates.

The neorealists are critical of the Bush strategy because they do not think it is in the US national interest. Many of them oppose the Iraq war because, although Saddam Hussein is a tyrant, he does not at present pose a direct threat to the United States. Moreover, a war in Iraq might divert resources from the main threat from al-Qaeda. Thirty-four international scholars, including such luminaries as Kenneth Waltz, often considered the father of neorealism, Thomas Schelling, the inventor of ‘compellence’, and John Mearsheimer of the ‘long peace’, placed an advertisement in the *New York Times* opposing the war in Iraq.³⁶

Of course, there is a range of views among the neorealists. Some, like Henry Kissinger, do favour war with Iraq, on geopolitical grounds. Others, while reserving the right to use military power unilaterally, consider that military power is less important nowadays. Joseph Nye, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense, draws a threefold classification of power: military, economic and what he calls ‘soft’ power. Nowadays, power resources have shifted away from military power towards economic and ‘soft’ power. Whereas military power is unipolar, dominated by the United States, economic power is multipolar and ‘soft’ power is ‘the realm of transnational relations that cross borders outside of government control ... [Soft] power is widely dispersed and it makes no sense to speak of

³⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, *The long peace: inquiries into the history of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); John J. Mearsheimer, ‘Why we will soon miss the Cold War’, *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1990.

³⁶ ‘War with Iraq is *not* in America’s national interest’, advertisement, *New York Times*, 26 Sept. 2002.

unipolarity, multipolarity or hegemony.³⁷ For Nye, values are part of the national interest. Nevertheless, he considers that what he calls C list priorities—wars in places like Bosnia and Rwanda which do not threaten US interests—are less important than A or B list priorities, direct threats to the US from a ‘peer competitor’ or threats to strategic US interests in places like the Persian Gulf or the Korean peninsula. For this reason the United States has to be able to act unilaterally and cannot accept constraints like the International Criminal Court, which might lead to ‘unjustified charges of war crimes’ by US troops.³⁸

The anti-imperialist left are the inverse of the neorealists. They see the United States as a great power, an empire, pursuing geopolitical interests like oil, and they consider that the idealism of the Bush administration (and indeed of earlier administrations) is merely a cover or legitimization for more hard-headed self-interest. Thus Chomsky talks about the new ‘military humanism’.³⁹ They assume that military ‘compellence’ still works. Hence they view with great suspicion, in Peter Gowan’s words,

Washington’s central strategic initiative of the past decade—not the winding down of Nato after the end of the Cold War ... but its first deployment in action in the Balkans, and then expansion full-steam ahead to the frontiers of Russia itself. Since September 11, of course, the ‘revolution in military affairs’ has carried the American war machine still further, into hitherto unimagined terrain, with bases in five or six Central Asian states, and forward posts in the Caucasus, to add to the eighty countries in Eurasia, Africa and Oceania already in its keep. The staggering scale of this armed girdling of the planet tells its own story.⁴⁰

The positions of the neorealists and the anti-imperialists are well illustrated by the new interest in resource wars (meaning primarily wars about oil). Both the neorealists and the anti-imperialists often argue that underlying the ‘war on terrorism’ is a strategic interest in controlling the sources of oil and oil transportation routes. In support of this argument, the Cheney report on energy is often cited. The report advocates seeking new sources of oil apart from the Persian Gulf (Alaska or the Caspian Sea) to ensure cheap oil supplies to the United States for the foreseeable future.⁴¹

In the wars of the twentieth century, control over oil supplies was always a central part of strategy. Oil was the key factor of production and of warfare in the Fordist era, and, in a global conflict, the various sides sought ways to cut their enemies off from the supply of this vital commodity. The Second World War, in particular, depended on the mass mobilization of tanks, aircraft and ships fuelled by oil. Both Germany and Japan were obsessed by the need to seek autonomous sources of oil. Nowadays, however, the world has changed. The market for oil is much more globalized and war is much more localized. There

³⁷ Joseph S. Nye, Jr, *The paradox of American power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 39.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

³⁹ Noam Chomsky, *The new military humanism: lessons from Kosovo* (London: Pluto Press, 1999).

⁴⁰ Peter Gowan, ‘The calculus of power’, *New Left Review*, July–Aug. 2002, p. 63.

