

## Introduction to the Hoover Classics Edition

The idea for this book was born in Paris in 2001, where I was living when the attacks of September 11 took place. There I could observe first-hand the transformation of French attitudes toward the United States, which changed from an initial and genuine sympathy for their long-term ally, facing violent terrorist attacks on a previously unknown scale, into a bitter animosity that for many burgeoned into an irrational anti-Americanism. The book was completed in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq as the wave of anti-Americanism in Europe grew to a crescendo. Some of American's oldest friends had suddenly become our most derisive opponents; that hostility naturally elicited among many Americans a deep sense of betrayal. Other Americans, however, chose to seize on European anti-Americanism as a political cudgel, blaming it on the policies of the administration in Washington.

This book argues that the deep cultural roots of European anti-Americanism predate contemporary partisan concerns. Of course, there is always room to debate particular policies, but European political culture frequently draws on a reservoir of stereotypes and caricatures about the United States that can mobilize an

underlying animosity. Certainly, not all Europeans are anti-American, but we should be aware that, in the proper circumstances, some European politicians will likely opt to play the “anti-American card,” if it benefits them, especially at election time. In 2002, Jacques Chirac pursued this strategy in France, as did Gerhard Schröder in Germany, and both won electoral victories. Interestingly, both are now out of office—Schröder promptly landed himself a lucrative job working for the Russian energy industry, but poor Chirac is, as of this writing, caught up in a criminal investigation of government corruption—their successors, Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel, have, to their credit, refused to engage in similar opportunistic appeals to anti-American sentiments. This is not to say that they automatically hew to American policy. Sarkozy and Merkel are independent thinkers with strong personalities who surely will not take orders from Washington. They do not, however, translate legitimate policy disputes into transatlantic name-calling.

Not that they lack for opportunity. Anti-American feeling is great in Western Europe. In fact, despite some moderation in the so-called “unilateralism” of American foreign policy and an enhanced effectiveness of American diplomacy during George W. Bush’s second term, European attitudes toward the United States have continued to worsen. According to the 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Project, between 2003 and 2007 favorable attitudes to the United States have dropped in France from 42 percent to 39 percent, in Germany from 45 percent to 30 percent, and even in England from 70

percent to 51 percent.<sup>1</sup> Politicians or journalists who might want to stir an anti-American pot continue to have a lot to work with.

Yet this problem is not only about European culture and political processes. The phenomenon of anti-Americanism in Europe has been explicitly politicized in domestic U.S. debates through the frequent (but nonetheless erroneous) argument that Bush administration policies, having squandered European good-will, are fully responsible for the anti-American chorus. Not only is this argument untenable because of the deep cultural roots of anti-Americanism, described in this book, but it also omits important data that frame and relativize the European problem. Although European attitudes toward the United States continue to decline, in Africa, by way of contrast, approval rates of America are at near record highs: 70 percent in Nigeria, 80 percent in Ghana, 88 percent in the Ivory Coast. In the world's largest democracy, India, favorable views of the United States are at 59 percent, slightly up from the previous year. Even in Venezuela, despite the rhetoric of Hugo Chavez and his clampdown on opponents in the media, 56 percent rate the United States favorably. If it is American policies that influence attitudes to the United States—the argument made in reference to Western Europe—then something must be working well in other parts of the world. Alternatively one could also conclude—to my mind, correctly—that European anti-

1. <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/256.pdf>

Americanism is a consequence of European legacies, not American policies.

This important distinction cannot be explained too often. Opinion-makers typically assert that low approval ratings of the United States in given countries result solely from U.S. policies, but that blatantly ignores the specific cultural textures of the countries involved, including important internal differentiations. To use an example of a country outside Europe, take Lebanon, where public opinion appears split, with 47 percent viewing the United States favorably against 52 percent viewing us unfavorably. When one looks more closely, however, one finds that 82 percent of Lebanese Christians are pro-American, whereas among Lebanese Shia Muslims, 92 percent view the United States unfavorably. Lebanese Sunnis are slightly more pro-American than the national average, at 52 percent. Thus the overall Lebanese attitude to the United States can only be understood by examining the particular character of Lebanese society and culture, instead of simplistically blaming Lebanese attitudes on Washington in some empty and partisan gesture of condemnation. In a similar sense, to understand the vitriol that some Europeans direct at the United States, we must come to a detailed understanding of the European cultures themselves. Blaming European attitudes on Washington is ultimately just another way for our opinion-making establishment to continue its refusal to study and interpret other societies. This book tries to correct that perspective by taking a look at the European sources for European anti-Americanism.

For many in Europe—and not only there—the United States is also the primary symbol of capitalism and the free-market. As low as Europeans' general opinions of the United States may be, their judgment on American business is even lower: favorable views are only 32 percent in Italy, which is as good as it gets: in Germany, favorable views are 27 percent, in France, 25 percent, and in Britain, a mere 24 percent. This should come as little surprise to anyone familiar with the social-welfare model of much of Western Europe, where the United States is typically cast as the source of all free-market evils. Interestingly, however, in much of the rest of the world, American business practices get much higher grades than in Western Europe: nearly twice as high in many of the former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and even in much of Latin America. American business ranks even higher throughout Africa, which we have already found to be generally pro-American: 79 percent of Kenyans view U.S. business practices favorably, as do 78 percent of Nigerians and so forth. Particularly noteworthy, however, are the ratings in the Middle East, where all Arab countries hold an unfavorable views of the United States, but whose views on American business are nearly enthusiastic: Kuwait, 71 percent, Lebanon, 63 percent, Jordan 51 percent, Egypt, 48 percent. In other words, for Europeans, American business is a net negative in their estimation of the United States, whereas for most of the rest of the world, the judgment on American business is more favorable than the judgment on the United States in general. This certainly tells us something about Europe's

general attitude toward business and its largely anomalous standing in the world. In terms of attitudes toward business, it seems that it is Europe, not the United States, that is out of step.

Anti-Americanism in Europe, in short, is a problem that emerges from European culture and it will be with us for long time. We must understand its source, and how it is regularly remobilized to serve the needs of particular politicians. We also must be able to see anti-Americanism in Europe as an indicator of European culture, rather than the fault of U.S. policies. Historically, Europeans have been among the strongest friends of the United States, and for many that tradition continues. There is also, however, a European predisposition to vilify the United States. This book explains why.

*Russell A. Berman*  
*San Francisco, July 2007*