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**Liberalism
and
American
Power**

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still drive portions of U.S. policy; but they cannot really integrate these two insights—their belief in power for power’s sake with their observation about the idealist impulses of some of their fellow citizens. And so, the realists bow piously toward the liberal democratic idea; and then, once the services have concluded, they go on prattling about power for power’s sake.

And here we stumble on a peculiar tragedy of our present moment. The United States has come under military attack, requiring military responses. But, as in the Civil War, the revolutionary responses of liberal democratic ideals are likewise required, and not in a small degree. For the ultimate goal of our present war—the only possible goal—must be to persuade tens of millions of people around the world to give up their paranoid and apocalyptic doctrines about American conspiracies and crimes, to give up those ideas in favor of a lucid and tolerant willingness to accept the modern world with its complexities and advantages. The only war aim that will actually bring us safety is, in short, the spread of liberal outlooks to places that refuse any such views today. That is not a small goal, nor a goal to be achieved in two weeks, nor something to be won through mere military feats, though military feats cannot be avoided.

In each of the greatest crises of its past, the United States has known how to summon its most radical ideals and to express them in ever deeper versions to ourselves and to our enemies—as Lincoln did; as Woodrow Wilson did; as Franklin Roosevelt did two times over, first against the fascists and then, at the end of his life, in sketching a few preliminary notions for the impending cold war. But, on these themes, our present White House has turned out to be incoherent. George W. Bush’s demeanor, his undignified language (and even the language of his speechwriters, which is oddly antique, without any hint of the revolutionary liberalism of 1989 and the modern era), his early bias against what he derided as “nation-building,” the continuing sneer at revolutionary liberation that is contained in the sinister phrase “regime change,” his antipathy toward the ideals of international law, his uncultured air—these are traits that Hobbes would surely have ascribed to an American head of state or to any head of state. Right now, we need to summon people around the world to express a “devotion” (in Lincoln’s word) to liberal ideals—a devoted enthusiasm for those ideas among the schoolteachers in every impoverished immigrant suburb of Europe, among the editors in every Arab newspaper office, and among the professors in every Muslim university. We need the cooperation of millions of people, who, in their idealism, will rush out to argue with their own students and neighbors and readers. But the U.S. government, which knows how to twist the arms of Turkish politicians, does not know how to inspire the schoolteachers and newspaper editors and professors, not to mention the European masses, not to mention the American masses. Worse, the American leaders don’t even try to inspire people around the world, which is shocking to see, considering that our current problem is 90 percent political and only 10 percent military.

And so, we find ourselves in the midst of a Lincolnian war, a war for the liberation of others, yet led by people with Hobbesian instincts—find ourselves plunged into a crisis of liberal democracy, in which our leaders do not know what Lincoln knew, which was how to appeal to the ever more radical principles of liberal democracy. Our military is armed to the teeth, which turns out to be a good thing. (I admit it.) But our government has for some reason disarmed itself unilaterally in the realms of persuasion, inspirational example, philosophical clarity, and moral leadership. How did this happen to us? It has happened to us. Tocqueville thought that liberal societies could not wield power, and Lincoln proved him wrong. I am terrified that we are in the process of proving Lincoln wrong—that we are wielding power without liberalism, which will turn out to be no power at all. ■

What war can’t achieve. Smart Money

BY JEFFREY SACHS

IN GEORGE W. BUSH’S post-September 11, 2001, vision, our nation faces serious risks only if it fails to use decisively our vast military power. We are, after all, the world’s hyperpower, the country whose military capacity outranks that of the next 20 nations combined. According to Bush, that power can be translated into national security, if we are steadfast enough to use it, by carrying the war on terrorism to the terrorists and to rogue states like Iraq. Bush’s new national security doctrine, above all else, calls upon us to strike first before those enemies gain access to weapons of mass destruction. Since the United States is powerful enough to do that, we can fail only by failing to act. The administration doesn’t quibble about whether such actions are preemptive or preventative; either way they are protective.

Military action has thereby become the administration’s defining response to September 11, and, for that reason, war in Iraq is imminent no matter what the rest of the world might say. Delaying action, according to Bush, means denying the United States the means of our own defense, and any obstacle to U.S. action is per se a threat to us as well. If the United Nations slows us down, it is inimical to American security. If friends such as France and Germany warn us away from action, they must not really be friends after all. The media amplifies the Bush administration’s scorn for anything and anybody that holds back the United States from its appointed course. The administration means it when it says we are not going to wait around to prove whether or not Saddam Hussein

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has weapons of mass destruction. He probably does, but, even if he doesn't, he surely seeks them. For Bush, that's enough to justify war.