⁴¹ Michael Klare, ‘Global petro-politics: the foreign policy implications of the Bush administration’s energy plan’, *Current History*, March 2002.

are threats to oil supplies, but they derive much more from instability and conflict, 'new wars', than from the risk of hostile control of oil. Indeed, it can be argued, especially, for example, in the southern Caucasus, that geopolitical interests actually stimulate local conflicts and make oil supplies less rather than more secure. There may, of course, be a private greed element, in that the oil companies have a powerful influence on the Bush administration and they see the acquisition of bases as a way of exerting influence to win contracts. But that is not the same as a national or geopolitical interest. Some argue that oil is the main reason for going to war with Iraq. But if this were the case, are there not easier ways, short of war, to secure the oil? Indeed, it can be argued that, by stressing the importance of oil, the anti-imperialists endorse the realist justification for unilateral action. In the 1991 Gulf War, George Bush Senior was able to make much of the possibility that Saddam Hussein could strangle Western oil supplies.

Like the Bushites, the neorealists and the anti-imperialists have an old-fashioned view of military power, drawn from earlier wars. They are perhaps more prudent than the Bushites. Unlike the Bushites, they also have an old-fashioned view of sovereignty. For the anti-imperialists, this tends to mean that they do not take human rights violations or terrorist attacks sufficiently seriously—regarding these concerns merely as justifications for imperialism. For the neorealists, terrorist threats to the United States are important, but human rights violations or terrorist threats in other countries are not.

One difference between the neorealists and the anti-imperialists is in the economic field. Neorealists tend to support a liberal world economy. Anti-imperialists are often protectionist, believing that sovereignty is the best way to defend against imperialist exploitation.

Cooperative security

European leaders often deplore the unilateralism of the United States. One strand of European multilateralism continues to be realist. That is to say, the European realists have a vision of the world composed of sovereign states, but based on a set of rules and norms. Underpinning this vision is the philosophy of the so-called English School—people like Hedley Bull or Martin Wight, who trace their thinking to early international legalists like Grotius. According to the English School, there is no single world power but there is, nevertheless, world society because even in an anarchical context, states operate according to certain principles—the most important of which is non-intervention. Hedley Bull, for example, was opposed to humanitarian intervention because it challenged this principle: 'The growing moral conviction that human rights should have a place in relations among states has been deeply corrosive of the rule of non-intervention, which once drew strength from the general acceptance that states alone have rights in international law.'⁴²

⁴² Hedley Bull, ed., *Intervention in world politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 183.

It was assumptions of this kind that underpinned the detente policies of the 1970s and 1980s pioneered by European social democrats, who were deeply distrustful of American idealism. They strongly favoured disarmament and arms control as well as openings to the East but opposed the muscular language of human rights. I remember Denis Healey, former Labour Foreign Secretary, saying in the early 1980s when the Polish solidarity movement was at its height: 'I prefer stability to solidarity.'

International lawyers in the United States also make this argument in opposition to the war in Iraq and to the Bush administration's doctrine of pre-emption. Douglass Cassel of Northwestern University argues that a 'preemptive strike in these circumstances would rupture the framework of international law built since World War II and provide a precedent for future aggression by powerful states whose agendas might be quite different from the United States.'⁴³ Possible examples are a Chinese attack on Taiwan, India or Pakistan attacking each other, or Russia invading Georgia.

Robert Kagan has criticized the multilateralist view on the grounds that it reflects Europe's weakness. He argues that the multilateralist view is only possible because Europeans can rely on American military force.⁴⁴ Of course, Kagan assumes that 'compellence' works and that American military force does preserve stability. But he has a point about Europe's weakness. Can non-intervention nowadays be sustained in the face of crimes against humanity, genocide or massive violations of human rights? Do not Nye's 'C list threats' impinge on the rest of the world? 'New wars' do, after all, create the black holes that generate criminals, refugees and terrorists. Spectacle war is not the answer. But are there alternative means?

Cosmopolitanism

At the heart of the cosmopolitan position is the notion that a new form of political legitimacy needs to be constructed, one which offers an alternative to various forms of fundamentalism and exclusivism. The cosmopolitan position is idealist and multilateralist. It draws its inspiration from Immanuel Kant's perpetual peace project published in 1795. Kant argued that perpetual peace could be achieved in a world of states, based on republican (democratic) constitutions, where these states sign a permanent peace treaty with one another (the principle of non-intervention) but where cosmopolitan right (human rights) overrides sovereignty. He argued that cosmopolitan right need only be confined to the right of hospitality, i.e. that strangers should be tolerated and respected. It was Kant who pointed out that the global community had shrunk to the point where 'a right violated anywhere could be felt everywhere.'⁴⁵

⁴³ Quoted in Adele Simmons, 'Iraq: who's leading the protest?', *Chicago Sun-Times*, 13 Oct. 2002.

