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1 The empire of liberty: American ideology and foreign interventions

In the 1890s, as the United States for the first time prepared to colonize peoples outside the North American continent, the debate over whether a republic could also be an empire raged intensely. When accepting the Democratic nomination for president in 1900, William Jennings Bryan castigated the American colonization of the Philippines, claiming that such policies undermined the essence of republicanism: "Our whole history," Bryan said, "has been an encouragement not only to the Filipinos, but to all who are denied a voice in their own government . . .

> While our sphere of activity has been limited to the Western hemisphere, our sympathies have not been bounded by the seas. We have felt it due to ourselves and to the world, as well as those who were struggling for the right to govern themselves, to proclaim the interest which our people have, from the date of their own independence, felt in every contest between human rights and arbitrary power.[1]

In the century that followed Bryan's doomed battles for the presidency the complexity of his sentiments was to be often repeated at key moments of making decisions in US foreign policy: could Americans, jealous of their own freedoms, govern others? And, if not, what form should that "interest" in the world that Bryan proclaimed take? Was liberty for Americans enough to satisfy the promise of America, or was the agenda of American liberty the world? If America's mission stopped at its shores, how could the United States in the long run defend its own liberties? And if that mission extended *ad infinitum*, how could American power protect the United States *and* build global freedoms at the same time?

Historians, with their sense of dichotomies, have often seen the 1890s and Bryan's defeats as a struggle between the republican preoccupation with liberty and the Republicans' preoccupation with money and interests – a contest that the latter decisively won. But, at least in terms of foreign policy, the turn of the nineteenth century could as well be seen as a particularly intense moment in a continuous creation of a distinct American

ideology, a process that extends back to the twenty-first. When Thomas Je an America concentrated on perfectin that avoiding war may be "a theory wl liberty to follow." The problem, Jeff tions of the nation – "our people ha commerce."[2] In the creation of the early twentieth centuries, "theory" while becoming increasingly entwine

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ideology, a process that extends back to the eighteenth century and forward to the twenty-first. When Thomas Jefferson in 1785 praised the *principle* of an America concentrated on perfecting freedoms at home, he himself added that avoiding war may be "a theory which the servants of America are not at liberty to follow." The problem, Jefferson found, was in the very foundations of the nation – "our people have a decided taste for navigation and commerce."[2] In the creation of the American state in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "theory" and "tastes" competed for primacy, while becoming increasingly entwined and mutually adjusted.

By the mid-twentieth century both liberty and interests – "theory" and "tastes" – had natural and integrated places in US foreign policy ideology, welded together as symbols and key perceptions in a universalist understanding of America's mission. During the Cold War what set the function of these ideas apart from those of "normal" states within the Western state system was how American symbols and images – the free market, anti-Communism, fear of state power, faith in technology – had *teleological* functions: what is America today will be the world tomorrow. While American universalism and teleology go back to the revolutionary origins of the state, their ideological manifestations developed more slowly, often as much needed compromises between divergent ideas. As historian Michael Hunt has observed, the outer form of these symbols all go back to the revolutionary era, while their content can be strikingly contemporary.[3] It therefore makes sense to speak of an American ideology that goes back two hundred years, but it is an evolving ideology into which generational experiences are interpreted and perceptual conflicts solved.

The history of America's interventions in the Third World is very much the history of how this ideology developed over time and how it framed the policies of the US foreign policy elite. Although there were periods of strong domestic opposition to the policies pursued, the Cold War era stands out as a time when there also was, by American standards, a remarkable consensus as to the immediate aims and means of US policy abroad. This relative lack of political controversy has sometimes made scholars oversimplify the relationship between ideology and practice in how Washington has conducted its international policies. But as the genesis of America's relations with the world shows, the Cold War consensus developed out of profound conflicts in the past over the role and the means a democratic republic could take up when influencing others.

"In every contest"

From its inception the United States was an interventionist power that based its foreign policy on territorial expansion. Its revolutionary message – free

men and free enterprise – was a challenge to the European powers on a continental scale. Even for those few who in the early nineteenth century did not believe in divine providence, the core ideas that had led Americans to nationhood were the same ones that commanded them to seize the vastness of America and transform it in their image. Together these ideas formed an ideology that motivated US elites in their relations with the outside world from the federal era to the Cold War.

First among these core ideas was the American concept of *liberty*, with its particular delineations and extensions. Liberty for its citizens was what separated the United States from other countries; it was what gave meaning to the existence of a separate American state. American freedom was, however, sustained by a human condition that was different from that of others. The American, Jefferson argued in the wake of the French Revolution,

> by his property, or by his satisfactory situation, is interested in the support of law and order. And such men may safely and advantageously reserve to themselves a wholesome control over their public affairs, and a degree of freedom, which, in the hands of the *canaille* of the cities of Europe, would be instantly perverted to the demolition and destruction of everything public and private ... But even in Europe a change has sensibly taken place in the mind of man. Science has liberated the ideas of those who read and reflect, and the American example has kindled feelings of right in the people. An insurrection has consequently begun ... It has failed in its first effort, because the mobs of the cities, the instrument used for its accomplishment, debased by ignorance, poverty and vice, could not be restrained to rational action. But the world will recover from the panic of this first catastrophe.[4]

To the third president, and his successors, liberty could not exist without private property and the dedication to an ordered society that followed from that particular right. Liberty, therefore, was not for everyone, but for those who, through property and education, possessed the necessary independence to be citizens of a republic. Already during the federal period it was widely accepted that most Europeans could achieve such status if they were enlightened by the American example, and, in ethnic terms, the circle of possible enlightenment widened in the twentieth century. Up to the Cold War, however, most of the world's population – including the internal African colony the Europeans had brought to America – was *outside* that circle. Native and Latin Americans were also excluded. "I join you sincerely, my friend," Jefferson wrote to de Lafayette in 1813, "in wishes for the emancipation of South America.

> That they will be liberated from foreign subjection I have little doubt. But the result of my enquiries does not authorize me to hope they are capable of maintaining a free government. Their people are immersed in the darkest ignorance, and brutalised by bigotry & superstition.

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Jefferson still held out hope for the Latin Americans, though: "Light will at length beam in on their minds and the standing example we shall hold up, serving as an excitement as well as a model for their direction may in the long run qualify them for self-government."[5]

Central to the American ideology was its *anticollectivism* – the independent individual can be a republican, the *canaille* cannot. The collective symbolized all the fears American eighteenth-century revolutionaries had for the corruption of their republic. Outside the United States the essence of non-liberty consisted in being controlled by others, through feudal bondage or, as in the case of the French revolution, through seduction by a party or a movement. In America – and gradually elsewhere – the countermeasure to this enslavement was in education and "rationality" through science. But there remained, echoing through generations, a risk that if America did not tend and defend its own liberty, then history could move in the opposite direction; that American freedom could be undermined by imported collectivist ideas or by uneducated immigrants who clung to cultural identities US elites did not recognize.

Most Americans of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century shared a reluctance to accept *centralized political power*. Indeed, much of the ideological discourse in first two hundred years of the American republic centered on ways of *avoiding* a strong state. In order to have the nation's constitution commonly agreed upon in the late eighteenth century, for instance, a number of powers – including the power to declare war – had to be taken away from the executive. One hundred years later this anticentralism prevented America from using the state as an instrument of social reform along European lines, and cast suspicion, in ideological terms, on those countries that followed such a path. During the twentieth century, in spite of occasional attempts at state-led reform and also in spite of the immense growth, in absolute terms, of the federal state, these attitudes were still important in how American elites saw the world and their role in it.

