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**Anti-Americanism,
U.S. Foreign
Policy,
and the
War on
Terrorism**

Adam Garfinkle

To the extent that those who do not like America admit the fact, nearly all contend that the reason lies not with them but with and within America. A few such persons go beyond dislike to hatred, and a few of those go from passive to active expressions of that hatred. A few of those active expressions are violent, and a few of those, if they randomly target civilians, are terrorist. And a very few of those, if they cross trend lines with WMD proliferation, are arguably the most dangerous national security threat facing America today.

Now, if anti-Americanism is really the fault of the United States, if American policies justify the hatred of others toward the United States, then it follows logically that we can eliminate the terrorist threat if and only if we change our policies. If that is true, then all our exertions at public diplomacy, all our efforts to understand the sociology of the Arab and Mus-

This chapter reflects the author's own views and does not represent the views of the U.S. government or the Department of State.

lim worlds, all our labors to liberalize the political cultures of the Middle East are pointless and futile. If such a view were true, it would be very important to know it, because such knowledge could save us an enormous amount of time, money, and misplaced expectations. Armed with such knowledge, we could simply economically change the bad policies with dispatch, and that, presumably, would be that.

A good example of that very view is exemplified in a fairly recent article by Lamis Andoni, a Jordanian journalist who is by no means a radical, a terrorist, or an irrational hysteric. This well-known and well-respected Arab journalist is sure that American policies “perpetuate inequities and exacerbate regional conflicts,” which is a code phrase, of course, for America’s support for Israel. That support is why, Andoni claims, “neither U.S. control over the flow of news, nor the efforts of Pentagon and Madison Avenue spin doctors, can ease the resentment of U.S. policies and actions that have affected the lives, hearts, and minds of the people of the region.”

More than that, Andoni is “alarmed” that “the United States fails to realize that a foreign policy based solely on such principles of power and domination leave no room for legitimate political opposition, driving all discontent into the camp of extremists and terrorists.”¹ Hence the conclusion, so widespread even among those who do not hate America, that we “deserved” what we got on September 11, 2001. We presumably deserved what we got because we exacerbate conflicts,

1. Lamis Andoni, “Deeds Speak Louder Than Words,” in *The Battle for Hearts and Minds: Using Soft Power to Undermine Terrorist Networks*, ed. Alexander T.J. Lennon (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 262–63. A similar account of Muslim/Indonesian views may be gleaned from Jane Perlez, “U.S. Asks Muslims Why It Is Unloved. Indonesians Reply,” *New York Times*, September 27, 2003; and Pakistani views from Hussein Haqqaqi, “The Rage of Moderate Islam,” *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2004, 74–76. Haqqaqi reviews Khursheed Ahmed’s *Amrika: Luslim Dunya ki Bey-Itminani* (“America and Unrest in the Muslim World”) (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 2002).

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and we are responsible for authoritarian Arab and Muslim governments that repress all dissent and force people to extremism and terrorism. Our victimhood, in short, is all our own fault.

Those who believe this line of argument are thoroughly unconcerned about the principles and interests that might be adversely affected by abrupt and major changes in U.S. policy. They are unconcerned for one, or both, of two reasons. The first reason is the assumption that there would *be* no adverse effects—that policies that deserve to be hated ought to be changed, terrorism or no terrorism. The second is that no principle or interest could be as important as eliminating the threat of mass-casualty terrorism that confronts America.

If the situation is really so simple and clear-cut, why, then, do such supposedly terrible and counterproductive U.S. policies persist as they do? Many abroad, and some in the United States, who take this point of view have a handy explanation: because U.S. policy is in thrall to a powerful domestic lobby—the Jews.² It never occurs to most such people that the president and those of his cabinet members who are relevant to foreign policy—none of whom are Jews—might have good reasons, fully in the U.S. national interest, for the policies they determine. Were these people to acknowledge such reasons, however, it would mean that their own views were not so obviously justified after all. So, those who hold such views of the origins of U.S. policies instead prefer explanations based on plots and conspiracies because those explanations are so easy on the brain and are so comforting to preconceived biases.

