

The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple.

Oscar Wilde

The truth is rarely pure and never simple.

Oscar Wilde

Truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains to bring it to light.

George Washington

Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth.

Aristotle

For though we love both the truth and our friends, piety requires us to honor the truth first.

Aristotle

The least initial deviation from the truth is multiplied later a thousandfold.

Aristotle Every man has a right to his opinion, but no man has a right to be wrong in his facts.

Bernard Baruch

One of the most untruthful things possible, you know, is a collection of facts, because they can be made to appear so many different ways.

Karl A. Menninger

The media tends to report rumors, speculations, and projections as facts... How does the media do this? By quoting some "expert"... you can always find some expert who will say something hopelessly hopeless about anything.

Peter McWilliams

If the president is failing to disclose material facts with regard to legislation being presented to the Congress on a question as important as war and peace, I

think it does impair the level of trust that the House and the Senate have for this administration.

John Dingell

http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/truth_4.html

Ideology regime change interpretation regime preconceived

If had been a clear cut success, would regime change be ethically acceptable?

Semester essay : Fact fiction or fantasy? Magical thinking in and about US Foreign Policy

Options

#1 mission accomplished? Throughout Overthrow, Kinzer repeatedly claims that virtually every US regime change he studied have been a "catastrophic success"(p,) What does he mean by "catastrophic success"? Using empirical evidence and reasoning from 2 chapters, plus additional sources take a position on this thesis: is he on target? Off target? A combination?

#2 Especially since 9-11-01 people in the US are keenly aware of worldwide "Anti-Americanism" but are often genuinely surprised and perplexed by these strong antipathies. drawing on 2-3 specific events/policies explain possible causes for these attitudes *and* why Americans are

usually baffled. According to some, anti Americanism is a form of blowback. Investigate the origins, meanings and application of blowback to take a stand on the question: to what extent anti am a type of blowback?

Regime change as a way of lifeG bush said terrorists attack our way of life how might this be true in a way bush didn't intend—or even understand? What does he mean? Is 9-11 an example of blowback? Is police of the world chalmers Johnson contends that blowback's primary function is to mystify American

mystification Anti American a form of blowback? Taken by surprise by anti American attitudes and actions: Cuba and one you choose evaluate the validity or anti Americanism" by many citizens how have US regime change policies contribyed ti anit American

According to Chalmers Johnson, a key consequence or element of blowback is its power to mystify many u.s. citizens—where is the magical thinking? How do you know?

#3

#5 just the facts? factoids How can there be such drastically different interpretations and facts;; two dominant: liberal and conservative using why we fight demonstrate how do some facts cancel out others? How do people accuse each other of magical think? How might factoids how does the varying versions of why we fight show the role of ideology, preconceived

Why regime change? Kinzer suggests that many of the regime changes he treats stem

from ecopmic motives, especially the interests of multinational corporations. Likewise, Jarecki (2005) Military industrial complex, think tanks & democratic accountability Be sure to address presidential rhetoric

My friend my enemy: in why we fight gore vidal remarks that we live in the united states of amnesia—what does he imply(whisper)

evaluate the strengths and weaknesses using either saddam Hussein, Noriega or the shah of Iran

can we forget what we never knew? Who needs to learn the lessons of 100 yrs of refie change? Role of ideology-preconceived convictions

According to Kinzer, US regime changes have often installed, supported and benefited from repressive regimes(). Using the 1954 CIA coups in Guatemala and Iran, evaluate Kinzer's claims. However,

build your own:

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COMMON SUPPOSED TOs

SOURCES: min. 3

1. Required: Kinzer, other course materials, e.g. Congressional Researcher, YouTube, etc. You can use any/all other text/source we have worked with as long

as it is a credible source and you have a complete citation .