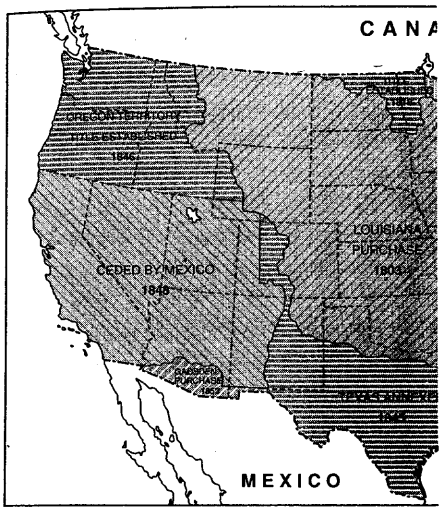
Science as the progenitor of "rational action" underpinned American faith in the new state's universal significance from the very beginning. The United States was the first country created on the "scientific principles" of the Enlightenment. This meant the new state was a pioneer of other states to come – "the light that will bear in on their minds," in Jefferson's terms. But it also meant that an American identity, during the nineteenth century, became connected with the very concept of modernity, closely linking technology with the existing social order in the United States. The only way of becoming modern would be to emulate the American example, to "liberate" productivity and innovation from "ancient" (later "traditional") cultures and

ideologies. By the twentieth century the only framework of reference for Americans was America – the completion, one may say, of the self-fulfilling prophesy made at the beginning of the American republic's existence.

Part of the "rational action" of early America was *the market* – the exchange of products and services based on their value in money alone, unfettered by patronage or by need. As we have seen, even Thomas Jefferson – who along with large numbers of nineteenth-century Americans cherished the self-sufficient farmer as the ideal citizen – recognized his countrymen's "taste for navigation and commerce" enough to, as president, send naval forces to North Africa to protect American shipping. As the United States industrialized in the late nineteenth century, the capitalist market became a reality for all Americans, and the participation in that exchange, in one form or another, became a symbol of belonging to America. And as American exports grew at around the turn of the century, so faith in the market transformed itself into a self-serving belief in open international markets, where American companies – more often than not the strongest competitors – could bring their money-making skills and their business organization. Even though this conviction was not always brought to bear on *foreign* access to *American* markets, the free market had become a part of American foreign policy ideology – as an idea, a logical extension of the virtues of capitalism and universal liberty.

Having successfully defended their access to international trade in the war of 1812, American elites of the early nineteenth century turned their attention to the expansion promised at the inception of their state. Up to the end of the century the aims of that expansion were primarily continental – the existence of European colonial empires on American soil was intolerable to liberty as constituted in the United States. During Jefferson's presidency the United States consisted of roughly 800,000 square miles – by 1848 the figure was 3 million square miles, and in 1867, after the acquisition of Alaska from Russia, it was more than 3.5 million. Only the latter can be said to have happened, in historian Bradford Perkins's phrase, as a "freely negotiated transfer." The others – Louisiana, Florida, Texas, the Northwest, the 1848 conquests from Mexico – all resulted either from war or the threat of war. The image that made possession of the continent America's "manifest destiny," a term first used in 1845, expressed as myth what in reality was a rather concrete imperialist program.[6]

But by far the most important US interventions of the nineteenth century took place against Native American nations. In the name of rationality and progress, the American government attempted to control



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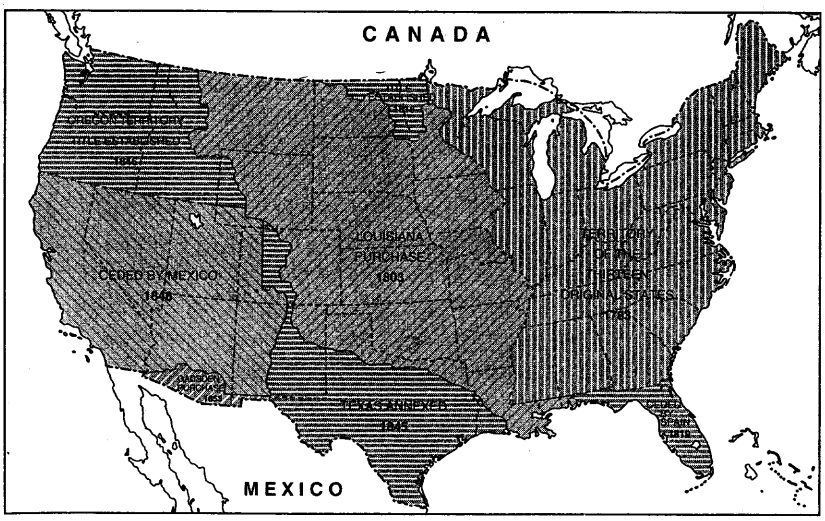

Map 1. The contiguous continental expansion of the United States up to 1914.

and in some cases exterminate all the nations who had settled in what became the United States before the seventeenth century. These interventions – against those who, in spite of competing imperialist claims, in the early part of the nineteenth century were in still in command of most of the continent – set the framework for dealing with countries that for reasons of low levels of "rational action" could not receive liberty as a gift from America. "Control" became the favored method for extending American's aims beyond the seas, to where liberty as yet was not an option.[7]

The issue of control of those not yet worthy of the levels of liberty accorded to white Americans was also crucial for the treatment of the internal African colony that had come with the Europeans. While at least in the nineteenth century slavery was increasingly abhorrent to most Americans, blacks still had to be controlled for fear that their lack of "rational action" could disturb the progress of America. After the reconstruction era, Southern racism and Northern plans for "betterment" effectively disenfranchised the black population up to the late twentieth century, delivering, as we shall see, both techniques of control to be employed abroad and, eventually, an ideological challenge to American concepts of liberty.

In the late nineteenth century, at the same time as the issue of the United States as a transoceanic imperialist power first emerged, the dual

face of foreign immigration also became increasingly apparent to many Americans. On the one hand, Americans then – as during the Cold War and today – recognized that increasing immigration was the confirmation of America's success. On the other hand, Northern whites grew increasingly concerned over the threat to "American values" that could come out of the entry of "unassimilable strangers." From 1870 to 1920, as the United States received 26 million new immigrants, racial and ethnic stereotyping came to determine their initial "placing" in American society, and, in some cases, who should rather be kept out. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first of a series of laws, campaigned for by organizations such as the Immigration Restriction League, which attempted to keep out "racially inferior" peoples. Such exclusion was important, it was claimed, because free immigration would prevent America from living up to its global promise. "We believe," said a Wyoming delegate to the United Mine Workers of America in 1904,

> that Americans today, as in 1776, stand for independence and the noblest manhood; the Japanese laborer, as we find him in our mines and other industries, stands for neither. The Jap, like the Chinaman, works for whatever the company is pleased to pay him, and returns a portion of his earnings regularly to a Japanese agent, who is called a "boss," doubtless to evade technically the law prohibiting contract labor.[8]

As the concept of manifest destiny fastened its grip on Americans' perceptions of their country's role, the question of where this destiny ended was becoming increasingly controversial. Could an ideology that was in its essence universal and teleological end its applicability at the shores of North America? In the early part of the nineteenth century interventions further afield limited themselves to political support and, in a few South American cases, supplies for favored groups or movements. The United States, John Quincy Adams argued in 1821, had to distinguish between extending sympathies and using military power:

> Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benediction, and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own.[9]

By the final decades of the century, however, an increasingly strong argument was being put forward that the United States had a duty to assist in the "freedom and independence" of others outside its new borders. There were several reasons for this shift. The successes of American industrialization and the reordering of society along capitalist lines after the civil war increased the confidence of the elites in the international relevance of their message. The takeover of North America

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had been carried through as far as possible without incorporating inferior Latinos in Mexico or risking conflict with the British empire over Canada. The European imperialist land grabs in Africa and Asia posed the challenge of how "advanced" countries should interact with lesser developed nations. American missionaries had begun carrying the nineteenth-century campaigns for social control and social betterment abroad. And, finally, American commercial expansion led to hopes of new foreign markets, or at least to a fear that such markets, were they to exist, could become the domain of others.

It would still be wrong to see the American occupation of Hawaii (1897) and the occupation of the Philippines and Cuba in the wake of the Spanish–American War (1898) as too radical a departure in US foreign relations. The American involvement with East Asia, both in commercial and political terms, goes back to the 1840s – it was US naval vessels, after all, that forced Western trade on Japan in 1854. The Mexican War of 1846–48 – in which Matthew Perry of later Japanese fame had served with distinction – also brought the United States into closer contact with the Caribbean and Central America. In 1855 the American William Walker set himself up as the ruler of Nicaragua, and numerous other adventurers in the late nineteenth century attempted to follow his example.[10] And, as we know, American interventionism in the Caribbean did not end with Cuba: between 1898 and 1920 US Marines were used on at least twenty separate occasions in the region.

