



Anti-Americanism and the Pursuit of Politics

Russell A. Berman
Stanford University

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, US foreign policy included wars in Afghanistan and Iraq which elicited considerable opposition in western Europe, both among political elites and in the general populations. The altercations that ensued between the US and, especially, the governments of the “old Europe” of France and Germany took place in the context of declining European estimations of the US, as measured by various opinion polls. In turn, public discussion in the US and abroad began to pay considerable attention to this phenomenon of “anti-Americanism.” In the meantime, much research has been devoted to the problem and we now have a conceptual apparatus that facilitates distinguishing between specific policy disagreements and a broader, emotionally tinged hostility to things American, just as we know more about the distribution of attitudes about the US across populations as well as about the deeper historical sources of (negative and positive) estimations of the US as a culture.

While discourses of anti-Americanism nearly always involve some political content—even when they are primarily cultural, e.g., in traditional European elitist denunciations of aspects of democratic mass culture such as Hollywood films—the question remains as to whether and how anti-Americanism genuinely impacts on the pursuit of politics. In the

face of the news that Europeans held largely negative views about the United States during the period of the Iraq War, one common American response boiled down the anguished question: Why don't they love us? This response then typically expands into a recollection of American achievements for Europe as a basis for a condemnation of anti-Americanism, denounced as an indication of a hurtful ingratitude. While this line of thought may be understandable as emotion, it is not clear that it is relevant as politics. In other words, lack of "love" for the United States may not entail a significant impediment for the sober pursuit of American interest (just as the converse holds: in a situation characterized by a strongly pro-US predisposition, it is hardly the case that the government of such a country could not simultaneously be a tough partner during negotiations over conflicting interests).

With regard to the phenomenon of post 9/11 anti-Americanism, one can speculate about specifically practical, political implications on at least three levels. The first possible terrain for a politically significant ramification of anti-Americanism involves the domestic US polity. While this topic lies largely outside the frame of this paper, it is worth noting for completeness sake. After all, evidence of anti-Americanism abroad figured prominently in the domestic debates up to and during the 2004 presidential campaign. Thus, accusations were raised by political opponents that the Bush administration had squandered a reservoir of good-will that had been evident in the immediate aftermath of the attacks in New York and Washington. Similarly, concerns were voiced repeatedly that our traditional allies had grown alienated due to the administration's policies: anti-Americanism as an alleged symptom of current

international affairs became an accusation in the adversarial rhetoric of political competition. The merits of both claims deserve close interrogation in their own right; they are cited here solely to indicate how anti-Americanism abroad became an element of domestic politics. More generally however, the relationship between foreign and domestic spheres of politics can also be examined in the other direction: a heightened ideological polarization of US political debate has been underway for sometime, and one has to consider the possibility that some component of anti-Americanism overseas involves an export of domestic dissension. One might call this a “boomerang effect” anti-Americanism. Some regret that politics no longer ends at the water’s edge. Meanwhile the cultural and intellectual communities, with their occasionally adversarial stances toward US power, enjoy an international distribution, thereby amplifying domestically generated criticisms of the US overseas. This interaction process between domestic US discussion and political processes overseas deserves greater attention.

The second terrain on which to explore the pertinence of anti-Americanism for the pursuit of politics—“politics as usual,” to speak—involves the question: can one demonstrate that anti-Americanism genuinely impedes the pursuit of US interests in international affairs? Is anti-Americanism a problem for the State Department? While it is no doubt hardly pleasant to read anti-American comments in the foreign press or to see televised accounts of anti-American demonstrations, do such phenomena have a negative impact on the business of politics? In other words, this question separates the possible experience of, for example, a tourist who might encounter unappealing hostility (although in fact anecdotes of such unfortunate events are rare) from the processes in the