⁴⁴ Kagan, 'The power divide'.

⁴⁵ 'Perpetual peace' (1795), in Hans Reiss, ed., *Kant's political writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Thus the cosmopolitan ideal combines a commitment to humanist principles and norms, an assumption of human equality, with a recognition of difference, and indeed a celebration of diversity.⁴⁶ To be idealist is not necessarily to be unrealistic. In a world where 'compellance' no longer works, the only alternative is containment; and this has to be done through political and legal means. Politically, the cosmopolitan ideal has to offer an alternative that can undercut support for extremists. Religious fundamentalism and ultranationalism are rarely popular; their support depends on the weakness of alternatives. These exclusive ideologies are bred primarily but not only in 'weak' or 'failing' states, out of the despair of the excluded. In legal terms, the cosmopolitan ideal has to be situated within a multilateralist set of rules and procedures that apply equally to all individuals and can be seen to be fair.

There is a role for military means in this vision—but as containment, not spectacle war. A cosmopolitan global community cannot stand aside when genocide is committed, as in Rwanda, for example. But military tasks should be confined to the protection of civilians and the arrest of war criminals, and should be authorized through the appropriate multilateral procedures. Normally, this means UN Security Council authorization, but there could be a set of principles in exceptional cases; if such principles were violated, then there would have to be procedures for appeal.⁴⁷ The task of military containment may well include air power, but it would have to be viewed as tactical power in support of protection forces. Hence there is an argument for 'defence transformation' to develop military forces that are trained neither for spectacle war nor for classic peacekeeping; the transformation needed is one of roles and tactics rather than technology. Military containment needs to be conceived as international law enforcement, not as war-fighting.

The cosmopolitans thus share the Bushite assumption that sovereignty is conditional; but in this view conditionality applies to all states and, moreover, the conditions cannot be determined unilaterally but only through a set of multilateral agreed procedures. The cosmopolitans are, for example, deeply critical of the current American attempts to undermine the International Criminal Court by reaching bilateral agreements which would exempt Americans from criminal charges. The United States cannot be exempted from the ICC because that implies that Americans are exceptionally privileged—a position that directly challenges the fundamental assumption of human equality. In the case of Iraq, cosmopolitans would, for example, favour regime change and indeed might support a multilateral humanitarian intervention aimed at protecting the Iraqi

⁴⁶ Anthony Appiah, 'Cosmopolitan patriots', in Joshua Cohen, ed., *For love of country: debating the limits of patriotism*. Martha C. Nussbaum and respondents (Cambridge, MA: Beacon Press, 1996).

⁴⁷ A set of principles were specified by the Independent International Commission on Kosovo, chaired by Judge Richard Goldstone. They included three threshold principles: there must be evidence of an impending humanitarian catastrophe; there must be an overriding commitment to the protection of civilians; and there must be a reasonable chance of success. See Independent International Commission on Kosovo, *Kosovo Report* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch. 6.

people from Saddam Hussein. But they would oppose a unilateral 'spectacle war'.⁴⁸

Cosmopolitanism has to be able to offer an alternative reality. Paradoxically, it is the current American administration and its enemies who are getting away with an unreal vision of the world. War, for them, is a form of escapism, which diverts attention from everyday life. Especially for the religious fundamentalists and ultranationalists, war is a way of reminding people of a supposedly purer, less difficult past; a form of nostalgia, where spiritual values are more important than the material present. They are often master manipulators of the new media, using television, videocassettes and radio to convey their message.

This is another reason why cosmopolitans also need to have an economic programme, a multilateralist commitment not just to a liberal world economy but also to global social justice. The commitment to an international rule of law and to global security, based on cosmopolitan principles, is the precondition for improving everyday life; but human rights do also include economic and social rights.