2. Required: Healey databases/indices
 3. Required: min. 1 book you retrieve before and during our Nov. 30 session with Janet.
 4. Your/peers' background research (from blogs, Roundtables)
 5. Identify at least one key concept, and two proper nouns that need to be defined, described, connected to your focus & thesis.
 6. Highlight any instances of magical thinking
 7. Explain Magical thinking”
-
8. include in your Conclusion a response to: “why study history if we never seem to learn?”
 9. APA in text citations and works cited

LENGTH: min 5 pp not including works cited, title page or graphics/images

REVISIONS: MIN. 2 BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR FINAL VERSION

MIN. 1 EACH: PEER FEEDBACK & CONFERENCE W.ME

Double standards or? However, Supreme Court Justice Wm. O. Douglas once declared:

When Mossadegh and Persia started basic reforms, we became alarmed... . We united with the British to destroy him. We

successes and ever since our name has not been an honored one in the Middle East.

~~Use required sources and your independent research to construct an argument showing that other US middle east policies independent of Israel might profoundly contribute to anti-American sentiments among many Arabs~~

THIRD WORLD TRAVELER



Blowback

excerpted from the book

Blowback

The Costs and Consequences of American Empire

by Chalmers Johnson

Henry Holt, 2000



p3

Northern Italian communities had, for years, complained about low-flying American military aircraft. In February 1998, the inevitable happened. A Marine Corps EA-6B Prowler with a crew of four, one of scores of advanced American jet fighters and bombers stationed at places like Aviano, Cervia, Brindisi, and Sigonella, sliced through a ski-lift cable near the resort town of Cavalese and plunged twenty people riding in a single gondola to their deaths on the snowy slopes several hundred feet below.

Although marine pilots are required to maintain altitude of at least one thousand feet (two thousand, according to the Italian government), the plane had cut the cable at a height of 360 feet. It was traveling at 621 miles per hour when 517 miles per hour was considered the upper limit. The pilot had been performing low-level acrobatics while his copilot took pictures on videotape (which he later destroyed).

In response to outrage in Italy and calls for vigorous prosecution of those responsible, the marine pilots argued that their charts were inaccurate, that their altimeter had not worked, and that they had not consulted U.S. Air Force units permanently based in the area about local hazards. A court-martial held not in Italy but in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, exonerated everyone involved, calling it a "training accident." Soon after, President Bill Clinton apologized and promised financial compensation to the victims, but on May 14, 1999, Congress dropped the provision for aid to the families because

of opposition in the House of Representatives and from the Pentagon.

This was hardly the only such incident in which American service personnel victimized foreign civilians in the post-Cold War world. From Germany and Turkey to Okinawa and South Korea, similar incidents have been common-as has been their usual denouement. The United States government never holds politicians or higher-ranking military officers responsible and seldom finds that more should be done beyond offering pro forma apologies and perhaps financial compensation of some, often minimal sort.

On rare occasions, as with the Italian cable cutting, when such a local tragedy rises to the level of global news, what often seems strangest to Americans is the level of national outrage elsewhere over what the U.S. media portray as, at worst, an apparently isolated incident, however tragic to those involved. Certainly, the one subject beyond discussion at such moments is the fact that, a decade after the end of the Cold War, hundreds of thousands of American troops, supplied with the world's most advanced weaponry, sometimes including nuclear arms, are stationed on over sixty-one base complexes in nineteen countries worldwide, using the Department of Defense's narrowest definition of a "major installation"; if one included every kind of installation that houses representatives of the American military, the number would rise to over eight hundred. There are, of course, no Italian air bases on American soil. Such a thought would be ridiculous. Nor, for that matter, are there German, Indonesian, Russian, Greek, or Japanese troops stationed on Italian soil. Italy is,

moreover, a close ally of the United States, and no conceivable enemy nation endangers its shores.

All this is almost too obvious to state-and so is almost never said. It is simply not a matter for discussion, much less of debate in the land of the last imperial power. Perhaps similar thinking is second nature to any imperium. Perhaps the Romans did not find it strange to have their troops in Gaul, nor the British in South Africa. But what is unspoken is no less real, nor does it lack consequences just because it is not part of any ongoing domestic discussion.