Not a single element of what we may call the Andoni et al.

2. A popular example in a European context is Michael Lind, "The Israel Lobby," *Prospect* (April 2002). My rebuttal may be found in "The Israel Lobby—Part II," *Prospect* (September 2002). In the United States, almost any issue of Patrick Buchanan's magazine *The American Conservative* will display an example.

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argument is correct. Only some anti-Americanism is a function of American policy, and the most dangerous kind linked to terrorism really is not (of which, more below). Changing good, reasonable policies under the pressure of terrorist threats would not make us safer. To the contrary, it would unleash a feeding frenzy of pressure on American interests worldwide. A self-interested, parochial cabal does not control American foreign policy against the national interest. Nor is it true, as always implied if not always stated, that U.S. support for Israel is really at the top of every Arab and Muslim's agenda, despite the efforts of al-Jazeera's electronic yellow journalism to make it so.³ And American foreign policy is most certainly *not* based solely on "principles of power and domination."

For what it may be worth, the United States is also not responsible for the rise of authoritarian government in the Middle East. Such authoritarianism was firmly in place long before American influence arrived on the scene, and our capacity to change it today is much more limited than many think. In addition, the very same people who chastise us for intervening imperially into affairs that are supposedly none of our business are often the first ones to urge us to intervene into the affairs of those they dislike and wish to constrain or harm.

But because the general story line sketched above is so widely believed in the Middle East, and increasingly in Europe, public diplomacy and other "soft" instruments of

3. It certainly is not a big concern in post-Ba'athi Iraq, to take one important example. Ambassador Hume Horan was attached to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, from which he traveled the country for several months, having hundreds of conversations with Iraqis from all walks of life. "I've been here four months," Ambassador Horan wrote to me, "and *no one has ever raised the Palestinians or the Arab-Israeli issue with me*. Stale Arab causes are in the doghouse these days." E-mail communication, September 4, 2003 (emphasis in original).

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American policy are necessary and important and can surely do some good if wisely employed.

Of course, there are limits. We will never convince most of our enemies that their addled, paranoid, conspiratorial way of seeing the world is mistaken, and we must still do what we think is right, even if others misunderstand our motives for doing it. The clearest and most unapologetic articulation of this truth is that of Fouad Ajami:

There should be no illusions about the sort of Arab landscape that America is destined to find if, or when, it embarks on a war against the Iraqi regime. There would be no “hearts and minds” to be won in the Arab world, no public diplomacy that would convince the overwhelming majority of Arabs that this war would be a just war. An American expedition in the wake of thwarted UN inspections would be seen by the vast majority of Arabs as an imperial reach into their world, a favor to Israel, or a way for the United States to secure control over Iraq’s oil. No hearing would be given to the great foreign power.

America ought to be able to live with this distrust and discount a good deal of this anti-Americanism as the “road rage” of a thwarted Arab world—the congenital condition of a culture yet to take full responsibility for its self-inflicted wounds. There is no need to pay excessive deference to the political pieties and givens of the region.⁴

All of this is true enough. But that misunderstanding, as pervasive as it is, is an autonomous factor—it is part of our problem, and not, all things considered, a small part. We *can* convince some in the Middle East that this story line is wrong, not least because it *is* wrong. We have to try. To try, however, we need a more sophisticated understanding of anti-Americanism and of a growing Middle Eastern anti-Semitism that is closely related to it.

4. Fouad Ajami, “Iraq and the Arabs’ Future,” *Foreign Affairs* (January–February 2003).

The Nature of Anti-Americanism

There is loose in the world a perception of sharply rising anti-Americanism. That perception resides not least in the minds of many newspaper and journal editors and sundry other intellectuals, both in the United States and abroad. The frequent repetition of this perception bears influence in its own right, whether or not the facts match the perception—and to a considerable extent, they don't.