professionalized political sphere: they may perhaps not “love” us, but they may very well still do business with us. Those who insist on the importance of anti-Americanism may not always ask whether this perhaps culturally interesting development is in fact politically important at all. Before asking what we should do about it—enumerating the various strategies that might be undertaken in order to reduce anti-Americanism—it is worth inquiring whether resources should be deployed at all in order to ameliorate a situation that deleterious impact of which has yet to be delineated. Does it matter? What are the real costs of anti-Americanism? Rather than breaking into panic at the sight of anti-Americanism, one should at least entertain the possibility of internalizing these costs—if they really amount to much at all—while continuing, unrepentantly, the pursuit of unrevised policies, no matter what foreign criticism they may elicit, since these politics emerge presumably from core US interests and values. In any case, this level of the evaluation of the importance of anti-Americanism is the core concern of this paper: does anti-Americanism really get in the way of US foreign policy?

Anti-Americanism may have a political import in a third manner: domestic politics overseas, i.e., the political lives of France, Germany, etc. In recent years, we have witnessed examples of efforts by politicians in foreign countries to mobilize latent anti-American sentiment (a perhaps constant latency, given the sheer prominence of the US in the contemporary world but certainly derivative from other sources as well); to harness it for political gain; and to ride waves of anti-American sentiment into office. Both Germany’s Schröder and Venezuela’s Chavez fit this model. There is therefore evidence of a political pay-off from anti-Americanism. Two questions follow however: can this

mobilized anti-Americanism easily be turned into policy, in particular to a policy that might not have been pursued anyhow? In other words, while politicians may “play an anti-American card,” it is not clear that they necessarily pursue policies that are, in substance, distinctively hostile to US interests. This then leads to the question most germane to US foreign policy: are such politicians who utilize an anti-American rhetoric necessarily more hostile to the US and therefore less amicable in bilateral and multilateral negotiations? When is anti-Americanism just a matter of affect and atmospherics and when does it genuinely impinge on the practical pursuit of politics?

In terms of global evaluations of the significance of anti-Americanism, there is a third approach beyond affect (like and dislike) and beyond pragmatics (cooperation or adversariality). Since 9/11 much has been made of the “war of ideas” between models of western modernity, often generally represented by the US (despite differences with the modernity of western Europe on many points), and the anti-modernity associated with fundamentalist tendencies above all in the Islamic world (where they are no doubt a minority current but an influential one). The discourse of anti-Americanism is a fertile source for the culture of anti-modernity. It is hardly a consolation that anti-Americanism is, sometimes, not specifically about the US but “only “ about modernity. It is however therefore important that engaging in the “war of ideas” does not necessarily entail building subjective affection for the US specifically but rather promoting acceptance of key tenets of modernity, e.g., tolerance, minority rights, gender equality, private property, free markets, etc. Ignoring the war of ideas, arguably, could have irreparable consequences by ignoring the virulence of a subculture which has proven to be the source

of agents of terror and by refusing to promote the ideas of democratization, which could provide a solid basis for a modernization precisely in those parts of the world that represent a problem for the US and US policy. This level of importance of anti-Americanism could be called “theoretical” (because it is about ideas) as well as “generative” (because it is here that both terroristic politics and their opposite, democratic engagement, generate new formations). The rest of this paper examines several regional cases: affective issues are not discussed, except as occasional background; the main focus is directed at pragmatic concerns in the practical pursuit of politics; and theoretical-generative concerns are raised where appropriate.

Germany : Policy, Despite anti-Americanism: Even leaving aside the nations of central and eastern Europe (where the Communist past typically generates a pro-American bias), the perspective on the US varies considerably from country to country in “old Europe.” England is wrapped in the special relations of the Anglosphere, French attitudes to the US are driven, in part, by both historical similarities (democratic revolutions) and rivalries (Gaulist nationalism). Germany is distinct in its own way, burdened by a past that put it in opposition to the US in two world wars, but then, at least as far as West Germany goes, a competing history as a major beneficiary of American military protection during the Cold War. For the purposes of this paper, however, Germany will stand in as the primary European example.