... it is past time for such a discussion to begin, for Americans to consider why we have created an empire-a word from which we shy away-and what the consequences of our imperial stance may be for the rest of the world and for ourselves. Not so long ago, the way we garrisoned the world could be discussed far more openly and comfortably because the explanation seemed to lie at hand-in the very existence of the Soviet Union and of communism. Had the Italian disaster occurred two decades earlier, it would have seemed no less a tragedy, but many Americans would have argued that, given the Cold War, such incidents were an unavoidable cost of protecting democracies like Italy against the menace of Soviet totalitarianism. With the disappearance of any military threat faintly comparable to that posed by the former Soviet Union, such "costs" have become easily avoidable. American military forces could have been withdrawn from Italy, as well as from other foreign bases, long ago. That they were not and that Washington instead is doing everything in its considerable powers to perpetuate Cold War

structures, even without the Cold War's justification, places such overseas deployments in a new light. They have become striking evidence, for those who care to look, of an imperial project that the Cold War obscured. The byproducts of this project are likely to build up reservoirs of resentment against all Americans-tourists, students, and businessmen, as well as members of the armed forces-that can have lethal results.

For any empire, including an unacknowledged one, there is a kind of balance sheet that builds up over time. Military crimes, accidents, and atrocities make up only one category on the debit side of the balance sheet that the United States has been accumulating, especially since the Cold War ended.

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What we have freed ourselves of, however, is any genuine consciousness of how we might look to others on this globe. Most Americans are probably unaware of how Washington exercises its global hegemony, since so much of this activity takes place either in relative secrecy or under comforting rubrics. Many may, as a start, find it hard to believe that our place in the world even adds up to an empire. But only when we come to see our country as both profiting from and trapped within the structures of an empire of its own making will it be possible for us to explain many elements of the world that otherwise perplex us.

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The term "blowback," which officials of the Central Intelligence Agency first invented for their own internal use, is starting to circulate among students of international relations. It refers to the unintended consequences of policies that

were kept secret from the American people. What the daily press reports as the malign acts of "terrorists" or "drug lords" or "rogue states" or "illegal arms merchants" often turn out to be blowback from earlier American operations.

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One man's terrorist is, of course, another man's freedom fighter, and what U.S. officials denounce as unprovoked terrorist attacks on its innocent citizens are often meant as retaliation for previous American imperial actions. Terrorists attack innocent and undefended American targets precisely because American soldiers and sailors firing cruise missiles from ships at sea or sitting in B-52 bombers at extremely high altitudes or supporting brutal and repressive regimes from Washington seem invulnerable. As members of the Defense Science Board wrote in a 1997 report to the undersecretary of defense for acquisition and technology, "Historical data show a strong correlation between U.S. involvement in international situations and an increase in terrorist attacks against the United States. In addition, the military asymmetry that denies nation states the ability to engage in overt attacks against the United States drives the use of transnational actors [that is, terrorists from one country attacking in another]."

The most direct and obvious form of blowback often occurs when the victims fight back after a secret American bombing, or a U.S.-sponsored campaign of state terrorism, or a CIA-engineered overthrow of a foreign political leader. All around the world today, it is possible to see the groundwork being laid for future forms of blowback. For example, is

estimated that from the Gulf War of 1991 through 1998, the U.S.

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In pursuing the war in Vietnam in the early 1970s, President Richard Nixon and his national security adviser Henry Kissinger ordered more bombs dropped on rural Cambodia than had been dropped on Japan during all of World War II, killing at least three-quarters of a million Cambodian peasants and helping legitimize the murderous Khmer Rouge movement under Pol Pot. In his subsequent pursuit of revenge and ideological purity Pol Pot ensured that another million and a half Cambodians, this time mainly urban dwellers, were murdered.

Americans generally think of Pol Pot as some kind of unique, self-generated monster and his "killing fields" as an inexplicable atavism totally divorced from civilization. But without the United States government's Vietnam-era savagery, he could never have come to power in a culture like Cambodia's, just as Mao's uneducated peasant radicals would never have gained legitimacy in a normal Chinese context without the disruption and depravity of the Japanese war. Significantly, in its calls for an international tribunal to try the remaining leaders of the Khmer Rouge for war crimes, the United States has demanded that such a court restrict its efforts to the period from 1975 to 1979—that is, after the years of carpet bombing were over and before the U.S. government began to collaborate with the Khmer Rouge against the Vietnamese Communists, who invaded Cambodia in 1978, drove the Khmer Rouge from power, and were trying to bring some stability to the country.