What does set the late 1890s apart, though, was the willingness of the American federal state under McKinley and Roosevelt to take political responsibility for the overseas peoples under its control. In a way historians have been right in seeing the establishment of an American transoceanic empire as an aberration – a short-term reaction to the culmination of European imperialism and an attempt at conforming to the global system it created. By taking up "the white man's burden" – as Kipling had implored it to do in his poem – the United States found a place as one among the Western great powers. The problem for the American imperialists was, however, that America was already fast becoming something more than one among many: in terms of its economic and military power, it did not need to conform or to take on a role that, in ideological terms, was foreign to it. Rather than being *one* imperial power, the United States was fast becoming the protector and balancer of a capitalist world system.

It was that role that America formally assumed – even with regard to Europe itself – during World War I. To Woodrow Wilson and many of his contemporaries, the decision for war meant that America could begin to reshape a world in which there were so many wrongs that needed to be put right and where the American experience could serve as a pattern.

Intervention, Wilson had concluded by 1917, was the only way of achieving "a reasonable peace settlement and the reconstruction of the world order."[11] What Wilson felt to be good for the world – as in his Fourteen Points – would also, necessarily, be good for America.

"Foreigners" and anti-Communism

In the overall American approach to global affairs, World War I symbolized first and foremost a reduction of Europe and its main powers almost to the level of nonrational charges. Europe, wherefrom the light that Jefferson spoke of had originally gone forth, had debased itself through an orgy of blood and hatred. It was up to America – a victor in the war and, when it ended, undoubtedly the strongest power in the world – to set things right. President Woodrow Wilson, an interventionist reformer at home and abroad and a (political) scientist who saw America's mission as creating an international order that prevented war between the great powers in the future, focused on two main problems: nationalism and revolution. Understanding his approaches to this twin challenge is crucial for understanding American foreign policy discourse right up to the end of the twentieth century.

Wilson saw nationalism (self-determination, in his terms) as the only mechanism by which stable states could be created, which then, with American aid, could be set on the way to democracy. But, as the war had shown, nationalism also had another face, filled with those wild and vulgar features that had characterized Germany's fate on the road to disaster. As the president had noted already during the war, a very thin line divided "positive longings" from "anarchy" (perhaps Wilson's favorite term of opprobrium), and the postwar situation in Europe gave him plenty of examples of the latter. While Wilson's support for national self-determination helped numerous nationalist projects to become reality on the ruins of war in Central and Eastern Europe, he withheld American support from many others, especially where he feared that radicalism or socialism were the driving engines. Wilson's fear of disorder – inherited from his early years in Reconstruction Virginia – led to an acceptance of the French and British governments' emphasis on stability, rather than on popular will, in the European peace settlements.

For the world outside Europe it was the negative results of European colonialism that presented a challenge after World War I. Instead of uplifting their charges to higher levels of civilization, European colonialists had exploited and mistreated them, thereby creating potential hotbeds of chaos and anarchy. Even for the British colonies such as India – often seen in the nineteenth century as a star example of

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benevolent colonial rule – American opinion in the interwar period turned increasingly critical. But, from its the very beginning this renewed anticolonial critique ran into problems in terms of alternatives. Since the Europeans had so often failed in their civilizing mission, real independence for the colonies would only lead to more instability and suffering. The Mexican revolution, unfolding on America's very doorstep, was to Wilson a terrible example of what such instability would produce.

By the early 1920s the fear of what instability and ignorance could result in was made worse by the Russian revolution and its effects. At first, in 1917, the collapse of the tsar's government was welcomed by many Americans, who saw tsarism as the most reactionary form of rule in Europe and hoped that the new regime's policies would follow a trajectory not unlike that of the American revolution. But the authoritarian collectivism of the Bolsheviks, and their emphasis on the permanence and internationalism of their revolution, soon drove away any goodwill that may have existed among American elites. On the contrary, over the years that followed Soviet Communism came to be seen as a deadly rival of Americanism, because it put itself forward as an alternative modernity; a way poor and downtrodden peoples could challenge their conditions *without* replicating the American model. Already by 1918 the US government had joined the other imperial great powers in a military intervention against the Bolsheviks.

America's postwar unwillingness to take the lead in the international organizations Wilson had constructed is often written down to a US sense of political betrayal after Europe spurned US positions at the peace conferences. But the so-called "isolationism" of the 1920s and 1930s had deeper roots than concern over diplomatic negotiations. As the United States became the world's primary industrial power, immigration had increased manifoldly, reaching its peak in the years immediately preceding World War I. While in principle accepting the need to import labor in order to keep up with the productivity (and the export potential) of American industry, many Americans were concerned about what "new" groups of immigrants could signify in ideological terms – could the principles of liberty withstand the influx of Latin, Slavic, or Asian immigrants; peoples who in racial terms were not seen as possessing the virtues needed for rational behavior? Could America's involvement with the world quite literally be polluting the idea of liberty at home?

In post-World War I America – the period in which most US Cold War leaders grew up – the idea that Europe and the world had shown themselves not ready for American order, organization, and concepts of rights merged with concern over the effects of immigration. In ideological terms it could be argued that the two perceptions were mutually reinforcing; if

foreign countries had not yet reached the necessary levels of civilization needed to receive the American message, what then about the masses from these very same countries who were coming to the United States? Immigration could overwhelm American democracy and defeat it in ways foreign powers were no longer capable of doing. And the way to refute that internal challenge was through limiting immigration by "less civilized" peoples and Americanizing the foreigners who were already inside.

The main obstacle to the process of Americanizing foreigners at home were the ideas with which they were contaminated before arriving on American shores. By the 1920s the most threatening of these were Communism, both because of its revolutionary collectivism and because it purported to represent a version of modernity more advanced than that presented by America. As seen by elites in the United States, the latter claim was not only wrong in essence, but was also a declared challenge to the universalism and teleology embedded in their ideology. There was simply no room, within or without the United States, for a universalist ideology that constructed a world operating according to different principles and with a different endpoint from that of their own images. Communism – and, by implication, collectivism in all of its forms – in this view had to be grouped with the traditionalist and antimodern traits of Europe that had so disastrously manifested themselves in World War I.

The existence of an American Communist Party, from 1921, therefore became an ideological manifestation out of proportion with the very limited following that party came to command. To many Americans, the very existence of such a party (alongside other ills, such as organized crime) proved the need for Americanization and vigilance at home. At the same time, the existence of an American Communist Party did become, for a brief moment during the Depression, a signal to some of those whom Americanism had disenfranchised that other methods for organizing society could be envisaged, even in America. The author Richard Wright, who briefly joined the party after his escape from institutionalized racial oppression in the South, wrote depreciatingly of

> our too-young and too-new America, lusty because it is lonely, aggressive because it is afraid, insists upon seeing the world in terms of good and bad, the holy and the evil, the high and the low, the white and the black; our America is frightened of fact, of history, of processes, of necessity. It hugs the easy way of damning those it cannot understand, of excluding those who look different, and it salves its conscience with a self-draped cloak of righteousness.[12]

The great majority of Americans, however, viewed the growth of authoritarian collectivist ideologies in Europe during the Great Depression with suspicion and fear. Although Communism had in

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and fear. Although Communism had in many ways been the original challenge, it was not difficult to see similarities between the Communist faith – especially in its Stalinist form – and other contemporary political directions, such as fascism or national socialism. They all represented a challenge to America. "In a world of high tension and disorder, in a world where stable civilization is actually threatened," Franklin Roosevelt said in his 1938 State of the Union address, "it becomes the responsibility of each nation which strives for peace at home and peace with and among others to be strong enough to assure the observance of those fundamentals of peaceful solution of conflicts which are the only ultimate basis for orderly existence."[13]

Although the perceived lessons of World War I led the American administrations of the 1920s and 1930s to question the value of direct military intervention, as such the interwar period in US foreign relations can barely deserve the label "isolationist." On the contrary, these two decades were the breakthrough for America as the center of the global economy, especially with regard to the Third World. In Latin America, the United States replaced Britain as the key economic power, and the American share of exports to East Asia almost tripled between 1920 and 1940. In a world where the Great Depression forced many minds to begin to consider new models for their nations, American ideas followed American products to an extent that few Americans – in their fear of outside challenges – realized. This influence was far more profound than just American models for production or management. In urban popular culture, in Europe and in the Third World, America established itself as the epitome of modernity, conveying ideas that undermined existing concepts of status, class, and identity.