It was no doubt the flare up in anti-American attitudes in 2002 and 2003 that contributed to the current concern with the American image abroad. The scope of this outbreak may

have been greater in (West) Germany than elsewhere, given the relatively high positive estimation that prevailed previously. According to the Pew Global Attitudes study, positive evaluations of the US, in the period between 2000 and 2003, dropped in Spain from 50% to 38%; in France from 62% to 43%; but in Germany from 78% to 45%. Received opinion attributes these drops to Bush administration policy to prosecute wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In terms of a political psychology, one might claim, however, with equal plausibility, that this heightened negativism represents a post 9/11 effect: the terrorist actions obviously staged attacks on symbols of American power, the destruction of which in turn took on the character of an invitation to disclose previously concealed attitudes of hostility. More generally, future historians will have to explore what larger shifts were underway that allowed this level of underlying animosity to accumulate. It is likely in part a matter of the post-Cold War world in which West Europeans were no longer dependant on the US military to provide protection from the Red Army. In addition, in the era of globalization, Western Europe had ceased to be a privileged center of power, as US attention was directed more to Russia and China than to Paris and Berlin, a shift that did not go unnoticed and elicited resentment. Furthermore, the latent, then manifest hostility to the US surely had to do with the complex dynamics of European unification. While no one really knew what "Europe" would stand for, at least everyone was sure that it was not "American." Hence in the recent French vote on the European constitution, the Socialist supporters argued for Europe as a vehicle with which to confront the US: *faire face a l'Amérique*. (That the referendum of May 29 lost has to be taken, in part, as an indication of the ideological limits of anti-Americanism: not even an

opportunity to opt for a confrontation with the US was able to overcome the political liabilities of the process of constitutional ratification.)

German anti-Americanism is a particular case of this West European phenomenon and sheds interesting light on the pragmatic question: does anti-Americanism make a difference for practical political concerns? While anti-Americanism has indisputably added to the atmospherics and represents a fascinating vector within the ideological transformations of German identity since the nineteenth century, it is difficult to mount the argument that anti-Americanism ever played a decisive role in political interactions between the two states. To keep the big picture in mind: two decisive moments in US-German relations in the twentieth century, the war declarations of 1917 and 1941, were not consequences of anti-Americanism but rather results of large and complex constellations of political, imperial, and military logics. Yet this insight cannot alone demonstrate the political inconsequentiality of anti-Americanism since, arguably, it is only in the post-1945 world that the US emerges as a *bona fide* world power, and anti-Americanism only becomes pertinent in this period. (Earlier variants, such as nineteenth-century European anxieties regarding US democracy and capitalism are important as historical sources of twentieth-century ideological formations, but the shape of international politics was so different that a comparison with the late twentieth century is difficult to present convincingly). A more intriguing example of a gap between anti-Americanism and political results has to do with the relationship of ideology to policy around the first post-war West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. Alongside his anti-Nazi credentials, Adenauer maintained a characteristically German conservative

skepticism with regard to American modernity, especially its materialism and its secularism.¹ (This is indeed an interesting twist on contemporary polarities: in the 1950s, German Christian Democracy feared American secularization, while today German and more broadly western European intellectuals fear a US seen as gripped by religious fanaticism.) Nonetheless, despite his reservations about American culture and institutions, Adenauer was the founding proponent of a *Westpolitik*, an orientation toward the West which, of course, implied first of all a stabilization of the emerging division of Germany in the Cold War. Atlanticism meant a painful decision: refusing a unified and neutral Germany. In other words, real-world exigencies, in this case, keeping the Red Army beyond the Fulda Gap, meant accommodating the Americans despite cultural reservations.