Even an empire cannot control the long-term effects of its policies. That is the essence of blowback. Take the civil war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, in which Soviet forces directly intervened on the government side and the CIA armed and supported any and all groups willing to face the Soviet armies. Over the years the fighting turned Kabul, once a major center of Islamic culture, into a facsimile of Hiroshima after the bomb. American policies helped ensure that the Soviet Union would suffer the same kind of debilitating defeat in Afghanistan as the United States had in Vietnam. In fact, the defeat so destabilized the Soviet regime that at the end of the 1980s it collapsed. But in Afghanistan the United States also helped bring to power the Taliban, a fundamentalist Islamic movement whose policies toward women, education, justice, and economic well-being resemble not so much those of Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran as those of Pol Pot's Cambodia. A group of these mujahedeen, who only a few years earlier the United States had armed with ground-to-air Stinger missiles, grew bitter over American acts and policies in the Gulf War and vis-a-vis Israel. In 1993, they bombed the World Trade Center in New York and assassinated several CIA employees as they waited at a traffic light in Langley, Virginia. Four years later, on November 12, 1997, after the Virginia killer had been convicted by an American court, unknown assailants shot and killed four American accountants, unrelated in any way to the CIA, in their car in Karachi, Pakistan, in retaliation.

It is likely that U.S. covert policies have helped create similar conditions in the Congo, Guatemala, and Turkey, and that we are simply waiting for the blowback to occur. Guatemala is a particularly striking example of American imperial

policies in its own "backyard." In 1954, the Eisenhower administration planned and the CIA organized and

funded a military coup that overthrew a Guatemalan president whose modest land reform policies were considered a threat to American corporations. Blowback from this led to a Marxist guerrilla insurgency in the 1980s and so to CIA- and Pentagon-supported genocide against Mayan peasants. In the spring of 1999, a report on the Guatemalan civil war from the U.N.-sponsored Commission for Historical Clarification made clear that "the American training of the officer corps in counterinsurgency techniques" was a "key factor" in the "genocide.... Entire Mayan villages were attacked and burned and their inhabitants were slaughtered in an effort to deny the guerrillas protection. According to the commission, between 1981 and 1983 the military government of Guatemala-financed and supported by the U.S. government-destroyed some four hundred Mayan villages in a campaign of genocide in which approximately two hundred thousand peasants were killed. Jose Pertierra, an attorney representing Jennifer Harbury, an American lawyer who spent years trying to find out what happened to her "disappeared" Guatemalan husband and supporter of the guerrillas, Efraim Bamaca Velasquez, writes that the Guatemalan military officer who arrested, tortured, and murdered Bamaca was a CIA "asset" and was paid \$44,000 for the information he obtained from him.

Visiting Guatemala in March 1999, soon after the report's release, President Clinton said, "It is important that I state

clearly that support for military forces and intelligence units which engaged in violence and widespread repression was wrong, and the United States must not repeat that mistake.... The United States will no longer take part in campaigns of repression." But on virtually the day that the president was swearing off "dirty tricks" in other people's countries, his government was reasserting its support for Turkey in its war of repression against its Kurdish minority.

The Kurds constitute fifteen million people in a Turkish population estimated at fifty-eight million. Another five million Kurds live largely within reach of Turkey's borders in Iraq, Iran, and Syria. The Turks have discriminated against the Kurds for the past seventy years and have conducted an intense genocidal campaign against them since 1992, in the process destroying some three thousand Kurdish villages and hamlets in the backward southeastern part of the country. Former American ambassador to Croatia Peter W. Galbraith comments that "Turkey routinely jails Kurdish politicians for activities that would be protected speech in democratic countries." The Europeans have so far barred Turkey from the European Union because of its treatment of the Kurds. Because of its strategic location on the border of the former Soviet Union, however, Turkey was a valued American ally and NATO member during the Cold War, and the United States maintains the relationship unchanged even though the USSR has disappeared.