Many European social democrats stress this aspect of multilateralism, as do some elements of the anti-imperialist camp. This argument acquired increased momentum in the aftermath of 11 September. Tony Blair, for example, made a strong appeal for a new global justice agenda. 'One illusion has been shattered on 11 September,' he said on a trip to the United States: 'that we can have the good life of the West irrespective of the state of the rest of the world ... the dragon's teeth are planted in the fertile soil of wrongs unrighted, of disputes left to fester for years, of failed states, of poverty and deprivation.'⁴⁹ Or, as George Soros put it in his latest book: 'The terrorist attacks on September 11 have brought home to us in a tragic fashion how interdependent the world has become and how important it is for our internal security what internal conditions prevail in other countries.'⁵⁰ The French government proposed a Tobin tax and the British and Scandinavian governments have been pushing for a big increase and untying of development aid. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is also part of the concern for global justice. Nevertheless, these efforts are so far modest and, despite some nods in their direction, have drawn little serious response from the Bush administration. Moreover, especially in the European case, the commitment to a liberal world economy still does not extend to the free movement of people.

Conclusion

The war on terrorism is not working. At the time of writing, the Russians have just stormed a theatre in Moscow where Chechen fighters held 800 people

⁴⁸ Salman Rushdie, 'The liberal case for regime change', *International Herald Tribune*, 2 Nov. 2002.

⁴⁹ Tony Blair, quoted in *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening democracy in a fragmented world* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 101.

⁵⁰ George Soros, *George Soros on globalization* (London: Perseus Books, 2002), p. 17.

hostage; over 100 have died so far because the special forces used a dangerous incapacitating agent. The Washington sniper has just been caught; he is called Mohammed and he says he supports what al-Qaeda did on 11 September. Two weeks ago, a nightclub in Bali was blown up, killing hundreds of young people from all over the world.

I have argued that only a cosmopolitan vision can, at least, contain the new sources of violence. We live in a world where privileging groups of people is counterproductive because it is no longer possible to insulate territory. We also live in a world where the utility of military force is much more limited than formerly. A political, legal and social approach is much more important as a way of dealing with terrorism. American power, despite its wealth and huge military forces, can be effective only within a cosmopolitan framework. This is why we need Americans to be what Richard Falk calls 'cosmopolitan patriots'.⁵¹

It is sometimes argued that the war on terrorism will be good for the global economy and help to prevent a recession in the United States. Expenditure on the war has permitted deficit financing and overspending may help to stimulate global growth. Unlike at the beginning of the Cold War, however, the United States no longer enjoys an external surplus. At that time, the world was desperate for dollars, and overseas military spending helped to stimulate both domestic growth in other countries and increases in US exports. Today the United States has a substantial current account deficit and is heavily indebted. Some argue that this does not matter because foreign investors are attracted by high American productivity growth. But increased overseas spending, especially to states with weak rule of law and inadequate governance, could merely end up increasing the deficit. For a new 'golden age', the United States needs global growth stimulated through a multilateral programme of assistance that offers the possibility of reconstructing legitimate authority.

Are there any prospects for reorienting American power, for dismantling the straitjacket of the Cold War heritage and harnessing American power to a set of cosmopolitan goals? In the immediate aftermath of 11 September, when even *Le Monde* proclaimed that 'we are all Americans', many people hoped that such a reorientation might happen because the threat was real. Wars often bring about dramatic restructuring, although not immediately. If terrorism continues to spread, if the economy fails to pick up, and if, above all, American democracy still has some life in it, then change is possible. On the one hand, wars of the new type tend to be polarizing, entrenching extremists on all sides; this is the experience of the Balkans or the Middle East. On the other hand, anti-war protest in the United States is gathering strength and new connections are being made among generals, who understand the limitations of war, global companies, whose profits depend on global stability, and immigrant groups, especially the Muslim community.

⁵¹ Richard Falk, 'Testing patriotism and citizenship in the global terror war', in Ken Booth and Tim Dunne, eds, *Worlds in collision: terror and the future of world order* (London: Palgrave, 2002).

I conclude, therefore, that the Asian human rights activist I quoted at the beginning is wrong. If the American political system continues to be distorted by the manipulation of public opinion through spectacle war, then it no longer represents the ideal of democratic deliberation propounded by the founding fathers, which has been such an inspiration to the rest of the world. The current strategy of 'spectacle war' may have the effect of repressing democracy. But if America is to remain a truly open, reasoning society, then it needs democracy in the rest of the world. There is no such thing as democracy in one country any longer.