It is unlikely that Gerhard Schröder harbors similar reservations about US culture. Yet in the 2002 national election campaign, he was quite prepared to play an anti-American card. He not only profiled his foreign policy against Washington's military response to 9/11, which was, arguably, a policy position within the range of normal debate and disagreement (and therefore not necessarily "anti-American"). Schröder crossed the Rubicon into a realm of decided anti-Americanism by introducing a rhetoric denouncing *amerikanische Verhältnisse*, "American conditions," which clearly represented a much more encompassing verdict than a dispute over military strategies. "American conditions" signals neo-liberal deregulation, especially a reform of the labor market, interestingly precisely those points which it had been hoped Schröder himself would pursue. Yet in the context of the campaign, he was forced to lean to the left, in a

successful vote-getting strategy, with the side effect of undercutting the post-Communist party, the PDS, which fell below the 5% hurdle. Excluding the PDS only increased the SPD majority in the *Bundestag*.

However it is difficult to argue that Schröder's political decision to mobilize left-wing anti-Americanism significantly impacted on policy issues of interest to the US. If counterfactual history is permissible for a moment: had Schröder refrained from the anti-Americanism rhetoric, and the election had placed the conservative CDU/CSU in power, there is no indication that a Chancellor Stoiber would have permitted German participation in the Iraq campaign (just as there is little expectation that Angel Merkel, should she succeed Schröder in the autumn, will reverse this policy). The anti-military bias of the German populace is so great, a consequence of a long national history, that significant foreign engagements are nearly unthinkable. Even the limited participation in the Balkans—clearly a neighboring European region, fraught with history, and where the case about genocide was indisputable—was deeply controversial. Yet this disjunction between anti-American ideology and pragmatic politics can be demonstrated even without a counterfactual: although Schröder rejected participation in the Iraq War (in line with French policy), he did allow for considerable ancillary cooperation with the US in security measures in the larger theater: naval patrols in the Mediterranean, chemical weapons detection units on the Kuwait border, and security troops in Afghanistan. While there may be foreign policy nuances between “Red-Green” and CDU/CSU, on the large issues the divergence will not be great: both will refrain from full-scale military engagements overseas, but both will try to prove themselves cooperative partners on the

margins. This outcome will be independent of the scope of anti-American during a campaign.

The recent state election in North Rhine-Westphalia represented a sort of repetition of the rhetoric of the 2002 campaign, but with a reverse outcome. It was not anti-Americanism that was played out directly, but a fairly strident anti-capitalism (the head of the SPD described international capitalists as a plague of “locusts”), and many of the international firms identified in a leaked SPD paper were American. While the heated rhetoric mobilized the left, the SPD nonetheless went down to a resounding defeat in one of its strongholds. Playing the anti-American card does not guarantee winning the game.

West European Political Leaders and the Political Value of anti-Americanism: It is worth considering how the political leadership during the Iraq War subsequently fared in the context of anti-American political predispositions. One should leave aside the case of Jose Maria Aznar; the Spanish elections took place under the impact of the Madrid bombings of March 11, 2004 and, perhaps more importantly, a botched government handling of public relations in the immediate aftermath of the attack. Another counterfactual: had the bombing not taken place, there were expectations that Aznar’s conservatives would win, i.e., a pro-American government might have withstood an electoral test despite a public opinion broadly hostile to US foreign policy (and where anti-American resentments have deeper roots stretching back to the Franco era). Yet again the counterfactual is not necessary, since both in Italy and the United Kingdom politicians have been able to remain in power (and, in the case of Blair, to be reelected to

a remarkable third term) despite their personal support for a US foreign policy which elicited from the public wide-spread hostility, typically couched in more broad-brush rejections of US society and culture. To be sure, neither Blair nor Berlusconi is as firmly in place as they were a few years ago, yet it is impossible to attribute their falling stars to public anti-Americanism. Political processes in both countries are much more complex. The comparative clinchers, however, are the cases of Chirac and Schröder, who were on the opposite side of the anti-American divide but who now, in the aftermath of the turmoil of 2003, face similar political declines. If the election in North Rhine-Westphalia demonstrated that anti-Americanism camouflaged as anti-capitalism does not necessarily win an election, even in a left-wing stronghold, the comparison of the vicissitudes of the political leaders from the Iraq War era shows that positioning vis-à-vis the US (Berlusconi and Blair: positive; Chirac and Schröder: negative) does not appear to produce different results in political careers.