The dichotomy that existed between the domestic elite view of the United States as being under pressure from within and without, and the international view of America as superabundant and expanding, was replicated from the 1930s onwards in the fissures that the Great Depression created in American politics. Roosevelt's New Deal and the state-led reforms that followed were greeted by some as a necessary concession to collectivism, while others feared the administration's initiatives and saw them as confirming the political, cultural, and moral decline that had been forced on America by "foreign" influences. Both directions – "liberal" and "conservative" – were anti-Communist, but the latter was considerably more skeptical to direct military intervention in the 1930s and through most of the Cold War. Both saw international affairs as an extension of their interpretation of America's domestic role, with the conservatives accusing their opponents of being "soft on Communism" and the liberals claiming that the conservatives were unwilling to pay the price of "making the world safe for democracy."

While the responses to the Great Depression were the main progenitors of America's Cold War visions of the world, it was the Second World War that formed its strategies. The Japanese attack in 1941 confirmed that interventionism and global reform were key to America's survival – the "monsters" would have to be destroyed if the United States was ever again to feel secure. It was the liberal interpretation of American foreign policy ideology that made World War II and its aftermath a laboratory for global reform. Like Wilson during World War I, Franklin Roosevelt believed in "positive nationalisms" as the best guard against authoritarian ideologies, but with the crucial difference that America this time could and should assist in finessing the *content* of these nationalisms and the reforms they envisaged for their countries when liberated from the enemy menace. As in America, educated reform could guide the energies of those who had dreamt of revolution in a "modern" direction. Referring to the aftermath of World War I, Franklin Roosevelt in October 1944 promised that "we shall not again be thwarted in our will to live as a mature nation, confronting limitless horizons. We shall bear our full responsibility, exercise our full influence, and bring our help and encouragement to all who aspire to peace and freedom."[14]

The American wartime involvement in China is the best example of how Washington attempted to guide allied regimes deemed deficient in talent, education, and moral strength toward reform. While the Chinese leader Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) saw his alliance with the United States as a marriage of convenience directed, first, against Japan and then, after Tokyo's defeat, against the Chinese Communists, many in Washington viewed Sino-American cooperation as a blank check to reform Chinese society and the state. When Jiang proved himself unwilling to be educated by the Americans, rather than withdrawing, the United States attempted to have the Chinese leader replaced by other anti-Communists who would be more willing to listen to American advice. Although ultimately unsuccessful in China, this was a pattern of intervention that would be repeated elsewhere in Asia later in the century.

The way World War II ended, with the unconditional surrender of its enemies, proved that America could defeat evil on a global scale. But it also proved to most Americans that the world wanted Americanism – through its products and through its ideas. What Americans abroad had seen in Europe, not to mention in China, Korea, or Iran, were peoples who needed to be set free from age-old forms of social and ideological oppression, people whose lives were so different from those experienced in the United States that their very existence formed a challenge to America's global mission. And the two world wars had shown what could happen in such societies if they were *not* exposed to the American

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form of progress, but rather were hijacked by false forms of modernity – German imperialism or Nazism, Japanese militarism. Other countries, in Harry Truman's phrase concerning Greece and Turkey in March 1947, must be aided before "confusion and disorder" spread.

The wartime alliances with the Soviet Union and Great Britain had remarkably little influence on how US leaders saw the world. Conservatives did criticize the Roosevelt administration for being "naïve" in its relations with the Soviet Union – in part a way to attack reform at home – but with limited success. Roosevelt and his main advisers seem to have been convinced that their very participation on the side of the United States in the war would pull both of its main allies in a more "democratic" and "progressive" direction, since the United States was, by far, the most powerful of the three. Victory in World War II was therefore a victory not just for an alliance, but also for the American way of life itself. It had outproduced and outgunned its enemies; now the time had come to transform both enemies and friends in one's own image.

Beyond Europe

The origins of America's interventions in the Third World form part of the origins of the American state. When Thomas Jefferson intervened against pirates on the North African coast – in the American image, the precursors of twenty-first-century terrorists – the aim was both to secure American commerce and to impose American standards of behavior. It was also to declare to the outside world that the United States was prepared to impose its will abroad. The need for such a declaration – later to be repeated as dogma for Latin America in the Monroe Doctrine – grew out of the visible contrast between building empires overseas, such as the West European powers were doing, and constructing a continental or even "inner" empire, such as Americans did through the twin processes of westward expansion and slavery.

Though much of the American discourse on non-Europeans originated with the colonial encounters with Native Americans, it is through the institution of slavery that the new republic formed its main images of the world beyond Europe. It is therefore doubly wrong to see American Third World policies as a kind of afterthought to US foreign affairs, as some historians have done. Africa was at the heart of the new republic's policies both at home and abroad during the first hundred years of its existence, and Africans for much longer than that. It was through battles over the institution of slavery that much of American foreign policy ideology took shape and the form of liberty that the United States was to stand for in the twentieth century was defined.

Out of the nineteenth-century conflicts over slavery and Reconstruction in the South came two key images for the development of twentieth-century American Third World policies: those of *emancipation* and *guidance*. The first relates to the need to remove the stigma of slavery from American ideals of liberty. Emancipation came to symbolize the removal of the *causes* of slavery, which were taken to be not primarily American economic need but rather the "ignorance, poverty, and vice" of those societies from which the slaves had originated. As such, it was an indictment of most non-European peasant societies and a stipulation that only the removal of the present form of these societies could prevent the conditions of slavery from reemerging. In such a sense, emancipation had a global agenda that was particularly urgent because slavery had existed in America itself and had come to be seen as a direct threat to its liberties, particularly as antislavery Northerners felt the double transformation of wage labor – often referred to as "wage-slavery" – and mass immigration threaten their own personal independence.

The concept of *guidance* and its object, *the ward*, were prominent in American images of African Americans before and during the Civil War, but became issues of key concern during the era of Reconstruction. Because of their wants, former slaves were seen as being incapable of controlling themselves. Even more than recent immigrants, they therefore fell easy victim to a return to the ways of their "underdeveloped" peasant societies of old, or, even worse, to the lures of new collectivist ideologies – such as socialism – competing for influence. The Reconstruction project, and African Americans' intense struggles for equality and justice, proved to many Americans that they were in need of guidance. In the South white elites disenfranchised blacks through political violence and terror. In the North it was often reformers – those who sought to eradicate poverty and vice in the cities – who crushed black aspirations through their insistence on making African Americans conform to white society a condition for their eventual "assimilation."

But the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries zeal for reform was not only a key to American politics, it also put its stamp on the activities of Americans abroad, especially through the expansion of religious missions. After the United States had forced access to China and Japan at midcentury, American missionaries had spread there and gradually elsewhere, including Africa. While they were hugely important in bringing the "gospel of modernity" – health, education, and consumerism – the missionaries' relative lack of success in spreading the gospel of Christ troubled their audience at home, even though exaggerated figures of souls saved were reported. In the 1910s and 1920s many Americans began to

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see the "heathen natives," especially in East Asia, as being "ungrateful" for what was offered them through American missions.