After Israel and Egypt, Turkey is the third-highest recipient of American military assistance. Between 1991 and 1995, the United States supplied four-fifths of Turkey's military imports, which

were among the largest in the world. The U.S. government, in turn, depends on the NATO base at Incirlik, Turkey, to carry out Operation Provide Comfort, set up after the Gulf War to supply and protect Iraqi Kurds from repression by Saddam Hussein-at the same time that the United States acquiesces in Turkish mistreatment of its far larger Kurdish population. One obvious reason is that communities like Stratford and Bridgeport, Connecticut, where Black Hawk and Comanche helicopters are made, depend for their economic health on continued large-scale arms sales to countries like Turkey. At the time of the Gulf War, a senior adviser to the Turkish prime minister said to John Shattuck, assistant secretary of state for human rights, "If you want to stop human rights abuses do two things-stop IMF credits and cut off aid from the Pentagon. But don't sell the weapons and give aid and then complain about the Kurdish issue. Don't tell us about human rights while you're selling these weapons."

The capture in February 1999 of the Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan exposed the nature of American involvement with Turkey, in this case via a CIA gambit that holds promise as a rich source of future blowback. The CIA term for this policy is "disruption," by which it means the harassment of terrorists around the world. The point is to flush them out of hiding so that cooperative police forces or secret services can then arrest and imprison them. According to John Diamond of the Associated Press, "The CIA keeps its role secret, and the foreign countries that actually crack down on the suspects carefully hide the U.S. role, lest they stir up trouble for themselves." There are no safeguards at all against misidentifying "suspects," and

"the CIA sends no formal notice to Congress." Disruption is said to be a preemptive, offensive form of counterterrorism. Richard Clarke, President Clinton's antiterrorism czar, likes it because he can avoid "the cumbersome Congressional reporting requirements that go with CIA-directed covert operations" and because "human rights organizations would have no way of identifying a CIA role." The CIA has carried out disruption operations in at least ten countries since September 1998. In the case of Ocalan's capture, the United States "provided Turkey with critical information about Ocalan's whereabouts." This was the first time some of the details of a "disruption" campaign were made public.

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Because we live in an increasingly interconnected international system, we are all, in a sense, living in a blowback world. Although the term originally applied only to the unintended consequences for Americans of American policies, there is every reason to widen its meaning. Whether, for example, any unintended consequences of the American policies that fostered and then heightened the economic collapse of Indonesia in 1997 ever blow back to the United States, the unintended consequences for Indonesians have been staggering levels of suffering, poverty, and loss of hope. Similarly, the unintended consequences of American-supported coups and bombing in Cambodia in the early 1970s were unimaginable chaos, disruption, and death for Cambodians later in the decade.

Our role in the military coup in Chile in 1973, for example, produced little blowback onto the United States itself but had lethal consequences for liberals,

socialists, and innocent bystanders in Chile and elsewhere. On the nature of American policies in Chile, journalist Jon Lee Anderson reports, "The plan, according to declassified United States government documents, was to make Chile ungovernable under [elected socialist president Salvador] Allende, provoke social chaos, and bring about a military coup.... A CIA cable outlined the objectives clearly to the station chief in Santiago: 'It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup.... We are to continue to generate maximum pressure toward this end utilizing every appropriate resource. It is imperative that these actions be implemented clandestinely and securely so that United States Government and American hand be well hidden.'"

No ordinary citizen of the United States knew anything about these machinations. The coup d'etat took place on September 11, 1973, resulting in the suicide of Allende and the seizure of power by General Augusto Pinochet, whose military and civilian supporters in their seventeen years in power tortured, killed, or "disappeared" some four thousand people. Pinochet was an active collaborator in Operation Condor, a joint mission with the Argentine militarists to murder exiled dissidents in the United States, Spain, Italy, and elsewhere. This is why, when Pinochet traveled to England in the autumn of 1998 for medical treatment, Spain tried to extradite him to stand trial for genocide, torture, and state terrorism against Spanish citizens. On October 16, 1998, the British police arrested Pinochet in London and held him pending his possible extradition.