Latin America: Anti-Americanism as a Shock to US Foreign Policy: For an inquiry into the significance of anti-Americanism for the pursuit of politics, the shift from Western Europe to Latin America raises important questions, due in part to the contrasting constitutions of these different anti-Americanisms. Anti-Americanism in Germany draws on long-standing cultural anxieties, building secondarily on “legacy anti-Americanism” (Katzenstein and Keohane), historical resentment toward the erstwhile enemy of the world wars. Latin American anti-Americanism (generalizing across a diverse region) foregrounds the legacy anti-Americanism, the wounds of US intrusions from the Mexican War to Grenada and Panama in the 1980s, with the cultural criticism

pushed to the back. The memory of US presence especially in the Caribbean is very much alive and defines anti-US sentiment. While this model of Latin American anti-Americanism contrasts it starkly with the ideological make-up of Germany, Latin America is arguably the original venue of anti-Americanism in general. According to Alan McPherson, “Most ‘Latins’ who expressed their discontent in the 1950s and 1960s lived in the Caribbean, the area of the world where U.S. influence was historically most pronounced [...]. One study found that from 1956 to 1965, 65 out of 171 ‘anti-American demonstrations, riots, and terrorists attacks’ in the world took place in Latin America.”² Latin America, in other words, is both a special case and a paradigm.

Aside from its legacy character, Latin anti-Americanism draws on various cultural traditions, some similar, some quite distinct from Europe. The most salient difference is of course that Latin Americans are also Americans, part of the New World and they therefore participate in the same deep perspectival shift that underlies many Old World anxieties about “America.” Yet, like Europeans, Latin Americans harbor a version of cultural aversion, “Arielism,” that dismisses the monster in the North as a Caliban. This elitism can intertwine with the revolutionary populisms of Sandino or Castro. Anti-Americanism—i.e., a hostility to the US cast as “Yankees”—has long provided a rhetoric of resentment available to politicians of various tendencies as a vehicle to mobilize popular support. On the left, Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez can attack the US when it serves him, but even the center-rightist Vicente Fox of Mexico, with his personal ties to President Bush, draws political sustenance from attacks on US policies to illegal immigrants from Mexico. (This is also a good case of the ambivalence frequently built

into anti-Americanism: railing against the US for not opening its borders to allow greater access to the US).

Yet Latin America demonstrates another dimension of the relationship between anti-Americanism and politics. Rather than thinking this problem in terms of the achievement of objective goals and the extent to which anti-Americanism represents an affordable or unaffordable transaction cost, a certain subjective dimension comes into play: because of certain expectations regarding Latin America and because of the specific values present in the bureaucracy of US foreign policy, anti-Americanism represents a problem for the functioning of policy as such. Anti-americanism becomes a problem not because the politicized opponents of America are able to withhold certain goods (they may or may not choose to do so), but because the representatives of the US and, perhaps, large sections of the US public cannot, subjectively, digest the expressions of animosity, which in turn hampers the political decision-making and its execution. The outbreak of anti-Americanism between the Nixon visit to Venezuela in 1958 and the incursion in the Dominican Republic in 1966—comparable to the wave of anti-Americanism in Europe during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—highlights this aspect of the phenomenon.