The themes of "ungratefulness" and "wasted opportunities" also marked early twentieth-century US views of Latin America, and especially of Cuba, which the United States had taken from Spain in the war of 1898 and later given a ward-like status of semi-independence. In the 1920s and 1930s American commentators repeated much of the nineteenth-century discourse of Latin peoples' unsuitability for true republicanism, but with the added twist that "democracy" in the Cuban case had been subverted from within, after the best American efforts at implanting the seeds of freedom on the island. Instead of taking their cue from the United States' example, Cuban and other Latin American leaders had adopted the worst practices of their former colonial masters. In doing so, they had scuppered the offer of liberty and progress that Washington had presented to them. "If the United States has received but little gratitude," a State Department instructor told new envoys in the mid-1920s,

> this is only to be expected in a world where gratitude is rarely accorded to the teacher, the doctor, or the policeman, and we have been all three. But it may be that in time they will come to see the United States with different eyes, and to have for her something of the respect and affection with which a man regards the instructor of his youth and a child looks upon the parent who has molded his character.[15]

The only country in the early twentieth century where the United States could impose its model of development through colonization was the Philippines. Like Cuba, the Philippines had been taken over after the Spanish–American War, but unlike the island in the Caribbean, the Southeast Asian islands were kept under direct American control as a dependency. The possession of the Philippines gave the United States an opportunity to experiment with the transposition of American ideals to a culture regarded as alien. In spite of the initially fierce resistance by the Philippinos to the American colonial project, by the mid-1930s many Americans were convinced that enough progress had been made for the colony to gain its independence within a decade. An alliance in Washington between trade protectionists, New Deal reformers, and fiscal conservatives secured a timetable for decolonization, on the clear understanding that the United States would keep its military bases and most of its political influence intact. The Philippines was seen as a triumph for American reform: it had brought a "new day of freedom" to an Asian people who earlier could have entertained no hopes for such a future.[16]

Much of the postwar agenda for US intervention in the Third World was therefore set from well before 1945 (or 1941, for that matter). What the results of the Second World War offered were new opportunities and requirements: as the main victor, the United States had the possibility, many in Washington believed, to remake the world. But in doing so it faced a challenge from the Soviet Union, the other main power left after the war, over the very content of the American mission. Within Europe, American aims centered on economic rebuilding through the Marshall Plan and security through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Both of these approaches aimed at combating Communism, and – in different forms – later came to form key elements of American policy toward the Third World.

Still, it was the restructuring of Japan that formed the main model for future American initiatives outside Europe. Although there were disagreements among US advisers as to how radical the restructuring of Japan should be, the basic direction was not in dispute: it was only through becoming more like the United States that Japan – the only non-European economic and military power – could be redeemed. The key to success was not only the rebuilding of Japanese institutions, but also the remolding of "the Japanese brain." "Our problem," according to an 1945 instructional film for the occupation forces, "is in the brain inside of the Japanese head. There are seventy million of these in Japan, physically no different than any other brains in the world, actually all made from exactly the same stuff as ours. These brains, like our brains, can do good things or bad things, all depending on the kind of ideas that are put inside."[17]

The mix of coercion, enticement, and appeal to the popular will that the occupation authorities used to put ideas into Japanese brains emphasized the new role that the state had come to occupy in American policy at home and abroad. In the beginning phase of the restructuring of Japan – just as in the implementation of the Marshall Plan in Europe – it was veterans of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs who set the aims, and in doing so they reflected a much more positive view of what the state would be able to do than had been usual in American policy abroad. Even though the Cold War soon saw New Dealers lose influence within the occupation regime and in US foreign policy in general, all postwar American administrations up to Ronald Reagan were much more willing to use state power for social development purposes than any of their predecessors had been.

State power meant, usually, a set of programs carried out by the local government under US guidance. While the experience in Japan set many of the *aims* of US Third World policies, the European Recovery Program

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defined the means. As Paul Hoffman – a key Marshall Plan administrator – put it in 1951: "We have learned in Europe what to do in Asia, for under the Marshall Plan we have developed the essential instruments of a successful policy in the arena of world politics."[18] Those instruments were the political and cultural seduction of local elites, access to local markets, and military aid and training. Together, these measures were aimed at creating states that could both be successful in their own development *and* be part of American containment policies against the Soviet Union and its allies.

Although many historians have exaggerated the domestic pressures President Truman faced after World War II for an American withdrawal from an evil world, it is clear that the support many Americans gave to permanent military engagements abroad and to a policy of intervention in the Third World could only come as a result of the rivalry with Soviet Communism. The immense rise in Soviet power as a result of World War II – in which it was the other major victorious state – would have posed a challenge to any great power engaged in Europe or Asia. But it was the American ideological insistence that a global spread of Communism would, if not checked, result from the postwar extension of Soviet might that made the rivalry between the two powers into a Cold War. To elites in the United States, the rise of the Soviet Union as a world power also meant the rise of an alternative form of modernity that America had been combating since 1917. Any compromise with the great power that embodied Communist ideals would have been unlikely in the late 1940s. But the Soviet form of messianic modernism was particularly unfortunate in reaching the peak of its influence just as the United States removed the last limits to its global mission. "What indeed," asked the State Department official Joseph Jones in 1955, "are the limits of United States foreign policy?

> The answer is that the limits of our foreign policy are on a distant and receding horizon; for many practical purposes they are what we think we can accomplish and what we think are necessary to accomplish at any given time ... [The Marshall Plan experience shows] not the limits but the infinite possibilities of influencing the policies, attitudes, and actions of other countries by statesmanship in Washington.[19]

But the US move to global interventionism did not happen without intense political debate at home as to the methods that America could use. Especially after the success of the Chinese Communist revolution and the attempt by Korean Communists to reunify their country by force, New Deal liberals came under attack from the Right for their failure to extend interventionism early and decisively enough. To Senator Joseph

McCarthy and his political allies, the determined resistance Jiang Jieshi had shown to American pressures for reform was not reason enough to limit assistance to his regime when faced with a Communist onslaught. In an extreme form of wishing a world of ideological allies, McCarthy attacked the New Dealers for not *exclusively* focusing on the defeat of Communism in the postwar period:

> In one area of the world the plan was fight international communism with economic aid: in another area it was to fight international communism with military aid; and in the third area [Asia] it was to turn everything over to the Communists ... We know that at Yalta we were betrayed. We know that since Yalta the leaders of this Government by design or ignorance have continued to betray us ... We are more free than they wish us to be, and we are ready to fight for what we know is right, but we must not fight under the leadership of perfumed, dilettante diplomats.[20]

Although his confrontational rhetoric in the end defeated him, McCarthy would have recognized many of his aims in the policies that the Eisenhower administration implemented toward the Third World in the 1950s. By the end of the Korean War it was abundantly clear to General Eisenhower that there were limits to the sacrifices most Americans were willing to make in order to extend Americanism abroad. His policies of using covert interventions combined with alliances with local elites – rather than US military forces – proved successful in toppling moderate left-wing governments in Iran and Guatemala. The foreign aid that the United States provided to the Third World was primarily military – 95 percent of all aid in 1954 and more than 50 percent in 1960 – and the intention was both to prevent left-wing governments from coming to power and to help local elites resist Soviet pressure (more than half of all aid went to "frontline states" up to 1961).

In terms of American ideology, the wave of decolonization that began in the late 1940s and was mostly completed by the mid-1970s led in two different directions. On the one hand, American elites welcomed the breakup of the European colonial empires because it meant opportunities for extending US ideas of political and economic liberties. It also meant that the European elites – much reduced in stature after the two world wars – could concentrate on defense against Communism and reform at home. As Secretary of State Marshall had commented after discussions on NATO in 1949, "when we reached the problem of increasing the security of Europe, I found all the French troops of any quality were all out in Indochina, and I found the Dutch troops of any quality were out in Indonesia, and the only place they were not was in Western Europe."[21]

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Decolonization meant that the future direction of the Third World was becoming an American responsibility, not a European one.

On the other hand, however, decolonization increased the threat of collectivist ideologies getting the upper hand in the Third World. The Chinese Communist revolution, the US-supported wars against Communist guerrillas in Vietnam, Malaya, and the Philippines, the radical orientation of the postindependence regimes in Indonesia, India, and Egypt, and even the successful interventions in Guatemala and Iran convinced the Eisenhower administration that the Third World may not be ready for democracy – the ingratitude shown by Chinese and Indonesians to US efforts to secure their freedom during and after World War II signified a lack of appreciation for the principles America was attempting to further. If that was the case, then a covert strategy for influence would make more sense than open attempts at gaining friends through aid and trade.

