

The New Global Ideological Order

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Sam Noumoff has passed away. His legacy will be remembered. The following text was first published by GR in May 2003

“We stand on the shoulders of those who preceded us” This statement holds as much truth today, as when it was first uttered some decades ago. The new emerges from the old, either as the maturing of an embryonic idea from an earlier era, or as the expression of a negation from that earlier era phrased as an alternative. What is new, therefore, is not the idea itself but rather the critical mass of power which patronizes the idea. We are truly entering an epoch of global ideological struggle for hegemony. Given the distribution, or more accurately lack thereof, of global power it is incumbent upon us to explore the strategic ideas emanating from the current U. S. power holders.

While trans-continental U.S. expansion is well known, driving as it did the indigenous population into a continuous “homelands” existence, it is essential for us to recall, that the continental appetite was not satiated until 50% of Mexico was detached and digested, leaving it halved with an appendage of what is now called “Baja{lower} California” as a morsel to the Mexicans. Non-contiguous expansion is easily dated to the U.S. victory over Spain more than a century ago in the “Spanish-American War”, with the U.S. appropriation of selected Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and the Philippines. This was followed by the U.S. elbowing its way into other lucrative parts of the world under the slogan of the “open door”, which translated into a realignment of market access in conformity with its newly flowing national hormones. At the conclusion of the Second World War, the continental United States remained untouched by the ravages experienced by Europe and Asia propelled itself into pre-eminence, challenged only by the existence of an alternative in the USSR, China and other socialist countries, while remaining the “leader” of the only global system. With the implosion of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, the stage was set for the next phase of re-alignment.

There are a number of marker issues which subsequently emerged which honed the process which we now witness in its full blown expression; Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait, and Bush-The-Father’s limited, albeit high technology response; and the U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade during the process of dismantling Yugoslavia. It was anticipated that Chinese action would be limited to rhetoric, in the absence of any effective action; the “Paper Panda” would be exposed as at least currently powerless. The final marker occurred during the Clinton Administration in 1994 when plans were afoot to preemptively strike North Korea’s nuclear installations, which was thwarted only by Jimmy Carter’s out maneuvering of the Clinton “Hawks” by his presence in Pyongyang and his T.V. announcement that he had obtained a positive agreement from the North Korean government. The impulse towards the use of preemption, consequently, is not new to the current U.S. administration.

With all of this as background we come to the present. With the recent war against Saddam by Bush-The-Son, we witness the culmination of the military demonstration effect of U. S. hegemonic power; the world is now, under the rubric of the “Bush Doctrine”, to be terrorized into seeking “freedom through the market”. Is there an ideology which under-girds this Doctrine? Clearly the answer is yes, visualized through the Edvard Munch painting the Scream.

While the scions of this ideology trace their ancestral tribal home to the Administration of Ronald Reagan, the contemporary residence is the Project for the New American Century, an institution founded in the Spring of 1997. The initial Statement of Principle was signed by twenty-five persons, including the current Vice-President, the current Secretary of Defense, a former Vice-President, the brother of the current President, an assortment of Defense and State Department ideologues, five academics, one theologian, two publishers, one Afghan Muslim who currently represents the U.S. in Afghanistan, a former “Drug Czar”, a former White House Director of Policy Development, and the ex-head of the Committee for a Free World. This core group reflects the soul of the current Administration, who six years ago elaborated their policy manifesto. Since taking power, one among them was the major conduit for U.S. government funds passed to the organizers of the abortive junta which attempted to overthrow the democratically elected President Chavez of Venezuela, another remains a proponent of “helping the Chinese to liberate themselves from communist despotism”, while yet a third is dedicated to the promotion of “Christian ideology”. Among them too resides a person who plead guilty to lying before the U.S. Congress. Their Manifesto contains the following main features:

(1) As the preeminent world power, the U. S. must have the resolve to shape the new century favorable to American principles and interests.

(2) Reestablish the Reagan principle of a strong military ready to meet all challenges in the promotion of American principles abroad, and accepts the United States’ global responsibilities. Failure to do so invites challenges to U.S. interests.

(3) Four immediate priorities are: (1) Increase the military (2) Challenge regimes hostile to U.S. interests and values (3) Promote the cause of global political and economic freedom (4) Extend an international order friendly to U.S. security, prosperity and principles.

