

The Nature of Anti-Americanism is Changing

And it is Fifteen Minutes to Midnight

By [Prof. Raymond K Kent](#)

Global Research, October 07, 2005

7 October 2005

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [THE BALKANS](#)

"Mystery shrouds the political moves determined on high in the distant Center...The conviction grows that the whole world will be conquered...Lies are concocted from seeds of truth.....(while).. boundaries of the Empire move steadily and systematically...Unparalleled sums of money are spent." Czeslaw Milosz (Captive Mind, Knopf, N.Y.1953, p.16)

Summary

There are two basic questions which the present text seeks to address:

(a)Should the U.S. dominate the world, through a combination of Geo-politics, militarism and hard-ball diplomacy focusing, basically, on obedience to its will?

(b)Can it succeed, as the "Indispensable Nation," in shaping and re-shaping other societies and their governments to "make the world safe for Democracy?"

The conclusion, which should become clear in the ensuing pages, is that, so far, the answer to both questions has been " yes." The thesis presented in the text is that our Machiavellians, who promote (without admitting) the pseudo-science of "Geo-politics," and Imperialism of "free trade," "human rights" and spread of Democracy as "rule by the people,"(demos from Greek), are actually self-defeating and suicidal, for the nation as a whole, with or without "Home Security." The immortal words of Lee Hamilton, after the 9/11 Report, "we (just) did not get it," apply equally to both questions posed. Articulated by "the street" in countries with Islam as the state religion, a silent and sullen hate is mutating in the most dangerous sense. Instead of being directed primarily at one or another U.S. Administration or individual occupants of the White House, as used to be the case not long ago, its emerging target today is the American People.

An evening ride from Washington's Dulles Airport into Virginia, along the main highway, allowed this passenger to view something that cannot be erased from memory. Up on the hill's plateau, lined up like soldiers in attention mode, light reflectors accentuating the edifice, there stood an endless row of Companies known mainly for their product-contributions to the Pentagon. It took about five minutes of reasonably fast drive to escape from these phantoms of war and destruction. It was a forceful reminder that the "Military-Industrial Complex, " about which Dwight Eisenhower had warned the American People some half-a-century ago, has a visible physical presence.

The construct "MILITARY-Industrial" has a tell-tale quality. Pentagon is not only pre-eminent at home in all kinds of financial demands on the total national budget. Military thinking,

intermingled with the pseudo-science of Geo-Politics dominates U.S. foreign policy as well. Just precisely when this development began is not certain. One thing is certain. Of the 48 military interventions undertaken by the U.S. since WWII, 33 belong to the period covered by the two-term Administration of William Jefferson Clinton.

In the process of increasing primacy, the Pentagon itself has undergone a transformation. First, its own Defense Intelligence Agency acquired greater influence than the CIA. Secondly, Pentagon's inner elite, generally unknown to our public, has been placing and maintaining military outposts abroad in almost unbelievable numbers. According to Professor Chalmers Johnson (his book "The Sorrows of Empire - Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic" will stun even well-informed persons) by September 2001 military personnel in some 30 countries around the globe just passed the 250,000 mark.(1) The "new" Pentagon operates in secrecy. Herbert Foerstel explains it, in his most recent book(2), by quoting the statement made at the "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer"(April 6, 1999) by Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Kenneth Bacon (ex-Editor and reporter within the Wall Street Journal).

"We have adopted a more restrictive policy than in the past'....Bacon gave four reasons for the new secrecy requirements (to wit) 'alliance war' such as the NATO campaign in Kosovo, made operational security difficult to maintain(3). Second, he said ' We now live in an era where information is made instantly available to the enemy."

Finally, he complained., that competitiveness within the media impelled all reporters to get into print or on TV with a speed that no one could slow down..

It is interesting to note that Bacon said nothing about .secrecy as a shield constructed against the American public when secret decisions are made secretly, decisions that affect all of us, often in a lasting way. Our clandestine involvement in the Balkans in the Fall of 1991, reported in the British press, was routinely denied by the Pentagon for several months until it could no longer be hidden. Nor did Bacon make any distinction between inbred institutional secrecy and frequent resorts to disinformation which is not directed at any "enemy" but targets the home public instead.

Without the Soviet threat, without Communists that had to be stopped from taking over in various places and with the failure of Communist ideology, the Military-Industrial Complex" would suffer an irreversible loss of profits unless the U.S. re-enters into combat against as yet unknown enemies. For the military side, creating enemies of the U.S. -even of tested friends, when needed—in order to generate support for entry into one war or another is hardly an unknown practice. Without such ongoing conflicts our high brass would be downgraded in importance, Pentagon's budget allotments would shrink, along with funding of sub-contracted support industry.