Let's be honest: much of the commentary on rising anti-Americanism presumes a cause—the supposed arrogance, self-absorption, and unilateralism of the George W. Bush administration. Those members of the “commentariat” who accept this characterization of the U.S. administration often begin with a conclusion that then presumes to sire its own factual premise.⁵

The actual facts say otherwise. True, there has been an increase in anti-Americanism in the past few years, and there has been a sharp spike corresponding to the period of the war in Iraq. But the increase has not been nearly as great as the commentariat typically suggests, and the reasons for the increase are more varied than usually averred. So says not only the U.S. Department of State's global opinion monitors but also a host of private professional polling and opinion analysis organizations.

Of course, measuring opinion is notoriously difficult, even in one's own country. It is harder still in countries with different attitudes toward the press and the common weal in general. Establishing the reasons that people express the opinions they do is harder still (of which also, more below). The begin-

5. A similar argument is advanced by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell in *The Economist's* special issue, “The World in 2004” (January 2004): 66.

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ning of wisdom in making one's way through this thorny topic is recognizing that distinctions matter. Anti-Americanism is, in truth, not one phenomenon but several.

Some people loathe the very idea of America. Even after "the end of history," in Francis Fukuyama's famous phrase, there are those who disparage the institutions of constitutional liberalism, who deprecate democracy, and who despise free-market economies. There are still many outside the zone of Western culture who equate liberty with license and equality under the law with the violation of some imagined hierarchy thought to inhere in nature itself. Opposition to America as an idea is an old prejudice indeed, going back to the very founding of the Republic. One may call it *philosophical* anti-Americanism.

Others do not like what they know of American culture, which inundates many societies these days without asking the permission of their elders. Not everyone likes popular cultural artifacts that are steeped in vulgarity, disrespect for elders and teachers, and countless variations on puerile promiscuity; even in the United States, there are a few of us left who feel the same way. We see, however, that freedom entails the right of others to debase themselves, and we know that we need not join their clubs if we do not wish to do so. But many abroad miss this subtlety. One may call their distate *cultural* anti-Americanism.

Still others like neither the particular policies of the American government nor the key personalities in a particular American administration. We may call this *contingent* anti-Americanism.

Sometimes philosophical, cultural, and contingent forms of anti-Americanism overlap. Often, however, they do not. Nor are these three varieties or facets of anti-Americanism evenly distributed around the world. The data show the

sharpest contemporary anti-Americanism to be concentrated in two groups; but, as we will see, these groups do not much share the same kind of anti-Americanism.

The first of these groups is large: average citizens in most Arab and many majority-Muslim societies. Anti-Americanism is often expressed in these societies in terms of particular policies: toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, toward the stationing of U.S. military forces in the region, and, until spring 2003, toward the sanctions regime against Iraq (and since then toward the American “occupation” of Iraq). Many people in the Arab and Muslim worlds distinguish between America and the American people on the one hand, and the American government on the other. This distinction is why it is really not so hard to understand why the same people who publicly excoriate America in one breath are often eager to express a desire to visit, work, and even immigrate to the United States in the next.

Not all Arab and Muslim anti-Americanism is of the contingent sort. Certainly, the supporters of Osama bin Laden are possessed of a rabid philosophical anti-Americanism. But in between the typical man on the street and the Islamist ideologue is a growing cultural anti-Americanism.

In this era of information technology diffusion, cultural anti-Americanism is spreading worldwide. So too, oddly enough as it would seem, is the popularity of American mass-market culture—rock music, jeans, backward baseball caps, and the rest. This seeming contradiction is not a contradiction at all, however. The fact is that rapid social change, accelerated by the information revolution, has produced a huge generation gap in many traditional and transitional societies. The young abroad tend to anathematize American policies while embracing American styles. Older people tend to anathema-

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tize American styles, regardless of what they may think and feel about American policies.

America's image in the world, popular or not, is seriously distorted by our pop cultural extrusions. The source of the distortion exists, in part, because Hollywood and the American advertising culture export images of America abroad that do not match American social realities.