If the United States had been a less dynamic society – and had its ideological foundations been different – then the Eisenhower approach to the Third World challenge may have continued for another decade or more. But the same reform impulses that extended American democracy at home in the late 1950s and early 1960s led to an increasing emphasis on reform abroad. To an impatient postwar generation, the containment of Communism in the Third World was not enough. While arguing for the extension of democracy to African Americans and other previously disenfranchised groups, it was increasingly difficult to maintain that peoples of the Third World were not ready for democracy. And if they were, then America had to help them reach that goal. Both Left and Right in American politics emphasized the need for increased American involvement – while the Left deemphasized the Soviet threat and stressed the need for aid, the Right pressed for a more aggressive form of containment and the need to win allies. Both strains came together in the "battle for hearts and minds" in the Third World constructed by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Ironically, it was the failure of that joint approach in Vietnam that created much of the critique of American interventionism. But at a time when US foreign policy ideology had turned radically interventionist, that critique centered not on motivations and world views, but on themes of economic exploitation abroad and business dominance at home.

"The world as a market"

To some, American capitalism has always been the centerpiece of US foreign policy. In their view, only through a more profound

understanding of its expanding economic role can the political aspects of US foreign affairs be grasped. In the twentieth century there were basically two directions within this school of thought. One was a radical populist and sometimes isolationist direction, which saw the influence of particular business interests as hijacking US foreign policy from the late nineteenth century onward, determining how America's relations with the world should develop. The other was a Marxist critique, which viewed the US state itself as an expression of the interests of the bourgeois class, representing that class in the international arena of competition for market shares. Given the increasing preponderance in international markets of US trade and investments, and the overall growth of its economy, it is not surprising that economic factors – be they seen as conspiratorial or structural – have been placed at the center of critical interpretations of America's global role.

Around 1900, in the 1920s, and in the 1960s – periods when US interventionism faced sustained criticism at home – the key to much of that critique was the undermining of American ideals through the influence of markets. Instead of seeing the role of the market in US foreign policy as part of a comprehensive ideology, many of those who opposed the occupation of the Philippines, Wilson's interventions, and the war in Vietnam saw the pernicious influence of businessmen as steering the direction of foreign policy. Bryan, in 1900, castigated "the commercial argument. It is based upon the theory that war can be rightly waged for pecuniary advantage and that it is profitable to purchase trade by force and violence ... Imperialism would be profitable to the Army contractors; it would be profitable to the shipowners, who would carry live soldiers to the Philippines and bring dead soldiers back; it would be profitable to those who would seize upon the franchises."[22] In the 1962 Port Huron statement, Students for a Democratic Society regretted – in a very Bryanesque way – the fact that "foreign investments influence political policies in under-developed areas – and our efforts to build a 'profitable' capitalist world blind our foreign policy to mankind's needs and destiny."[23]

Both before and during the Cold War there have been occasions when concrete business interests have had a direct and decisive role in American interventions, but the historical record shows that these were few and far between. Normally, presidents – from Jefferson to Reagan – have had little patience with businessmen promoting their self-interests, at least *after* they themselves have been elected to the White House. Those bankers, investors, and exporters who have come to the Oval Office pleading the case of their companies have more often than not received short shrift, somewhat similar to the way Soviet political theorists,

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But this is in no way to say that the capitalist market has played a negligible part in the formation of American foreign affairs. In a way, the Marxists seem to be right in arguing for a *systemic* role for business interests: throughout its existence, the American elite has argued – though in very diverse ways – for the promotion of free market exchanges as being at the core of US "national interest" abroad. While denying individual capitalists, no president has moved away from seeing the protection of such exchanges as a core duty. As Woodrow Wilson put it when he was still a political scientist rather than a practitioner: "Since ... the manufacturer insists on having the world as a market, the flag of his nation must follow him, and the doors of nations which are closed against him must be battered down. Concessions obtained by financiers must be safeguarded by ministers of state even if the sovereignty of unwilling nations be outraged in the process."[24]

The astonishing growth rates of the US economy in the nineteenth century – so far unparalleled in history – made America an economic superpower well before it took on that role militarily and politically. With growth averaging 3.9 percent per year between 1774 and 1909, by the beginning of World War I the United States was by far the largest producer of goods and services in the world. Its aggregate annual output was greater than that of the three main European powers – UK, Germany, and France – combined. While only a small percentage of the American economy then (and today) was engaged in foreign trade and investments, US exports have long been a significant part of world trade, constituting 13 percent of world total exports in 1913 and growing to 20 percent in 1950. A net importer of capital in the nineteenth century, by 1918 the United States was the world's largest capital exporter, a position it would keep until 1981.[25]

The influence of the American economic behemoth on the rest of the world has, of course, been substantial, and not just in terms of trade. In the 1890s and early 1900s the New York–London link created the first real international capital market, engaging American capital worldwide through British and other foreign companies. Between 1897 and 1914 total US investment abroad rose fivefold, and a significant part of these investments were connected to the Third World through European companies engaged in colonial exploitation and through direct investments in Mexico, Cuba, Central America, and to a smaller extent elsewhere in Latin America.[26] Although the relative size of US Third World investments never again reached their pre-World War I levels, after World War II the pattern broadened significantly to include a larger number of

countries, industries, and products. By the late 1940s, when the United States produced a full half of the world's manufactured goods, it makes good sense to speak of an American capitalist world system, in which all major economic decisions influenced and were influenced by the US market.

But in spite of its economic and financial preponderance during the Cold War era, the United States has proven itself a reluctant economic imperialist. During every decade – except, perhaps, the 1970s – the huge domestic market always had the upper hand in attracting capital: it was all the outside world (and especially the Third World) was not – rich, socially and geographically mobile, and politically stable. And even though the hope of greater returns always kept American capital coming to the Third World, very few of those investments and trade links turned out to be highly profitable. During the Cold War the government always wanted private companies to increase their investments abroad – and especially in the Third World – in order to create influence and "development" – but with limited success. One of the main reasons why Washington had to turn to direct and indirect aid to Third World countries in the 1950s and 1960s was the lack of a willingness to invest on the side of US business.[27]

Equally problematic for those who wanted to enlist capitalism for America in the Cold War was the question of tariffs. As we have seen, a key component of US ideology is the concept of a unrestricted exchange of goods. But in American history the slightly broader concept of *free trade* has been a domesticated term: it was good for trade within the United States and for American access to foreign markets. But it was *not*, overall, admissible for foreign exports *to* the United States. Arguing that foreign imports threatened American freedoms, because products made by "unfree" workers abroad did away with jobs and profits for its citizens, the United States used massive import substitution and prohibitive tariffs – first on textiles, then on steel and related products – to stimulate its economy in the nineteenth century (the very same measures which the International Monetary Fund has tried to deny Third World countries today).[28] During the Cold War such measures were supported by a majority in Congress up to around 1980, in spite of attempts by successive administrations to gain access for Third World countries to US markets.

During the Cold War it was not the importance of the Third World to the US economy, but the importance of the United States to most Third World economies that counted; and even then, not as much as mutual trade and foreign investments than as products and patterns of production. For people in the Third World, the United States was where advanced goods came from, where machines had done away with much

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of the drudgery of production, and where productive companies were headquartered. For Americans who traveled or worked abroad, the persistence of US products and the admiration that US living standards and technology met among others were powerful confirmations of the superiority of Americanism, and raised genuine hopes that the American experience could be replicated locally. For those "locals" of some stature who did not believe in the replication of the American dream in the place they knew, there was increasingly another way out. In the mid-1960s Congress abolished the racist national origins quota system for immigration to the United States, replacing job skills for race as the main criterion for admission, and thereby opening up for a flood of new immigrants from Latin America and Asia. In a pattern that had been established in agriculture in the nineteenth century, unemployment was part of the reason why these immigrants came to the United States, since local production had been outcompeted by imports.[29]

The wish to make the world safe for capitalism – and the disappointingly low interest among US capitalists to personally contribute to that process – led US Cold War administrations to embark on extensive aid programs for the Third World from the mid-1950s. It was still the experience in postwar Japan and Western Europe that formed these initiatives: aid was linked to the recipient's acceptance of market access and export of profits, as well as to administrative restructuring and the exclusion of Communists and left-wing socialists from government. The purpose of the aid – often put with remarkable frankness to the recipients – was to reform the states and societies of the countries that received it. As the US Agency for International Development put it, "successful efforts to influence macro-economic and sectoral policies are likely to have greater impact on growth than the added capital and skills financed by aid."[30] In other words, it was the *structure* of society that mattered, rather than capital or training.