It has been standard fare since 9/11, when our "hawks" became the main "defenders" of "Democracy" and "Freedom," to tell the "masses" that we are "fighting terrorists," in a war that will last a long time but one that we "will win." Unless one can identify the malady a lasting cure is virtually impossible. .Terrorist acts against us are engendered by a real enemy, anti-Americanism. It may be difficult to understand, but terrorism against "Americans" is egged-on by us in two ways.

One is the deeply ingrained belief that our economic success story, our institutions and our

status as the sole super-Power, at least for the time being, make us superior and even omnipotent. The other is our drive to dominate the rest of humanity for its own good. It is difficult to swallow the possibility that a people, any people, prefers to be ruled by its own strong man or “dictator,” as we call him, than to be occupied by foreign troops seeking to “rescue” them from such a ruler in the name of restoring rule to the people through elections. Anyone who seriously believes that the American Demos make foreign policy decisions must be an alien from outer space. “We, the People” are excluded roundly from a variety of decisions made in secret, without going for a national referendum.

It is worth noting, in this connection, that the first Iraqi election has been widely misunderstood. The vast majority of voters, who braved death at voting places, belong to the Shiite branch of Islam. They happen to have an Ayatollah who is not only revered but also unusual among sacerdotal Muslims. This man of God separated religion from politics. Using his unquestioned spiritual leadership he took the weapons away from the younger Shiite militants, and he decreed that his people must go to the polls and use the ballot box, not at the end of a gun. The election, by itself, was not a certifier of “Democracy.” It signaled the coming to political power of a majority that had been repressed under Saddam’s regime.

Not long ago, while not necessarily facile, combating anti-American feelings and sentiments could be effective. The successful stand of some of us “ugly Americans” abroad used to be that every four years the American People get a new Administration with its own meandering positions on foreign policy. But, that was yesterday and the situation is changing fast as we argue how much to spend on “home security.” The change comes in two parts. First, anti-Americanism is seen increasingly as a means for retaining one’s cultural, national and spiritual identity against the “American onslaught,” already successful in the domain of material culture.(4). Moreover, fewer and fewer are those abroad apt to accept the separation of American People from whatever party is in the White House and makes de facto the ad hoc U.S. foreign policy.

The turn into mutation came with the resounding 4,000,000 vote plurality in the re-election of George W. Bush, underscoring the powerful influence of fundamentalist Protestant Christianity. It was seriously exacerbated by the so-called “Wolfowitz Doctrine” of preemptive strikes against STATES, any states, anywhere, right after the Black September.. Let us now examine in some depth the Geo-political factor.

Geo-politics

Upon arriving at Kosovo under the U.N. flag, its U.S. component built a camp with a 99-year lease. It is called Camp Bondsteel and it is very near the Caspian Sea and Roumanian Oil deposits at Ploesti. Although Geo-politics never transcended its pseudo-scientific self, there is an aura to it as a “discipline” which no reputable university offers as a subject. But, in order to demystify and come to understand to what uses this would be “science” can be put, a background outline becomes essential. Its founding fathers are two Germans (Karl Ritter and Friedrich Ratzel) and three Frenchmen (Pierre Vidal de la Bache, Jean Brunhes and Albert Demongeon) By way of an over-simplified explanation, these developers tried to show the inevitable relationships of geography, space and demography, resources and political histories. .Nevertheless, they failed to converge as a unified and single school of thought in the aftermath of Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. The French side maintained that, in the multitude of components that enter into geopolitical thought, the human factor

is both dominant and determining. It can be said that the French geographers (and de la Bache was one of Europe's greatest) rejected the notion that the scientific and hence "rational" would-be pillar rules the world through Universal Laws. The French side came up with endless examples of the "humanistic" and thus "non-rational" modifiers acting as a sort of continuous trip-wire. This direction just about killed all further geopolitical endeavors in France.

It was "rescued" on the German side by a Prussian general (Karl Haushofer) and, at Oxford, by a Scottish scholar (Halford MacIndar). In 1904 he came out with the idea of "The Heartland" or the land-mass of continental Eurasia that could be threatened only by the surrounding maritime powers in control of communications. A U.S. Admiral (Mahan) combined Geopolitics with strategic thinking thus "improving" MacIndar. Thereafter, the world subdivisions and power relationships became rather arcane, sliced in a number of "equally valid" ways.