McPherson cites Richard Nixon's opening comments in his memoirs with regard to the 1957 trip—which culminated in violent anti-US demonstrations: "Of all the trips I made abroad as Vice President, the one I least wanted to take was my visit to South America in 1958...because I thought it would be relatively unimportant and uninteresting."³ While the phrasing surely results from a post facto stylization, it nonetheless reflects the

background assumption: taking Latin America for granted. The grand goals of foreign policy in Europe or East Asia contrasted with the expectation of no great drama in Latin America. Hence the stunned surprise at the demonstrations in Venezuela, foreshadowing the ineptitude of US political responses to Castro and his deployment of a harsh anti-American rhetoric as a vehicle to assert a national identity and independence. US foreign policy could not, however, react effectively. “The response of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations to this sudden anti-Americanization of Cuba was diplomatic rigor mortis.”⁴ Transfixed by the very fact of hostility, diplomacy could not ferret out the—at least according to McPherson—ambivalence which was present, until the two sides fell into the polarization of the Cold War.

The outbreak of anti-Americanism in Latin America between 1958 and 1966 shocked US foreign policy just as it surprised and stunned the public. The range of responses proposed is uncannily comparable to the post-9/11 discussion: including calls for greater sensitivity, more effective marketing, and programmatic resignation to the fact of an anti-American world. The question to explore here then is what is it exactly that explains the way expressions of anti-Americanism seem to stymie US foreign policy ambitions: not by blocking real-world goals but by overburdening the foreign-policy will itself.

Dean Acheson famously characterized the US preoccupation with foreign estimations of America as a “narcissus psychosis.”⁵ What Christopher Lasch later designated as “culture of narcissism” depended both on late twentieth-century cultural shifts as well as a long tradition of Puritan self-scrutiny: finding fault (sin) in oneself, or examining oneself

perpetually through the eyes of others.⁶ An anatomy of American intellectual and cultural mentalities may lead too far afield here, except to the extent that the deleterious impact of anti-Americanism has to be viewed in precisely such subjective terms: a culture predisposed to be concerned with its own failings will amplify the critical voices from outside (which is why this is a privileged matter for foreign policy: foreign criticism stings in a way domestic criticism never does, since it is merely politics). The force of Latin American anti-Americanism was so strong because it came from an unexpected quarter—a “neighbor”—and it spoke precisely to the vulnerable point in US foreign policy: on the one hand, the high ideals of democracy, on the other, their very inconsistent application. Were it not for the idealist core of US foreign policy, anti-Americanism would be little more than noise; in the context of the high standards set by that idealism, however, anti-Americanism, especially so close to “home,” can burden and incapacitate the foreign policy system.

China: Anti-Americanism in the Non-Democratic State: Potential legacy sources of anti-Americanism in China (the US role in the imperialism of the Boxer Rebellion era or the confrontation of the Korean War) do not appear to figure prominently. Nor is there evidence of any elaborate cultural criticism, such as standard European elitism or the “Arielism” of Latin America. Possibly some residue of the Communist propaganda of previous decades may still have resonance, left-overs from the high Cold War or the Cultural Revolution. A diffuse suspicion of the West can draw on memories of imperialism, but this does not impact relations with the US more than those with Europe. At stake is not a rejection of the West, the consumerist life-style of which now appears as

a goal to many Chinese (in contrast to the ascetic virtues of the Maoist era), but a potential animosity to the West, and especially the US, as part of the insistent assertion of Chinese national interests. Thus, the primary altercations with the US in the public eye have to do with current foreign policy disputes, especially support for Taiwan and for Japan. The bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade fit all too perfectly into this horizon of expectations: treating it as an affront and attack was much more plausible than considering it to have been an accident in time of war. Yet this sort of hostility can coexist with an appreciation for some US values, such as democracy, as evidenced in the Tianamen protest movement.