The deification of the market in the 1950s was a rather extreme version of the capitalist element in American foreign policy ideology. It came about for two reasons. One was the right-wing's political campaigns against the New Deal's extension of the US federal state. The other was the international collectivist challenge, which by the mid-1950s was more pronounced than ever in the Third World and from the Soviet Union. "I have become personally convinced," Secretary of State John Foster Dulles wrote in 1954, "that it is going to be very difficult to stop Communism in much of the world if we cannot in some way duplicate the intensive Communist effort to raise productive standards."[31] Both the domestic campaign and the international challenges led to a reaffirmation of the market in US foreign policy, but more as ideology than as exploitative practice.

Gradually, during the first part of the Cold War, the United States took on a *systemic* responsibility for the world economy, attempting to define its shape both with regard to Europe and the Third World. Ideology blended well with strategy in this mission: the Third World had to choose the market, in part because the periphery had to sustain the former imperial centers – Western Europe and Japan – through trade, and thereby both contain Communism *and* reduce the need for increased access to US markets. Aid to the Third World was one answer to all of these challenges. In the period 1956–60 – in spite of the fear of Soviet advances – only slightly less than 90 percent of all official aid to the Third World came from advanced capitalist countries, and between 60 and 70 percent of that percentage came from the United States.[32] As an increasing number of Third World countries gained their independence in the 1950s and early 1960s, the availability of such aid set rather crude questions of principles and priorities before their leaders.

On the American side – behind issues of strategy and alliances – lay a conviction that what had worked for the United States would also work for the world. Without the slightest hint of irony given their own practices of tariffs and embargos, "global development education" meant teaching the world to open its markets and encourage the growth of local private capital. Development was a matter of choice, and the model was the United States and its free enterprise. In its exhibitions abroad, its products were proof of America's success, showing, in the words of one reporter, "the freedom offered by washing machines and dishwashers, vacuum cleaners, automobiles, and refrigerators."[33] It was clear to American observers that just as trade carries products, products carry ideas.

Modernization, technology, and American globalism

With the postwar extension of American higher education and a rapid increase in the number of foreigners who came to study in the United States, it was not surprising that much work was set in to provide a theoretical model of Americanism to rival that of Communism. Both academic and government authorities stressed the need for such a model in education at home and in work abroad. Third World elites, underlined the Social Science Research Council in 1957, were looking for a new concrete form for their states and societies, and it was the duty of American social scientists to produce one.[34] The need was felt to be urgent: instead of the clear-cut Marxist theory of social change, the Western experience was a messy, drawn-out series of unheroic social processes, with few concrete points of reference that could enflame

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young Third World intellectuals. In order to learn, one had to observe the political systems of the "developing areas" and compare them with development in the West. The result, said Princeton professor Gabriel Almond, would not only be a prescriptive tool, but "a major step forward in the nature of political science as science."[35]

As an intellectual enterprise, what came to be called "modernization theory" has many of the same positivist traits as Marxism, with which it self-consciously draws a comparison. Indeed, it could be argued that both constitute a form of "high modernism" that emphasize, in a deterministic form, the unity of all modern development, centered on industry and technology. The Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons, whose 1937 book *The Structure of Social Action* inspired most of the postwar modernization theorists, had claimed that an integrated and stable transition to industrial society could only be achieved through changes in political and cultural values. But, unlike Marx, Parsons believed that it was the opportunities for the individual to fit into the structures of society that determined the course of history, not economic developments alone. For Parsons, for MIT's Daniel Lerner, and for Walt Whitman Rostow – the Harvard professor whose 1960 *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* later became a key text for modernization theory – the form of transition that they described had already taken place, in America. But there were enough "unsuccessful modernizations" – Germany, the Soviet Union, China – to necessitate the search for a grand theory of the road from "tradition" to "modernity."

Rostow's first major attempt at influencing policy-making came with a 1957 book he wrote with his MIT colleague Max Millikan, *A Proposal: Key to an Effective Foreign Policy*. In it, Millikan and Rostow argued that global challenges to the United States were momentous and immediate. "We are in the midst of a great world revolution," they wrote. "For centuries the bulk of the world's population has been politically inert. Outside America and Western Europe, and even in parts of the latter, until recently the pattern of society remained essentially fixed in the mold of low-productivity rural life centered on isolated villages. The possibility of change for most people seemed remote." But two world wars, decolonization, and improvements in communication had given "previously apathetic peoples" a chance to improve their lot. Unfortunately,

> the danger is that increasing numbers of people will become convinced that their new aspirations can be realized only through violent change and the renunciation of democratic institutions. The danger ... is greatly increased by the existence of Communism – not because of any authentic attractions in its ideology but because the Communists have recognized their opportunities to exploit the revolution of rising expectations by picturing communism as the road

to social opportunity or economic improvement or individual dignity and achievement of national self-respect.

But, according to Rostow and Millikan, the United States could offset the threat of Communism in the Third World through positive intervention. "American society," they wrote, "is at its best when we are wrestling with the positive problems of building a better world. Our own continent provided such a challenge throughout the nineteenth century ... Our great opportunity lies in the fact that we have developed more successfully than any other nation the social, political, and economic techniques for realizing widespread popular desires for change without either compulsion or social disorganization." The two social scientists wanted "to give fresh meaning and vitality to the historic American sense of mission – a mission to see the principles of national independence and human liberty extended on the world scene."[36]

In spite of being obsequiously self-referential, the US-led attempt at understanding the causes of Third World social and political change went far beyond simple apologia and the construction of global hierarchies. At its best, "developmentalism" was plainly intended as a wake-up call for America to take the global problems of hunger and social dislocation seriously and employ its enormous resources to improve the world condition. Designed to accompany the campaigns for social reform and the extensions of American democracy of the 1960s, the great majority of the US Third World programs aimed at improving education and health care, and to show that development intervention was an *alternative* to military intervention. As Millikan and Rostow had concluded, "we need the challenge of world development to keep us from the stagnation of smug prosperity."[37]

In the 1960s the United States saw administrations that eagerly responded to that challenge. John F. Kennedy – and his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson – both firmly believed that international development was an integral part of an American national security strategy. Kennedy, who made Walt Rostow head of the State Department's Policy Planning Council (he later served as Johnson's National Security Adviser), fervently believed that Americans could not escape, as he told Congress in 1961, "our moral obligations as a wise leader ... our economic obligations as the wealthiest people in a world of largely poor people ... and our political obligations as the single largest counter to the adversaries of freedom.

To fail to meet those obligations now would be disastrous; and, in the long run, more expensive. For widespread poverty and chaos lead to a collapse of existing political and social structures which would inevitably invite the advance of totalitarianism

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."[36]

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ɔns now would be disastrous; and, in the long run, more
overty and chaos lead to a collapse of existing political
would inevitably invite the advance of totalitarianism

into every weak and unstable area ... We live at a very special moment in history. The whole southern half of the world – Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia – are caught up in the adventures of asserting their independence and modernizing their old ways of life.[38]

For Kennedy and his advisers the key to what America could do to help avoid breakdown in the Third World was held by its technological success. Money in itself could not do the job – only the diffusion of technology and the accompanying know-how could bring Third World countries swiftly across the period of uncertainty in which Communism threatened. Likewise, the receptivity of Third World countries to US technology implied an acceptance of the American leading role in the global drive toward modernity. In an age when even some Americans had begun to doubt that US technological superiority would last, such acceptance was refreshing. "Starting from a position of substantial inferiority in almost all areas, the Soviet Union has caught up with and surpassed us in more categories than are comforting," noted Henry Kissinger, a Harvard professor whose early views of development very much overlapped with those of Rostow and Millikan. Kissinger's 1960 recipe for success was to combine massive increases in US foreign aid with assistance in constructing "enlightened political institutions" in the recipient countries. Noting that "economic assistance is a form of intervention," Kissinger believed that "to offer nothing but bread is to leave the arena to those who are sufficiently dynamic to define their purpose."[39]

Kennedy and Johnson had more to offer than bread alone. Initiatives such as the Peace Corps and the Alliance for Progress were intended to stimulate political as well as economic development. In announcing the Peace Corps – an organization that, by 1965, had sent more than 13,000 Americans to work as volunteers in Third World development programs – Kennedy had promised that "our young men and women, dedicated to freedom, are fully capable of overcoming the efforts of Mr Khrushchev's missionaries who are dedicated to undermining that freedom."[40] The Alliance for Progress, set up to provide economic, technical, and educational assistance to Latin America, had a similar aim. Kennedy's adviser, the Harvard historian Arthur Schlesinger, reported after a tour of the continent that coincided with the launch of the Alliance in the spring of 1961, that the administration had to engineer "a middle class revolution where the processes of economic modernization carry the new urban middle class into power and produce, along with it, such necessities of modern technical society as constitutional government, honest public administration, a responsible party system, a rational land system, an efficient system of taxation."[41] In other words, only by becoming more like the United States could Latin America develop.