It is obvious that strategic concerns skewed Geopolitics in search for world-dominance thus "politicizing" its applications. They also figured in pan-Germanism before WWI and in the Nazi ideology between 1933 and 1944/45. The geographic-scientific limitations of Geopolitics came into clear view at the end of WWII. While intellectually stimulating to some, Geopolitical "determinism" fails to explain anything scientifically. It simply ends up as justification for national ambitions that can be perpetually revised.

One would have thought that the end of Nazism would also remove Geopolitics from any serious revival. Actually, there came a Geopolitical Renaissance with a disciple who bested even Admiral Mahan, namely N.J. Spykman. Its centerpiece was the idea that the U.S. Naval strength could contain the Eurasian giant, U.S.S.R., Coupled with the famous article of Mr. "X" (George Kennan) it proved that Geopolitical and strategic thinking could "win" in the long run. In turn, this sent Geopolitics into overdrive.

In 1978, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the latest "Geopolitical philosopher," declared in Sweden that all of Europe was now basically under the U.S. :benevolent hegemony (he called it "patronage"). He added that "nothing endangering the American vital interests" will be permitted to solidify in that region of the world. Then he proceeded to lay out "the law" in respect to the Balkans years before it would actually be applied. There, according to "Zbig," the U.S. objectives included a "New Order" (term which appears in one of the earliest Geopolitical texts and re-appears at the end of G.P. Bush's Presidency).

According to "Zbig," the U.S. is to dominate the Balkans in collaboration with Germany, with special and detailed cooperation with Islamic States, "especially Turkey and Albania." Missing from this power-brew is a serious demonstration as to how it relates to the vital interest of the United States?. It should be pointed out that "Zbig" and one of his influential followers, Madeleine Albright, actually detested Russia and, by extension all Orthodox Slavs, while masking this bias with anti-Communism. It is hardly far fetched to state that our fatal entry into the Balkans (as time will show) has relatively little to do with "humanitarian interventions" and all the more so since it began in the Fall of 1991, long before all of the crimes within the boundaries of ex-Yugoslavia came to be pinned on "the Serbs" alone.

The Price of Militarism

Officers in-charge of any nation's armed forces are formed to think with precision and almost mathematical reasoning. The fact that their mistakes in actual combat can cost

unnecessary losses of troops from their home countries. acts as a powerful inducement for “precision.” When they enter into the political arena, whether an officer is a military genius like General MacArthur or an ambitious opportunist like General Wesley Clark, something happens to warp them. President Truman had to over-rule MacArthur and Clark’s English peer intervened to stop the American General from starting a war with Russia at Kosovo.

Much the same phenomenon (and noumenon too) can be observed in the political shaping of militarism. This is to say that, in order to jump into wars, the military advocates must confront politics directly or indirectly. We thus hear and see on Television broadcasts three and four-star Generals attesting that “we are winning in Iraq” while everything seen and read points to an obviously opposite conclusion. All of that is, however, in the public domain. Behind closed doors in the Pentagon, an” insider” elite,

encapsulated in Geopolitical “precision,” works on detailed plans for placing our military outposts all over the “strategic areas.” The end result is not just proximity to mineral resources but, as a look at the map can show, one must add the encirclement of Russia itself. The “rescue” of NATO after the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. involved the transformation from a defensive force into an aggressive one. The Balkans and within this peninsula of Southern Europe particularly “the Serbs” became a target for the practice of “modern warfare.” It was a sort of Immaculate Conception with humanitarian bombs and missiles and without the loss of not a single U.S. soldier or airman. .

Now, there was a moment in time when the United States and Russia plus United Europe could have gotten together to prevent violent conflicts in much of the globe but the Geopolitical thinking within Pentagon, which tagged Russia as a perpetual Eurasian enemy, produced such levels of distrust, falling back on the Cold War period, that one mega opportunity to enter into a better and safer future was missed altogether. The poverty of our military interventions in Yugoslavia, in Somalia, in Lebanon, in Afghanistan and in Iraq most recently, is glaring and ubiquitous. The leaders of all the new and old states in these areas make it a point to scratch the back of Uncle Sam and tell him what he wants and likes to hear. But, the populations “underneath” resent the auto da fes, the demands for obedience and the imposition of economic advantages which do not in reality benefit their own homes. We thus arrive at Catch-22. The more the militarism manifests itself the greater the depth of resentment against “America.” .