Although few Americans were affected by this covert operation, people around the

world now know of the American involvement and were deeply cynical when Secretary of State Madeleine Albright opposed Pinochet's extradition, claiming that countries like Chile undertaking a "transition to democracy" must be allowed to guarantee immunity from prosecution to past human rights offenders in order to "move forward." America's "dirty hands" make even the most well-intentioned statement ~ about human rights or terrorism seem hypocritical in such circumstances. Even when blowback mostly strikes other peoples, it has its corrosive effects on the United States by debasing political discourse and making citizens feel duped if they should happen to take seriously what their political leaders say. This is an inevitable consequence not just of blowback but of empire itself.

What, then, of the very idea of an American empire or, for that matter, American imperialism? "Hegemony," "empire," and "imperialism" have often been used as epithets or fighting words. They lie at the heart of Marx's and, especially, Lenin's condemnation of capitalism. During the Cold War, Communists asserted that imperialism was one of the "contradictions" of capitalism and hence a root cause of class struggle, revolution, and war. However, the terms also evoke images of the Roman and British empires, as well as of the Pax Romana and the Pax Britannica that were said to have accompanied them. Imperialism is further associated with the racism and exploitation that accompanied European, American, and Japanese colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and with the violent reactions to it that dominated the non-Western world in the wake of the Second World War.

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In 1917, the Soviet Union inherited an older czarist empire in Europe and central Asia, a multinational union of peoples based on conquest and a particular civilization ... [the] seven "people's democracies" in Eastern Europe that formed the heart of the Communist camp until its collapse in 1989: East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Albania, and Bulgaria. Its American equivalent was not NATO ... but the system of satellites the United States created in East Asia. These included at one time regimes in Japan, South Korea, Thailand, South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, the . ~ Philippines, and Taiwan.

Over time, and with the development of a nuclear arms race between the United States and the USSR, the two empires based on satellite regimes created after World War II expanded into much more extensive alignments based on ideology, economic interactions, technology transfers, mutual benefit, and military cooperation. For the Soviet Union this was the world that for a brief moment during the 1950s stretched from Moscow to Hanoi in the east and to Havana in the west and that even included, at least formally, China. For the United States it came to include most of the rest of the world-places where the United States assumed responsibility for maintaining some ill-defined "favorable" military environment (what the Pentagon now likes to call "stability") and where we insisted on free access for our multinational corporations and financiers (what our economists now call "globalization").

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Unlike in Europe, the main Cold War conflicts in East and Southeast Asia were not between democracy and totalitarianism but between European colonialism and national independence movements. The reluctance of the main European powers to give up their colonies led to wars of national liberation in Indochina against the French, in Malaya against the British, and in Indonesia against the Dutch, in all of which the United States supported the side of imperialism. The Dutch were finally driven from Indonesia; the British, after a decade-long war, finally acquiesced in Malaya's independence, followed by its becoming two independent countries, Malaysia and Singapore. After the French were defeated militarily in Vietnam, the United States fought an incredibly bloody and prolonged conflict before it, too, was forced to abandon its imperial role there. The United States also supported a long counterinsurgency struggle in the Philippines against a guerrilla movement that considered the post-independence Filipino government a creature of the Americans. Only after our defeat in Vietnam did we begin to adjust to the idea that East Asia was different from Europe...

South Korea has been occupied by American forces virtually continuously since the end of World War II. It was the scene of the most important armed conflict of the early Cold War years, the place where the United States and China fought each other to a standstill and froze relations with each other for two decades. Thanks to the United States and the Soviet Union, which in 1945 divided the country for their own convenience, a half century later Korea remains the last place on earth whose borders are determined

by where the armies of World War II stopped. South Korea's rise during the 1960s as a "miracle economy" and its spectacular financial collapse of 1997 were directly related to its status as a satellite of the United States.