The full articulation of their policy came with the State of the Union “axis-of-evil” address by Bush-the-Son on 29 January 2002, and the comments on it from the leaders of the Project for the New American Century. Gary Schitt and Tom Donnelley, issued a Memorandum reasserting that the U.S. has a greater purpose, than merely the fight against terrorism. It was “an opportunity to spread American political principles, especially into the Muslim world”. While Muslims were seen as the initial target, Schmitt and Donnelley went on to cite from the address that ‘No nation is exempt [from the] non-negotiable demands of liberty, law and justice’. The Memorandum concluded with the following; “lasting peace and security is to be won and preserved by asserting both U.S. military strength and American political principles”. The day after the Memo was issued, William Kristol, current Head of the Project and Editor of the Weekly Standard, published an article in The Washington Post which elaborated the trajectory of American thinking.

The U.S. moved from fighting terrorists, to terror-loving regimes, to tyranny in general, especially hostile tyrannies {emphasis added}, to regime change by military force in the urgent cases and regime change by diplomatic and political means in those non urgent ones. I can only assume given this optic on regime change, should diplomatic and political means not succeed, the military option is always available. Can the U.S. pursue this global policy of Roman Legate alone? The answer from the Project is expressed yet again in the liberal (in the American context) Washington Post in mid-September of 2002. Robert Kagan, a Project leader, described the multilateralism of Secretary of State Colin Powell and former Secretary of State James Baker, as “instrumental multilateralists”, that is people who take the view that “the United States should seek the approval of the U.N. Security Council [for military action]. Then if the Security Council refuses, the United States can invade anyway”. Kagan went on to say, “If it [the Security Council] makes the right recommendation, it strengthens your case, if not, you can always ignore it” “In an age of American hegemony, it will be multilateralism, American style.” Among the more bizarre and frightening of the Reagan legacies, is the confounding of reality with cinema, unfortunately not limited to Reagan himself, who was known for, upon occasion, confusing the two. Towards the end of March last, Gary Schmitt Executive Director of the Project, expressed in The Los Angeles Times his confusion when he incredibly likened the present world to the Gary Cooper film, “High Noon”.

“The townspeople [in the movie] are more than happy to live in peace brought by his {Garry Cooper’s character Marshall Wil Kane} law enforcement, but are nervous and resentful when the bad guys come back to town looking for him, to enact their revenge. The residents shortsightedly believe that if the marshal would just leave town, there would be no trouble. Of course the reverse is true. Without Kane to protect them, the town would quickly fall into an anarchic state, paralyzed by ruthless gunslingers.”

To grasp the fuller extent of the so called “Bush Doctrine” let us look at the National Security Strategy published last September. In this 25 page document we find the following:

- (1) There is only one sustainable true and right model for all peoples and countries, and that is based on “freedom, democracy and free enterprise” and is the non-negotiable demand from which no nation is exempt.
- (2) The U.S. will extend the peace on every continent and promote economic freedom beyond America’s shores
- (3) The U.S. will act against threats before they are formed and act alone and preemptively, as the best defense is an offense, recognizing that enemies can not be permitted to strike first.
- (4) Russia is in transition to a society which hopefully will conform to U.S. values, and China will in time recognize that this is the only path to national greatness
- (5) The concept in international law of “imminent threat” must be adapted to meet the danger of current adversaries
- (6) Rogue states who hate the U.S. and everything for which it stands must be stopped
- (7) Poverty is not the source of terrorism

(8) U.S. strategy will be based on a “distinctly American internationalism”

(9) When openings arrive the U.S. can encourage [regime] change (10) The United States will rid the world of evil

(11) The U.S. must dissuade any future military competition and develop access arrangements for long distance deployment of U.S. forces

(12) The U.S. will continue to oppose the application of the International Criminal Court to its personnel in the discharge of its global commitments.

There is a certain familiar and shuddering echo of this Manichean Doctrine traceable to the 1930s. The world is divided into two camps, good and evil and the national mission of the U.S. is to rise up and in the name of [Christian] civilization, combat and destroy evil, with a “coalition of the willing” if possible, but alone if necessary. There is but one truth and the U.S. is its embodiment, with a duty and responsibility to insure by whatever means necessary that the rest of the world accept this truth. Whatever norms of international law exist, be it the International Criminal Court or precedents in defining “imminent attack”, are to be merely bent to the instrumentalism of American hegemonic power. Presumably any state which may develop a credible military challenge to the U.S. will fall on the other side of the line and will be preemptively neutralized. How thinly disguised is this proposition?

Ideologies emerge from the pen of ideologues. We have seen above who these people are and the values which they represent. They have formulated an Imperial Doctrine in contemptuous disregard for the rest of humanity, and the richness of our collective historical diversity. They are the new talibs, quintessentially arrogant and self-righteous, who hopefully shall meet the same fate as did the Taliban, at the hands of the rest of the world.

*The late **Sam Noumoff** was Professor of Political Science at McGill University, Montreal.*

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