Introduction

As the diplomatic relations between the United States and some of its traditional European allies grew strained after September 11, so too did the attitudes of Europeans regarding the United States decline considerably. Positive opinions of the United States dropped in France from 62 percent in 1999/2000 to 43 percent in June 2003, as reported by the Pew Global Attitudes Project (discussed in chapter 1). In Germany the fall was even more dramatic, from 78 percent to 45 percent, and in Spain, from 50 percent to 38 percent. One can clearly conclude that large majorities in key Western European countries have ceased to be positively predisposed to the United States.

Several objective and strategic factors help explain this growth in anti-Americanism. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war have meant that Western Europe no longer needs the protection of U.S. troops, which in turn makes a public anti-American rhetoric more permissible than in the past. In addition, as the United States emerged as the single superpower (a tendency long before 1989 but only explicit after the demise of the Soviet empire), it became a more obvious target; Europeans could resent American power more while also

paradoxically expecting the United States to shoulder more international responsibilities.

In retrospect, the period between the fall of the Berlin wall on November 9, 1989, and the terrorist attacks in Washington, D.C., and New York City on September 11, 2001, can be viewed as a transition period in the emergence of a new international system, including a profound transformation of European attitudes toward the United States. The United States responded to terrorism robustly with the wars against the Taliban and against Saddam Hussein. Although a minority of Europeans genuinely supported these wars, there was also extensive opposition, based on an underlying inclination toward a policy of appeasement. This difference heightened tensions across the Atlantic. For the United States, September 11 indicated the need for strategies to reduce security threats. For many Europeans, September 11 was taken as evidence of how American behavior elicits hostility and how it would therefore be up to Americans to repent and change their ways. September 11 and its aftermath proved to be a turning point in European anti-Americanism, which has become an increasingly open and acceptable attitude.

Yet this transformation of European attitudes regarding the United States would not have been as pointed had it not been for another factor, related to the strategic post–cold war changes. As the process of European unification progressed, anti-Americanism proved to be a useful ideology for the definition of a new European identity. Currently, the main way Europe defines itself as European is precisely by underscoring its difference from the United States. To be sure, this is not the only way to define Europe, nor must it remain that way in the future. If the European political class were to speak out more forcefully against anti-Americanism, other understandings of "Europe" might be possible. Yet in the meantime, treating the

United States as the alternative to Europe—rather than as a partner—retains considerable attraction.

Writing in February 2002, after the success of the Afghanistan war, the author Salman Rushdie commented: "Anybody who has visited Britain and Europe, or followed the public conversation there during the past five months, will have been struck, even shocked, by the depth of anti-American feeling among large segments of the population, as well as the news media. Western anti-Americanism is an altogether more petulant phenomenon than its Islamic counterpart and, oddly, far more personalized. Muslim countries don't like America's power, its 'arrogance,' its success; in the non-American West, the main objection seems to be to American *people*."[1] Anti-Americanism, in other words, may take this or that policy dispute as a pretext for criticism about the United States. European anti-Americanism, however, involves a hostility that goes far beyond specific policies and entails a much larger and generalized disdain for America and Americans. It has elements of ideology and obsession; it is cultural and irrational; and it is likely to remain a feature of relations between the United States and Europe for the foreseeable future. Particularly in the cultural elite, but by no means only there, the animosity toward the United States is deep. As celebrated German theater director Peter Zadek has put it with admirable clarity: "I think that it is cowardly that many people distinguish between the American people and the current American administration. The Bush administration was more or less democratically elected, and it had the support of the majority of Americans in its Iraq war. One can therefore be

1. Salman Rushdie, "February 2002: Anti-Americanism," in Rushdie, *Step across This Line: Collected Nonfiction 1992–2002* (New York: Random House, 2002), 343.

against the Americans, just as most of the world was against the Germans in the Second World War. In this sense, I am an anti-American."[2] This one example stands for many instances of the European culture of anti-Americanism.