Several studies—including many directed by Dr. George Gerbner at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications—have shown, for example, that characters on network television are at least *fifty* times more likely to fall victim to acts of violence than the citizens of the real America. Violence is even more prevalent in exports of American television shows and movies, for the simple reason that the main expense in preparing a film for export is the cost of translation, whether dubbing or writing subtitles. The richer and more subtle the dialogue and plot, the harder and more costly the translation. Explosions and gunfire, alas, do not require translation, so films rich in such pyrotechnics are usually cheaper to export, hence more profitable for the studios.

In American entertainment exports, depictions of sex outside marriage are nine to fourteen times more common than dramatizations of marital sex. This is a fictional proportionality, one can safely assume, that is wildly out of whack with the real America. It would be wildly out of whack even with the real France, Italy, and Germany. One hopes so, anyway.

For better *and* for worse, there is little the U.S. government can do about America's entertainment industry exports. However, the cumulative impact of those exports on how America is seen and judged outside our borders is not so small. This is particularly so in parts of the world where traditional religious attitudes toward sexuality remain intact—in other words,

where they resemble attitudes almost universally held in the United States until only a few generations ago. (It is very important for Americans to realize that the values gap between American society and societies like those of Iran and Egypt has been produced not by recent changes in Iran and Egypt but by recent changes in America.)

The second major focus of contemporary anti-Americanism is much smaller in terms of the number of people involved: certain groups of intellectuals, mainly in Europe. But the influence of a small number of intellectuals is not thereby small. Ideas, even bad ones, have power. For these groups, disenchantment with American policies is more the pretext for an anti-Americanism that is philosophically deep-seated. This philosophical anti-Americanism has an old pedigree in resentment of a free and socially freewheeling America by the conservative, aristocratic blue bloods of Europe.

That such a prejudice, in somewhat modified form, has spread to the European Left over the past half-century is an ironic and interesting development. This spread can be seen in the recent book by Emmanuel Todd, *Après l'Empire: Essai sur la décomposition du système américain*, which was enormously popular and influential in France, and elsewhere in Europe, just before and during the war in Iraq. However, Todd, who describes America as the "singular threat to global stability weighing on the world today," has not been able to overtake the popularity of Michael Moore in Germany. *"Stupid White Men": Eine Abrechnung dem Amerika unter George W. Bush* has been, by far, the best-selling item of its kind in German translation. This anti-administration diatribe has sold well over a million copies and was on the German best-seller list for more than forty weeks running in 2002 and 2003. For several weeks in spring 2003, it topped the list. As of this writing, Moore's book has sold *more copies in German* than has the original

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English-language edition in North America, where the market is far larger.

Moore's film *Bowling for Columbine* has also been very popular in Germany; about a million people have viewed it to date, according to sources in the U.S. embassy in Berlin. Touted as a true-to-life depiction of America's violent culture, some German middle and high school teachers have proclaimed mandatory field trips to take students to see it. As Fred Kempe of the *European Wall Street Journal* put it, it cannot be without some significance (significance for Germany, not for the United States) that Michael Moore is the most popular American in Germany.

In Germany, and elsewhere in western Europe, cultural and contingent anti-Americanism have clearly mixed with and helped spread philosophical anti-Americanism during the past two years. Whether this new mixture will "take," however, and give rise to a new anti-American reality in Europe remains an open question. Most likely it won't, at least not among typical Europeans. Among *Muslims* living in Europe, however, it is another matter.

Outside of these two groups—the Arab/Muslim domain and a small group of European intellectuals—recent increases in anti-Americanism are either modest or nonexistent. One highly respected survey, the Pew Global Attitudes Project (PGAP), put it this way in 2002: "While criticism of America is on the rise, a reserve of goodwill toward the United States still remains." The United States and its citizens were positively rated by majorities in thirty-five out of forty-two countries in the PGAP survey.