South Korea was the first place in the postwar world where the Americans set up a dictatorial government. With the exception of its authoritarian president, Syngman Rhee, it consisted largely of former Korean collaborators with the Japanese colonialists. Despite opposition from the Korean people, America's need for a staunchly anti-Communist regime took precedence, given the occupation of North Korea by the USSR. In 1960, after Koreans searching for democracy overthrew Rhee, the U.S. government threw its support behind Park Chung-hee, the first of three army generals who would rule from 1961 to 1993. The Americans tolerated a coup d'etat by General Chun Doo-hwan in 1979 and covertly supported his orders that led to the killing of several hundred, maybe several thousand, Korean civilians at Kwangju in 1980 (probably far more people than the Chinese Communists killed in and around Tiananmen Square in 1989). In order to keep South Korea firmly under its control, during the 1980s the Americans sent as successive ambassadors two senior officials of the Central Intelligence Agency, James Lilly and Donald Gregg. Nowhere else did the United States so openly turn over diplomatic relations to representatives of its main clandestine services organization.

South Korea is today probably closer to a genuine parliamentary democracy than any country in East Asia, but no thanks to the American State Department, the Pentagon, or the CIA. It was the Korean

people themselves, particularly the students of the country's leading universities, who through demonstrations and street confrontations in 1987 finally brought a measure of democracy to their country. After the democratically elected government of Kim Young-sam took office in 1993, President Kim felt sufficiently secure to put the two surviving dictators, Chun and Roh Tae Woo, on trial. They were convicted of state terrorism, sedition, and corruption. The American press gave the trials only the most minimal coverage, while the U.S. government ignored them as a purely internal Korean affair.

The rule of Syngman Rhee and the U.S.-backed generals was merely the first instance in East Asia of the American sponsorship of dictators. The list is long, but it deserves reiteration simply because many in the United States fail to remember (if they ever knew) what East Asians cannot help but regard as a major part of our postwar legacy. U.S.-sponsored Asian dictators include:

* Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo in Taiwan. (Taiwan started to democratize only in the 1980s after the Carter administration had broken relations with it.)

* Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines (brought down by Corazon Aquino and her People Power movement after Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush had hailed him as a democrat).

* Ngo Dinh Diem (assassinated on American orders), General Nguyen Khanh, General Nguyen Cao Ky, and General Nguyen Van Thieu in Vietnam.

* General Lon Nol in Cambodia.

* Marshals Pibul Songgram, Sarit Thanarat, Praphas Charusathien, and Thanom Kittikachom in Thailand (where they were essentially caretakers for the huge American air bases at Udon, Takli, Korat, and Ubon).

* General Suharto in Indonesia (brought to power with the help of the Central Intelligence Agency and overthrown with the help of the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency).

Several others had careers too brief or obscure to remember clearly (for example, General Phoumi Nosavan in Laos). These men belong to the same category of petty tyrants that the former Soviet Union used to staff its satellites in Eastern Europe from 1948 to 1989 ...

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During the 1980s, the last decade of the Cold War, the parallelism between the policies of the United States and the USSR continued but with a new geographical focus. Both sought to shore up or establish puppet regimes in territories that were on their borders or in adjacent regions that had long been claimed as spheres of influence. The USSR was preoccupied with Afghanistan; the United States, with Central America. Both superpowers utilized the rhetoric of the Cold War to justify their aggressive actions against much smaller states-anti-capitalism for the USSR in Afghanistan, anticommunism for the United States in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, and the island of Grenada- even though capitalism in Afghanistan and communism in Central America were both essentially absurd ideas. Propaganda apparatuses in the United States and the USSR effectively disguised from their own peoples the true roots of revolt in

both regions—a religious revival in Afghanistan, opposition to oligarchies that had long fronted for American corporations in Central America.