The combination of unilateralism and militarism now at the core of the Bush security doctrine is unprecedented in modern U.S. foreign policy. And, whatever can be said about the accuracy of the administration's depiction of Saddam as an imminent danger to the world, one thing is clear: The Bush administration, in a short period of time, has scared the wits out of most of the world, leading to a wave of global anti-Americanism that could never have been imagined just a few months ago—especially after the worldwide outpouring of sympathy in the wake of September 11, 2001. Indeed, antipathy to the Bush Doctrine, and its potential use in Iraq, provoked what was perhaps the largest worldwide protest in history on February 15.

It is now a mark of honor for many in the administration to stand up to the complaints of the Europeans and the United Nations. They smugly trust that American power will carry the day. But they are wrong. The White House is vastly underestimating how painful and difficult the Iraq conflict and reconstruction will be, because it is making a broader, deeper mistake: It is vastly overestimating the utility of military power. And, because of this mistake, the collapse of worldwide trust in the United States will have prolonged and pernicious effects, greatly multiplying the costs that our country will soon bear in a conflict. We will find that the president's belief in the redemptive power of the military is misplaced—not because we'll lose the war but because we'll lose the peace or, more accurately, suffer prolonged instability and violence in the region and around the globe as the world turns increasingly hostile to American ideology and pretensions.

A U.S.-LED WAR could find vindication in the world's eyes under the ghastly circumstance that Iraq launches chemical or biological weapons against American troops, other countries in the region, or Iraq's own citizens. Vindication of the Bush strategy would also come quickly if American troops uncover a hidden nuke in the Iraqi sand. Short of those circumstances, however, the war and its aftermath will be hugely unpopular throughout the world, and hugely destabilizing as a result, as it will reveal America's weaknesses.

Three profound lessons about military power will be replayed in the aftermath of a war with Iraq. First, a conventional army on the ground cannot suppress local uprisings or guerrilla warfare without tremendous bloodshed and years of agony. For decades, the British could not suppress the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland. The vast military might of Israel cannot suppress the Palestinian uprising. The Russians could not suppress the mujahedin in Afghanistan in the 1980s or the Chechens in the 1990s. The United States took casualties and quickly departed from both Lebanon and Somalia and even now is struggling to gain control in Afghanistan outside of Kabul. Under much worse circumstances, the United States is about to insert itself for years into

the vicious internecine struggles of Iraq, where tens of thousands of angry young men will be keen to pick off the occupying force. Our smart bombs won't prove as helpful at ground level as they do at 35,000 feet.

Second, still less can a conventional army, even one backed by \$380 billion per year in spending, suppress a swath of popular unrest across the Islamic world that stretches for nearly 10,000 miles. As our unilateralist actions make enemies where none existed before, we will find ourselves facing an intifada that extends far beyond Palestine and Al Qaeda. There are literally tens of thousands of soft U.S. targets to attack—hotels, factories, ports, ships, power grids—that cannot be protected adequately. The bombings in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Aden, Mombasa, and Bali, by attackers impervious to U.S. military power, are just omens of what will come. And, as security concerns induce global investors to avoid Muslim regions, the resulting economic turmoil will exacerbate the unrest itself, just as the economic misery in the West Bank provides some of the tinder for the ongoing Palestinian intifada.

Third, the longer-term economic consequences for the United States and the rest of the world will be stark. Here's where Donald Rumsfeld and his colleagues don't seem to have a clue. Our economic well-being depends not only on oil, machinery, skills, and technology but also on the sophisticated global division of labor in which these inputs are effectively used. American companies have operations around the world, with more than \$2 trillion in direct investments overseas and networks of suppliers and customers which extend far beyond that. Our prosperity depends on the worldwide cross-border movements of millions of people each day, including traders, engineers, investors, scientists, and tourists, as well as the flows of merchandise, finance, and ideas.

A widening regional conflict following a war with Iraq is likely to undermine this sophisticated worldwide division of labor. Widening violence will disrupt trade lines; raise insurance costs and shipping tariffs; slow customs, ports, and immigration services; undercut tourism and business travel; cause spikes in world energy prices; and delay business decisions. It will make international commerce and investment more expensive, thereby shifting production away from long supply lines that are more efficient and economical under stable political circumstances.

The disruptions of September 11 offer an augury. Even though the direct economic losses of the attacks were small relative to the size of the U.S. economy, the disaster has undermined economic recovery for more than a year. The stock market is around 20 percent lower today than it was on September 10, 2001, business investment plans are still in abeyance, world oil prices have remained at least 20 percent higher, the airline industry has sunk into bankruptcy, and foreign investment both into and out of the United States has declined markedly. September 11 is certainly not the only cause of these mishaps, but it has played an important role, in part by raising the expectations of follow-up war. In the same way, the economic effects of the Palestinian uprising on the Israeli economy are orders of magnitude greater than the direct damage.