It is worth recalling, too, that recent increases in anti-Americanism have followed a period, after September 11, 2001, in which sympathy for the United States spiked up in most regions and countries. Increased anti-Americanism has

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also come in train with two U.S.-led wars, in Afghanistan and Iraq, that took place within a relatively short period. Clearly, the need for the United States to respond with military force to the events of September 11 inevitably magnified the perception of American “hard” power in a way that has made many people abroad uncomfortable.

Nonetheless, despite these special circumstances, the level of ill will for the United States expressed in the past two to three years is not markedly different from that expressed five or ten or twenty years ago. We have not, therefore, witnessed a deepening groundswell of hatred for the United States. In addition, it is very likely that the increases we have witnessed with the Iraq War will subside in due course, notably in Europe. Indeed, some recent data suggest that they already are.

Beyond media exaggerations, the perception of a sharp rise in anti-Americanism owes much to a key misperception among many Americans. The terrorist attacks of September 11 surprised most Americans, as well as frightened them. As the spate of “Why do they hate us?” press features illustrated, most Americans were not aware of much anti-American resentment in the world until it issued forth in large-scale murder on U.S. soil. As a rule, Americans are fairly informal and friendly people. Unless given a reason not to, they are inclined to like other peoples, and they expect other peoples to like them. Our citizens have been disturbed to learn that not everyone does like Americans, and this sudden awareness has led many to overestimate now what they underestimated before.

Other sorts of dynamics affect opinion and polling outside the United States. Some of what gets counted as anti-Americanism is not always as it seems. Anti-Americanism in some Middle Eastern climes has an almost allegorical character to it.

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In authoritarian political cultures, the average person is often reluctant to answer pollsters' questions honestly. In some of those cultures, too, citizens may be tempted to deflect frustration with their own government and society by blaming America. After all, America is far away, and it will not send goons with guns and billy clubs to knock on the door in the middle of the night.

Some authoritarian governments, justifiably frightened of their own people's wrath, actively encourage such deflectionary anti-Americanism in their official press. Many such governments have systematically been doing this for years, and some, amazingly, still claim to be true allies of the United States. If asked for a political opinion by a pollster, typical respondents stuck in such an information environment may say what they think their government wants them to say. They may believe their own answers, or they may not; it is almost impossible to know. Either way, toeing the official line is a way to stay out of trouble and to please those who control status, jobs, and access to credit.

The genealogy of Europe's philosophical anti-Americanism, on the other hand, has nothing to do with allegory. As James W. Ceaser pointed out in the summer 2002 issue of *The Public Interest*, in the late eighteenth century, many educated Europeans believed that the climate of America was prone to creating degeneracy and monstrosity in all living things. The Count de Buffon originated this preposterous thesis, which was taken up and popularized by Cornelius de Pauw. Thomas Jefferson took pains in his only book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, to debunk it.

In the nineteenth century, European anti-Americanism focused on opposition to the universalist principles of American public life. Many anti-Americans were romantics who found in America an excess of rationalism and who excoriated

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America for having no real culture or history and no noteworthy national bloodline. What America did have, as many European intellectuals from privileged classes saw it, was a dangerous obsession with leveling of all kinds.

From Joseph de Maistre to Heinrich Heine, this anti-American view dominated European intellectual life for decades and it was joined toward the end of the nineteenth century by a more explicitly racist element. Americans were racially impure and hence degenerate, said Arthur de Gobineau, the inventor, it so happens, of modern “scientific” anti-Semitism. This idea was more widespread than one would like nowadays to think. (The association of anti-Semitism with anti-Americanism has precedent, by the way: much anti-British sentiment during the heyday of British power, when London epitomized modernity and rationality, was also heavily laden with anti-Semitism, as the rantings of John Atkinson Hobson illustrate.)