President Reagan and his CIA director, William Casey, claimed they were trying to halt the erosion of the "free world" in the wake of the Vietnam War. Whether this was truly their strategy or merely political rhetoric has never been clear, but what could not be clearer was that, in 1981, the United States launched Vietnam-style operations in Central America and put large sums of money, often covertly raised, into supporting an insurgency against a Sandinista government in Nicaragua sympathetic to Castro's Cuba. At the same time, superpower detente, arms control talks, and Sino-American rapprochement virtually eliminated any real threat of war between hostile camps in Europe or East Asia. While the American demonization of Castro's Cuba ratcheted upward and the government argued vociferously that Cuban-inspired insurgencies were the hemisphere's greatest threat, the Cold War was already essentially over. The superpowers continued it only as propaganda cover for their respective neighborhood imperialisms.

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Thirty years ago the international relations theorist Ronald Steel noted, "Unlike Rome, we have not exploited our empire. On the contrary, our empire has exploited us, making enormous drains on our resources and energies." Our economic relations with our East Asian satellites have, for example, hollowed out our domestic manufacturing industries and led us into a reliance on finance capitalism, whose appearance has in the past been a sign of a hitherto healthy

economy entering decline. An analogous situation literally wrecked the former USSR. While fighting a losing war in Afghanistan and competing with the United States to develop ever more advanced "strategic weaponry," it could no longer withstand pent-up desires in Eastern Europe for independence.

The historian Paul Kennedy has dubbed this condition "imperial overstretch." In an analysis of the United States in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, he wrote that it too cannot avoid confronting the two great tests which challenge the longevity of every major power that occupies the "number one" position in world affairs: whether, in the military/strategic realm, it can preserve a reasonable balance between the nation's perceived defense requirements and the means it possesses to maintain these commitments; and whether, as an intimately related point, it can preserve the technological and economic bases of its power from relative erosion in the face of the ever-shifting patterns of global production. This test of American abilities will be the greater because it, like Imperial Spain around 1600 or the British Empire around 1900, is the inheritor of a vast array of strategical commitments which had been made decades earlier, when the nation's political, economic, and military capacity to influence world affairs seemed so much more assured.

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The American political and intellectual establishments remain mystified by and hostile to the economic achievements of Asians, just as the Soviet establishment remained mystified by and hostile to the economic achievements of Anglo-American and Western European

capitalism. It is time to realize, however, that the real dangers to America today come ... [from] ... our own ideological rigidity, our deep-seated belief in our own propaganda. As sociologists Giovanni Arrighi and Beverly Silver warn, "There are no credible aggressive new powers that can provoke the breakdown of the U.S.-centered world system, but the United States has even greater capabilities than Britain did a century ago to convert its declining hegemony into an exploitative domination. If the system eventually breaks down, it will be primarily because of U.S. resistance to adjustment and accommodation. And conversely, U.S. adjustment and accommodation to the rising economic power of the East Asian region is an essential condition for a non-catastrophic transition to a new world order."

The United States today desperately needs a new analysis of its role in a post-Cold War world and of the sorts of policies that might prevent another major war, like its last three, in East Asia. Some of the significant changes to come in East Asia are already visible: China's increasing attempt to emulate high-growth economies elsewhere in Asia; the reunification of Korea; Japan's need to overcome its political paralysis; America's confusion over how to adjust to a self-confident China and to a more independent Japan; the growing importance of Southeast Asia as a new economic center of gravity. American policy making needs to be taken away from military planners and military-minded civilians, including those in the White House, who today dominate Washington policy making toward the area. American ambassadors and diplomats in Asia should have at least an elementary knowledge of East Asian

history, languages, and aspirations. The United States desperately needs options for dealing with crises other than relying on the carrier task force, cruise missiles, and the unfettered flow of capital, just as it needs to overcome the complacency and arrogance that characterize American official attitudes toward Asia today.

Terrorism (by definition) strikes at the innocent in order to draw attention to the sins of the invulnerable. The innocent of the twenty-first century are going to harvest unexpected blowback disasters from the imperialist escapades of recent decades. Although most Americans may be largely ignorant of what was, and still is, being done in their names, all are likely to pay a steep price—individually and collectively—for their nation's continued efforts to dominate the global scene. Before the damage of heedless triumphalist acts and the triumphalist rhetoric and propaganda that goes with them becomes irreversible, it is important to open a new discussion of our global role during and after the Cold War...