Diplomacy, not War

Having discovered a growing animosity toward the United States, even among the West European allies and NATO partners, it has dawned on Washington, at last, that a big gap exists between how we perceive ourselves and how we are perceived abroad. An almost jingoistic reaction to 9/11 surpassed the arrogance that went abroad during the Clinton Administration. It irritated Western Europe to the point of forcing us to talk not threaten, to soften our declarations and tolerate even some foreign criticism devoid of pointed anti-American venom. This “soft-core diplomacy” can come to life for economic reasons, as in the case of China, or in the case of Pakistan as an ally in the war against terrorists who have hijacked Islam. In fact, Muslim terrorists have re-defined the requisite application in the path of God (JUHD) as a call to war (HARB), which was not the intended meaning, as they mutilated a noun to produce the verb, JIHAD.(5) As for hard-ball diplomacy within Europe it is confined at the moment to Serbia-Montenegro.

But, what links the soft and hard-ball diplomacies is an observable tendency of our

representatives abroad to go beyond protocols and get involved with “approved” local groupings either seeking to stay in power or to take over from those in power whom we consider “undesirable” or “politically incorrect.” Such meddling in internal affairs can tip the scales in local politics and help produce men and women at the top who become willingly subservient to our desiderata, creating an illusion that we have “won.” Hard as it is to grasp, in such situations “we” have actually lost. Local populations quickly perceive that their governments are not working to protect their lands, that their economies are dominated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and that “America” is behind a deliberate downside.

The Convergence

The convergence of Geopolitical thinking, militarism, “smart” but transparent diplomacy, huge slices of the national budget for Pentagon and its support systems, the very active drive by domestic “munitions makers” to keep augmenting their considerable wealth and protect their industry from losses—all of this is served by the advent of perpetual war, a war not against a recognized state but against shadowy groupings and individuals engaged in “spontaneous terrorism.” Thus, the once promising modern Athens-on-the-Potomac, the “Hope of Mankind,” has transmuted itself into a Sparta that cannot admit to existence of “state terrorism” from 35,000 feet above the ground, a Sparta ready to cause war, hurt foreign civilian life while “regretting” “collateral damage” enamored of its might and fostering a society in which the rule of demos is a fiction masked by elections and lip service to a Constitution that can be violated almost with impunity.

Even a blind person can see that something is rather deadly and self-destructive in all of this, that some sort of inner decay is gripping ALL of us. Any population tends to get the government it deserves precisely because it fails to be preoccupied and involved in both domestic and foreign policies. Putting one Party or the other into the White House cannot change the lethal and long-lasting convergence. Only the American People can. There are 15 cosmic minutes left to the Darkness at Noon. There is still time.

Lest some of the readers succumb to the temptation to conclude that an old and marginal busy-body cannot get out of his professorial habit to lecture, even to empty classrooms, permit him to conclude the present text (27/06/05) by reproducing the preamble to a 19-page memo written by him and sent to the-then Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, in December 1992 or eight years before 9/11 and 14 years to-date:

“We are now the sole remaining super-power. What we do or fail to do in the immediate future will undoubtedly have some lasting consequences. We might be able to arrive at some sort of benign Pax Americana not only among the formal states but also within them. On the other hand, our New World Order bears an almost uncanny resemblance to the Nineteenth-century Mission Civilisatrice; and we could thus become the most hated Nation in the world without really resolving any of the more serious Internal conflicts. Where the Communists repressed nationalisms,

Leaving them to smolder, we could easily encourage their most irrational components by taking local sides. This is hard to avoid, as will be illustrated in the case of ex-Yugoslavia, Yet, it is absolutely essential that we learn to master and control our own behavior in such situations. Our failure to do so could lead to simultaneous nationalist explosions in so many areas that a global conflict will creep-up on everyone. Any sense of our own immunity from sustained hate and deadly vengeance is apt to run into a novel reality. Relatively minor

nationalist groups, with access to portable biological and chemical weapons, could become a monumental threat to us by targeting the American population centers...Calls for Democracy and free markets alone are not enough to end local conflicts and may even make them more intractable.”

Warren Christopher was, as I knew of him from the San Francisco Bay Area , a most civil person. I never heard from him or anyone else.”

Raymond K. Kent is Professor Emeritus, History Department, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720

NOTES

(1) Sorrows of Empire, (2004, pp. 156-160)

(2) From Watergate to Monicagate - The Controversies in Modern Journalism and media (first published in 2001 now in new edition, p.103)

(3) This was a reference to a French intelligence officer who supposedly delivered the NATO plans for bombing Serbia to one of Serbia’s secret agents abroad. Actually, the NATO Commander, General Clark, immediately declared such a Mission impossible because only he and his immediate operational staff had access to the plans.

(4) Cf. J-J Servan- Schreiber, “Le Defi Americain.”

(5) Majid Khadduri, “War and Peace on the Laws of Islam” (I was his student at Columbia University but do not have the exact title or the book itself on hand. It was published in the late Fifties and should be required reading for any informed person).

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