In the twentieth century, anti-Americanism joined with newer streams of antimodernism. As Ceaser points out, not a small number of European intellectuals loathed standardized industrial production and were deeply suspicious of “culture for the masses.” Thus, for example, Friedrich Nietzsche and Rainer Marie Rilke’s intense dislike of America. The term *Americanization* was coined to mean turning true culture and spirit into base materialism. Thus, the influential view of Martin Heidegger, who started as a Nazi sympathizer but whose fulminations subsequently infused the postwar European Left through Jean-Paul Sartre and others. As prelude to Europe’s Luddite-like antiglobalization movement of our own time, to the thinking of Emmanuel Todd as well as Jose Bové, this legacy of European thought finds its place.

The Old-New Anti-Semitism

Obviously, there are many people in the Arab and Muslim worlds who are in no way anti-American. Obviously, too, most Europeans do not share the prejudices of a segment of their intellectual elite. Even so, anti-Americanism is a problem, not least because, as noted at the outset, a small number of people are motivated to translate their prejudice into violence. What is interesting, but also worrisome, is the coming together of strains of both anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism among radicalized Muslims born in Europe.

Olivier Roy's analysis points to a rich and varied Muslim sociology in western Europe. Roy has given thought, in passing in this volume and in greater length elsewhere, to the possibility that radical Islam in Europe might ally with radical left-wing movements (and maybe even radical right-wing movements). If so, the rabid anti-Semitism of both would serve as an anchor of common belief.

Roy has also pointed out that radical Muslims really come in two different categories. There are local or regional radicals, whose targets tend to be all that they define as alien to Islam in their midst: Jews and foreigners and the locals who "serve" them. For example, recent attacks in Morocco, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere were aimed not at local residents or even at government targets, such as police or political figures; instead, they were aimed at synagogues, foreign consulates, and restaurants and facilities where nonresidents congregate. In the Saudi case of November 2003, the attacks were aimed at non-Saudi Arabs.

The other category Roy (and others) defines as internationalist. These are mostly Arabs who live in the West, speak a Western language, lack a formal Islamic religious education,

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and have taken a Western academic program. Most have been radicalized in Europe; some are immigrants, but most are European-born. Many do not speak Arabic or any Middle Eastern language. In the course of their radicalization, they break with their families and, indeed, with traditional Islamic and diaspora traditions. These are rootless internationalist radicals, who were followers of Sayyid Qutb before they were followers of Osama bin Laden. Their aim is to strike at the source of the humiliation and powerlessness of Islam—the West, led by the United States.

Such radicals have one foot in the West and one in an idealist Islam that lacks genuine Middle Eastern roots. They are a modern, or postmodern, phenomenon of deculturation under the pressures of globalization. Their methods, too, are modern, and their aims have little to do with the Middle East. Roy points out that the favorite destinations for jihad of Muslim internationalists are at the periphery of the Muslim world: Chechnya, Bosnia, Kashmir, and New York. There are no examples of people like Muhammad Atta returning to their or their family's country of origin to engage in jihad.

These radicals, the most dangerous international terrorists, do not care about parochial conflicts in Algeria, Egypt, or Palestine. Osama bin Laden's *fatwa* against Jews and crusaders was issued when the Oslo process appeared to be going fine. If they hate Ariel Sharon, they hated Ehud Barak no less. The contention that a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would have a significant positive effect on the kind of threat al Qaeda poses to the United States is therefore completely false.

A solution to that conflict would be a good thing, of course, for several other reasons. But any solution with which the United States would be involved would obviously leave Israel as a Jewish state in one set of borders or another. In return for that, the Palestinian Authority would have to agree to end the

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conflict short of totally recovering all of historical, geographical Palestine. If the Palestinians as a whole accept that sort of compromise, most Arabs and most Muslims would accept it, too. But some would not. Muslim radicals would see any Palestinian who agreed to such a settlement just as Istanbuli saw Sadat: as an apostate from true Islam who deserves to be killed. Even among local Islamists, the prospect of such a settlement could be expected to increase terrorism, not reduce it, at least in the short term.