This book explores various dimensions of contemporary European anti-Americanism. Because anti-Americanism is a cultural problem—albeit with enormous consequences for policy—the tools of cultural analysis are necessary to understand it. Chapter 1 examines several recent surveys in order to determine the quantitative scope of anti-American sentiment, especially since September 11. The focus is on Germany, the key continental European ally during the cold war but also the site of the initial dispute over Iraq policy. German attitudes to the United States are interesting in various ways: the positive image of the United States has declined there more rapidly than in other European countries, whereas on various cultural questions, the Germans (or the West Germans, at least) are more like Americans than other Europeans. German anti-Americanism has features that are peculiarly German, as well as epitomizing a larger European phenomenon.

Because anti-Americanism is so much a matter of culture, the subsequent chapters examine various cultural traditions, intellectual historical lineages, and the attitudes of members of the cultural elite. Chapter 2 describes how anti-Americanism goes beyond rational debates over policy—a critic of this or that American policy is hardly necessarily an anti-American—and takes on an obsessive character. Anti-Americanism operates like a prejudice and a stereotype in the sense that it is impervious to rational arguments or factual proof. In general, European anti-

2. "Kulturkampf? Ich bin dabei: Spiegelgespräch," *Der Spiegel,* July 14, 2003.

Americanism has deep cultural roots, stretching back for centuries. The discovery of a "new world" challenged the European worldview and self-understanding, leading to various preconceptions about America: too violent, too democratic, too powerful. In addition, this chapter suggests a typology of three different variants of anti-Americanism: a predemocratic cultural elitism that dismisses American mass culture; the antidemocratic legacy of the Communist attacks on the United States, left over from the cold war; and a postdemocratic resentment that the United States retains an independence and sovereignty while the European nations submit increasingly to transnational forms of governance.

Chapter 3 examines the shape of anti-Americanism in the debates over the Iraq war. The sudden rage that erupted against the United States in major Western European cities, examined closely, is symptomatic of the emerging European identity. Although critics of the war regularly warned against upheavals around the world, it was primarily in Western Europe that anti-American demonstrators took to the streets. By supporting a policy of appeasement toward Saddam Hussein and opposing the democratization of Iraq, the Europeans, in the streets and in some governments, shed light on the political substance at stake. Their reluctance to criticize authoritarian regimes has led them to a position hostile to any "regime change." Indeed, for European anti-Americanism, no regime is so bad that it could ever warrant supporting the United States in bringing that regime to an end: not in Serbia, not in Afghanistan, and not in Iraq.

Chapter 4 explores the roots of anti-Americanism in this reluctance to criticize bad regimes for fear of siding with the United States. The historical and metaphorical frame around the two Iraq wars—the comparison of Saddam and Hitler—turns out to be quite illuminating on this point. When all is said and

done, the world did not rush to oppose either dictator; on the contrary, appeasement and a certain reality denial defined the relationship to Nazi Germany as much as it did to Saddam's Iraq. For Western Europeans, and perhaps for many others, it has always been more comfortable to ignore the violence of totalitarian states. Because the United States sets a higher moral standard in a way that causes discomfort to the appeasers, it becomes the target of resentment: another source of anti-Americanism.

The fifth and final chapter looks at another variation of anti-Americanism: the movement against globalization. Antiglobalization has become the most prominent form of anticapitalism since the collapse of Communism. As post-Communist anticapitalism, it overlaps considerably with anti-Americanism. This chapter examines the rhetoric of anti-Americanism in the writings of the French philosopher and social theorist Jean Baudrillard and the Indian author Arundhati Roy; Roy's anti-American writings have been widely circulated in Western Europe in the context of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Both writers lodge the critique of the United States within frameworks of antiglobalization. Their positions are contrasted with an alternative judgment from an earlier historical period, that of the German philosopher Theodor Adorno, some of whose writings on the legacy of Nazi Germany explore the overlap between anti-Americanism and antimodernization. Adorno suggests that the greater orientation toward democratic and free market structures in England and America explains their historical willingness to confront totalitarianism, just as continental European statism contributed to a predisposition to collaboration. This thesis implies that contemporary Western European anti-Americanism is not just a response to U.S. policies in Afghanistan and

Iraq but a much deeper rejection of those free market principles that Germans sometimes call "American conditions."

Anti-Americanism is not going to disappear in Western Europe overnight. The debate that erupted in the wake of September 11 has not been just a friendly disagreement. A deep divide has emerged. This book is intended as a contribution to understanding this important ideological challenge.

San Francisco, August 2003