And the adverse effects on the U.S. economy may pale in comparison with the effects on other hard-hit countries closer to Iraq. Around 2.4 billion people, 40 percent of the world, live in countries that are at least 10 percent Muslim. Virtually all of these countries risk some degree of destabilization from a war in Iraq. They may lose remittances from the Middle East as their workers flee the region. They are likely to be viewed as less hospitable places for foreign investment. Turkey suffered drastic economic losses after the Gulf war—due to the collapse of trade with Iraq and a decrease in foreign investment as companies exited the Middle East for regions viewed as more stable. This time, Turkey is bracing for another economic disruption as a result of war and the potential costs of caring for thousands of Kurdish refugees fleeing Iraq.

The Bush administration and many Americans seem to expect that Iraq's oil will pay for postwar occupation, reconstruction, and more—that there will be reconstruction contracts to tender, new reservoirs to develop, and lower world oil prices on the way. If only it were so. Iraq's new oil fields will take years to renovate and expand, probably under contentious political and security conditions. Iraq's existing creditors hold claims for more than \$150 billion. They will certainly insist on their place in the queue.

ALL THIS HIGHLIGHTS the folly of the Bush administration's unilateralism, its tremendous misjudging of the real meaning of U.S. power. And yet there is still time for the administration to back away from its unilateral rush to war. The rapid rise of worldwide opposition is spilling back to the United States and impacting American public opinion, especially as the public assesses the steeply rising costs of going to war alone. If we suddenly chose to pay heed to others in the Security Council, we would quickly reduce global anxieties and, even at this very late date, could still find a common strategy in battling weapons of mass destruction. Bolstering the U.N. inspections for several months and tightening the diplomatic noose on Saddam could prove decisive or, at the least, set the stage for U.N.-approved military action. With patience and creativity, we may even find an intermediate military strategy that defangs Saddam while staying short of a full invasion and occupation.

More generally, the current crisis could be the last chance for a while for us to learn the real meaning of global power. Our military might is no doubt important, as it allows us to defend the United States against any prospective coalition of enemies and also to protect our allies and vital resources—including Middle East oil—from attack. But military power, no matter how overwhelming, cannot easily be turned into direct economic advantage or global goodwill and trust, upon which globalization depends.

In addition to our military power, therefore, we have to translate our economic wealth and technological prowess into a different kind of power—the power to help shape the global cooperation institutions on which we will depend for our

livelihoods and our long-term prosperity. The much-maligned United Nations, the very institution we are doing so much to threaten by our current unilateralism, remains the single best hope for shaping a world to our liking in the twenty-first century. Through the United Nations and specialized agencies, such as the World Health Organization, UNICEF, or the Food and Agriculture Organization, we could deploy our economic strengths to overcome poverty, deal with climate-change problems, and fight debilitating diseases. We could help rid the world of the poverty that provides fertile ground for upheaval, dislocation, and terrorism. Over the long run, we would build international goodwill and shared values that would diminish the anti-American fury that threatens our lives and economic well-being. War with Iraq will, tragically, do the exact opposite. ■

Liberalism v. national interest. Self Service

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

TO HEAR DEMOCRATIC leaders and Democratic political candidates declaim on war is to conclude that liberals are totally incoherent on the subject of power. Liberalism, on the other hand, is quite coherent. It is important to distinguish between the two. Politicians are pulled by public opinion, by calculations of political advantage, and by other nonideological considerations. Hence, the cacophony of liberal voices about war with Iraq. Not only do these voices contradict each other, but some contradict themselves, not only day to day but even within the same speech—for instance, John Kerry and Edward Kennedy, who make elaborate cases as to why deterrence is to be preferred over war in Iraq and then absurdly add that, of course, Iraq must be disarmed.

In the United States, where party discipline is so lax, it is particularly hard to ascribe thematic coherence to the party out of power. To speak definitively about American liberalism's view of power, one has to look at what it did when it ran U.S. foreign policy. During the 1990s, liberalism spoke quite clearly. Strikingly, the very same party that voted overwhelmingly against going to war to expel Iraq from Kuwait ordered American troops to intervene in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and dramatically escalated American intervention in Somalia.

It is thus a mistake to say that liberalism is hostile to the exercise of power in and of itself. When given authority, liberalism rained hell on Serbia, killed a host of Somalis, and used the threat of overwhelming force to take over Haiti. The problem for liberals is not the notion of power. It is the notion