Such a settlement's impact on al Qaeda terrorists would probably not be very significant. But any impact it would have would most likely lead to *more* terrorism, against the United States, not less, for its having sponsored or mediated such an unacceptable settlement. The fact is that when most Arabs and Muslims argue that U.S. policy unfairly tilts in favor of Israel, they do not mean that the United States emboldens and supports Israel's occupation of territories taken in the June 1967 war. Rather, they refer to "occupied Palestinian territories," which to most means all of Palestine. Over the years, the Arab media, official and otherwise, have peddled a truly demonic image of Israel—state, society, ideology, everything. Israel sterilizes Egyptian women by putting secret ingredients in chewing gum. Israel deliberately spreads AIDS to the Arabs. Israelis kill Arab children to bake their blood into matzos for Passover. An extraordinary number of Arabs actually believe that such utter nonsense is true.

With such demonization has come a European-imported "literary" anti-Semitism circa the 1930s, complete with popular Arabic versions of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁶ The way

6. See Robert S. Wistrich, "The Old-New Anti-Semitism," *The National Interest*, no. 72 (Summer 2003).

Israel has been depicted makes the idea of peace and normalization with it virtually unthinkable to most Arabs—except, ironically, to many Palestinians, who actually have some degree of personal familiarity with Israel.

Given this “vision” of what Israel is, which is very widely shared from Morocco to Indonesia, no imaginable American-sponsored compromise settlement could erase the contention that American policy is one-sided, unfair, perpetuates inequities, and so forth. Indeed, for America to be truly liked these days in much of the Arab and Muslim worlds, American society and policy would have to become as routinely and as matter-of-factly anti-Semitic as theirs. Happily, this is not very likely.

The issue of Palestine has special resonance in the Arab and Muslim worlds for several reasons. One is that it is the quintessential pan-Islamic issue, largely because of the status of the Haram al-Sharif, the area in Jerusalem containing the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. In addition, Palestine is a collective symbol of Arab humiliation, particularly so at the hands of the Jews, who don't come out too well in the Qur'an.

However, the Palestine issue is one that works only at the high symbolic level. It has nothing to do with borders, security arrangements, water rights, and all the other elements in dispute that Western analysts, casual and otherwise, spend almost all their time trying to figure out. Most Arabs and Muslims in countries that have no border with Israel are almost completely ignorant of the state of play on such discrete issues and couldn't care less about them. All they know is that Israel is illegitimate, occupies holy Jerusalem, and is an anti-Islamic spearhead of the Christian West—a message whose resonance comes from the continued perseveration on Western coloni-

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alism in these societies. Failing elites deploy such a fixation to explain (away) the pathetic state of most of these countries.⁷

In short, those who see an imposed solution to the Israeli-Palestinian/Arab conflict as a U.S. strategic imperative because of the general context of the war on terrorism are mistaken about every one of their premises. If the United States were to pressure a democratic ally to make concessions to Islamist terrorism, it would be open season on U.S. interests wherever those interests touch the Muslim world. India, Russia, China, and other non-Muslim countries that share borders with Islam, either internally or externally, would come to regret such a decision, too.

It is true, however, that America supports Israel and that, because of Israel's wildly distorted image in the Arab and Muslim worlds, America suffers by association. What can be done about this?

As Ajami suggests, not much can be done, soon or directly. Ironically, the best way to go at this problem would be for Palestinian Arabs to become truth-tellers to the rest of the Arab and Muslim world. That could happen if Palestinians and Israelis, on their own, not by imposition, could arrive at a stable compromise peace. This is possible; it is even likely over the next half dozen years. Then it might be possible for Jordanians and Egyptians to get to know the real Israel better; the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic stereotypes so prevalent in the region might become weakened over time through Palestinian, Egyptian, and Jordanian media and word-of-mouth. In other words, if there is peace, reality will eventually intrude on lurid fantasy. In the meantime, there is a real limit to what

7. See the excellent analysis on this point of Michael Doran, "Palestine, Iraq and American Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* (January–February 2002).

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American public diplomacy can achieve, particularly official, government-sponsored public diplomacy.