In some Third World areas, where Communists or left-wingers had already staged attempts at gaining political power, civilian development had to be accompanied by military development, thorough US assistance programs aiming at establishing a "modern" army capable of fighting the counterinsurgence wars that would keep their opponents at bay. The combination of training and technology would enable the soldiers to hold the ground while the political and economic forces of modernization took hold of society, removing it from the danger of a Communist take-over. Meanwhile, through US education local officers themselves would become an important part of the modernizing middle class that Schlesinger saw emerging. For many of the young military commanders in Third World states it was therefore not only US support for their armies that mattered. Their own fascination with American technology also played a key role in defining the relationship. After Kennedy told General Joseph Désiré Mobutu, the de facto ruler of the Congo, that "there was nobody in the world that had done more than the General to maintain freedom against the Communists," Mobutu's reward, at his own request, was six weeks of parachute training at Fort Benning and at the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, and the delivery of a US military command aircraft for his use in the Congo.[42]

The problem for the theory of limited intervention that accompanied the ideas of modernization was that the international enemy, Communism, was seen as increasingly aggressive and dynamic, while one's own side had doubts about direct military engagements, even of limited nature. In the war in Vietnam this problem was visible to US policy makers from the beginning of the 1960s. Rostow, who thought Vietnam a particularly suitable country for showing the relevance of modernization to foreign policy, argued to Kennedy already in November 1961 that

> without the troop commitment, the Communists (who have been reading of our fears of white men in Asia ...) will believe that they have plenty of room for maneuver and continue infiltration ... If we move without ambiguity – without the sickly pallor of our positions on Cuba and Laos – I believe we can unite the country and the Free World; and there is a better than even chance that the Communists will back down and bide their time. This we should cheerfully accept; because the underlying forces in Asia are with us, if we do not surrender and vigorously exploit them.[43]

The emphasis on technology as a means of successful intervention abroad is embodied in Kennedy's and Johnson's Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara. Having come to the Pentagon from the Ford Motor Company, at which he had become a director at the age of 30, McNamara firmly believed that the advantage that the United States had

over Communism was primarily related to processing that knowledge into instrumen instance, ordering the right kind of weapo stances. But it also meant joining social sci Strategic Hamlet Program in Vietnam wa civilian population from an area so that t Communist propaganda and give anti-Com out their opponents militarily without riski McNamara also saw the program as having v explained to Kennedy, showed that hamlet an identity as citizens of a community" an development through centralization and sta

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the n dents who came to the United States for par to increase. Successive administrations we dents, on going home, constituted a mas States to draw on in its quest to influen countries. Having been confronted with th America, its educational and jobs opport ease of travel, and its youth culture, many achieve modernity for their own countrie turned out, in a form recognizable to t most, the aim became to construct a mod offered the same potential they had witnesse Ohio, but in a form that could be reconcil trends in their own countries or cultures. turned against the dominant American id identifying themselves with different forms and especially the US role abroad.

A significant part of the critique of US for students (and many who had never visited) States itself. During the 1960s, as a result of the civil rights revolution at home, some of American thinking about the Third World the criticism was diverse in background and sustained critiques came from civil rights lea struggle with that of Third World leaders o Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1967 spoke of t the African-American ghettos

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over Communism was primarily related to knowledge and the means of processing that knowledge into instruments of policy. That meant, for instance, ordering the right kind of weapons and tactics for the circumstances. But it also meant joining social science with military science: the Strategic Hamlet Program in Vietnam was an attempt at removing the civilian population from an area so that they would be less exposed to Communist propaganda and give anti-Communist forces a chance to wipe out their opponents militarily without risking high civilian casualties. But McNamara also saw the program as having wider aims. "Hard analysis," he explained to Kennedy, showed that hamlet construction gave "individuals an identity as citizens of a community" and promoted general trends of development through centralization and standardization.[44]

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the numbers of Third World students who came to the United States for part of their education continued to increase. Successive administrations were very aware that these students, on going home, constituted a massive resource for the United States to draw on in its quest to influence and reform Third World countries. Having been confronted with the wealth and the products of America, its educational and jobs opportunities, its communications, ease of travel, and its youth culture, many returning students wanted to achieve modernity for their own countries, although not always, as it turned out, in a form recognizable to their American mentors. For most, the aim became to construct a modernity that in material terms offered the same potential they had witnessed in New York, California, or Ohio, but in a form that could be reconciled with social and ideological trends in their own countries or cultures. In some cases, the visitors turned against the dominant American ideological message and began identifying themselves with different forms of critique of US modernity and especially the US role abroad.

A significant part of the critique of US foreign policy that inspired these students (and many who had never visited) came from within the United States itself. During the 1960s, as a result of the failing war in Vietnam and the civil rights revolution at home, some of the chief ideological tenets of American thinking about the Third World came under attack. Although the criticism was diverse in background and in intention, some of the most sustained critiques came from civil rights leaders who identified their own struggle with that of Third World leaders opposed to US foreign policy. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1967 spoke of telling the angry young men of the African-American ghettos

that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems ... But they asked – and rightly so – what about Vietnam? They asked if our own nation

wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted ... I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today – my own government.[45]

Three years earlier, Malcolm X had castigated the United States as a colonial power, internationally and domestically. "There is no system," Malcolm said, "more corrupt than a system that represents itself as the example of freedom, the example of democracy, and can go all over this earth telling other people how to straighten out their house, and you have citizens of this country who have to use bullets if they want to cast a ballot."[46]

The extension of democracy in America that began in the mid-twentieth century led the debate over US Third World policies in two different directions. Within the foreign policy elites the answer was to intensify engagements abroad through the Cold War, vowing to extend America's freedoms there as well as at home. But for many minorities the beginning successes in the battle for status and equality at home meant sympathy for those abroad who fought US power for the same purposes. Though always a minority voice and never politically influential, this persistent critique opened up visions of an America that concentrated on solving its own domestic problems, while engaging in a dialogue with the new countries of the Third World.

For official foreign policy, though, the universal Cold War became the proper symbol of America's aims. It was a globalist vision that fitted the ideology and the power of the United States in the late twentieth Century, while being symmetrical with the character of its Communist enemy, an enemy that also portrayed itself as popular, modern, and international. The Cold War provided an extreme answer to a question that had been at the center of US foreign policy since the late eighteenth century: in what situations should ideological sympathies be followed by intervention? The extension of the Cold War into the Third World was defined by the answer: *everywhere* where Communism could be construed as a threat.

2 The empire of justice: Sc and foreign interventions

Like the United States, the Soviet state wa for the betterment of humanity, rather t and nation. Both were envisaged by their ments, on the success of which the future states, both were universalist in their ap the majority of their leaders believed tha international stage were defined by proxi specific ideological premises on which eac founded. During the Cold War both Sovie to define the potential for such proximit from the other superpower in its foreign agenda.

In historical terms, much of the twent a continuous attempt by other states to s into forms of international interaction basec In these efforts there were some successes, cesses have mainly been connected to cr system that could directly threaten Moscov For the United States, as we have seen, the C World War, and the end of the Vietnam W of accommodation to the interests of other between the 1905 and 1917 revolutions, t attack in 1941, and the Gorbachev–Yeltsin dation. But the periods in which both powe vene unilaterally *against* the gradually devel interaction have been much more prev American and – at least during its Soviet during the twentieth century, it is reas two projects – one of state sovereignty and predominance – cannot be reconciled, even powers at least in form came to accept organizations.