Last Words

A certain amount of anti-Americanism is inevitable. It goes with the territory of being number one in terms of raw military, political, and economic clout. The United States did not actively seek such a global status. Gideon Rose put it well: "America's role in international affairs today is not a sign of a quest for power, but a reflection of it."⁸ But it doesn't matter how we got to be number one. There will always be those who fear the power of others, no matter the disposition of those who control that power. There will always be those whose capacity for envy exceeds their capacity for appreciation. It is as Machiavelli said: "Men's hatreds generally spring from fear and envy." That means, these days, that the potential for terrorism based in anti-Americanism can probably never be eliminated completely, only controlled and managed.

Although a certain amount of anti-Americanism does come with the territory of great power status, the U.S. government has no business making an unfortunate situation worse. Those in government must be sensitive to the tone of their pronouncements, more so now than ever in the past: As U.S. power waxes, so must its sense of restraint and responsibility. American policy makers must exercise forethought as to how actions, even when taken with the most benevolent of motives, may be seen by others.

This means that public diplomacy functions must be taken more seriously. American officials can no longer assume, as

8. Gideon Rose, "Imperialism: The Highest State of American Capitalism?" *The National Interest*, no. 71 (Spring 2003).

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has historically been their inclination, that the truth about American intentions will be obvious to everyone, or at least to everyone who matters. This is particularly true in regard to people in societies without access to free media and in which conspiracy theories are often accepted as matters of fact. Official American public diplomacy must do a much better job at monitoring falsehood and incitement, talking back to it, and unapologetically explaining American policies. As the Djerejian Report insists, we need to spend more money—a lot more money—to do this right.⁹

But getting at the broader cultural side of the problem is, as Ellen Laipson argues, no longer a job for government.¹⁰ This function is very important, but it needs to be privatized. American and international foundations should be set up for such purposes, and those already in existence need to be quietly supported. Government can help coordinate some of these activities, encourage them with tax breaks, and help make sure the basic message is consistent with government policy. But any more direct role than that for government is the kiss of death as long as America's image remains as sullied, justifiably or not, as it is today. That is why the general "new" approach of Radio Sawa and Radio Farda is unfortunate; these media outlets are examples of approaches that ought to be in the private sector.¹¹ It is also why the U.S. government-run Al

9. *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World* (Washington, D.C.: Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Muslim World, October 1, 2003): 25–26.

10. See also Michael Holtzman, "Privatize Public Diplomacy" and "Selling America to the Muslims," *New York Times*, August 8, 2002, and October 7, 2003, respectively.

11. Radio Sawa isn't working. See, for example, Duraid al-Baik, "Media Battle Rages on Air to Win Over Arab Minds," *Arab News* (Dubai), (November 11, 2003).

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Hurra Arabic satellite television station, based in Springfield, Virginia, is likely to be a failure and a waste of money.¹²

The distinction between government and private sector efforts is important; but there is another distinction that bears stressing, or repeating. To the extent that anti-Americanism is based on honest disagreement with American philosophy or policies, Americans, in government and out, should accept it and learn to live with it. In some cases, some Americans see anti-Americanism where there is only honest disagreement with a policy choice. Americans who cannot distinguish between those who hate Americans and those who disagree on the merits with the policy choices of the American government are liable to cause more anti-Americanism than they can possibly identify.

But to the extent that anti-Americanism is based on irrational premises that spring from social-political dysfunction abroad, we need to unmask and contend with that irrationality and dysfunction. Americans are, by and large, open to rational persuasion, and sometimes we are persuaded. But the American government should not, and will not, alter policies it knows to be correct just to please those who threaten the United States. It certainly will not bend before those who defame and impugn the United States from pathologies of their own making. After all, as many a wit has pointed out, it can be an honor to be hated, if one is hated by the right sort of people.

12. See Jim Rutenberg, "Coming Soon to Arab TVs: U.S. Answer to Al Jazeera, Production Values and All," *New York Times*, December 27, 2003.