This ambivalence toward the US provides the official press with the opportunity to play out US foreign policy against US democratization values. Thus, for example, a commentator in the *People's Daily* noted that: "In a short period of time, regimes in nations like Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan changed: parties in power were removed. These 'revolutions' were dazzling. Despite different political situations, these revolutions were largely successful due to U.S. involvement behind the scenes." This US involvement is taken as evidence of the definitively non-democratic character of the transitions; the article concludes: "...the Bush administration's foreign policy of democracy exportation is not real democracy but rather hateful hegemony."⁷

The concern with the putatively false character of the transitions to democracy invites a comparison of attitudes to the US in China and in Eastern Europe and Russia. In most of formerly socialist Eastern Europe, a pro-American bias prevails, as a consequence of the

Cold War: a “legacy pro-Americanism.” (East Germany is a major counter-example, where the transition took a different character due to the unification with the West, an experience, which no other satellite state underwent). Yet this political expression of gratitude is ambiguous to the extent that it may combine a response to US opposition to Communism with a response to US opposition to Russian occupation and hegemony: the former is about the social system, the latter about nationalism. The fact that there seems to be no pro-American bias in Russia seems to indicate that estimations of the US in the context of the transition from Communism are driven more by anti-Soviet nationalism than by capitalist anti-Communism. (To test this claim however one would need to gauge attitudes in a post-Communist Russia with a more successful capitalist economy than has been achieved to date). The implication for China is then not to expect a necessary pro-American turn, even if the transition out of classic Communist structures continues. Chinese nationalism (and perceived national interests) rather than Communism frame Chinese attitudes to US foreign policy.

The government can mobilize demonstrations against US support for Taiwan and Japan. It is unclear to what extent a bona fide government-independent anti-Americanism exists, i.e., a potential resistance toward a pragmatic accommodation by the Chinese government with the US. Are the anti-US demonstrators simply puppets of the government, or do they represent part of a potentially autonomous public opinion which the government has to calculate into its decisions? Given the restrictions on free and open debate in China, it is difficult to postulate that Chinese government opposition to US foreign policy goals are functions of a putatively anti-American public opinion in China. On the contrary, it is

more likely that the anti-American demonstrators are government loyalists. Still, the speculative question remains as to whether much public opposition would emerge if a changed administration in Beijing were to make a sudden about-face on a major foreign policy issue, such as the status of Taiwan.

Even if one were to assume that the anti-American demonstrators represent some genuine, non-manipulated current in the Chinese public, it is nearly impossible to posit that current Chinese government policy is constrained by such hypothetical public opinion. In democratic Spain, Italy, and England, the elected governments were able to cooperate with US foreign policy in Afghanistan and Iraq, despite extensive popular opposition to US policy. Yet if government is not tied tautly to public opinion even in democratic states, how much more independent must government articulation of foreign policy be in a Communist dictatorship? There are therefore no grounds for assuming that Chinese foreign policy results from some disseminated anti-Americanism. As far as the pursuit of US foreign policy goals, progress on resolving disputes with China will not depend on projects to improve the image of the US in the Chinese public. This would of course change in a free public sphere with a democratically elected regime, although even then Chinese nationalism rather than substantive anti-Americanism is likely to be the key issue.

Similarly, the periodic symbolic demonstrations of protest against the so-called hegemonic policy of the US have not impacted on the flourishing trade between the two countries. Robust economic activity can coexist with foreign policy disagreement. This

observation could be taken as a cautionary note to those who are concerned that anti-Americanism elsewhere might impact on the viability of US brands. Yet the silver lining of the economic success with China has many gray clouds, especially the trade imbalance and the dispute over the Yuan. The imbalance is surely not the result of some attitudinal anti-Americanism that inhibits Chinese consumers from purchasing US goods. Neither however does the success of Chinese sales in the US prove that anti-Americanism will always remain irrelevant to economic relations. A revaluation of the Yuan and increased pressure on China to accept US imports could, in the context of already exacerbated social tensions within China, elicit popular resentment, that would presumably combine anti-Americanism with an “anti-neo-liberalism” and anti-capitalism. Whether this would impact on government-to-government interaction would depend on the state of democratization and the liberalization of the public sphere.

The Islamic World: Anti-Americanism Outside the State

Reflection on the significance of anti-Americanism for the pursuit of American foreign policy goals in the enormously diverse countries of the Islamic world, stretching from Morocco to Indonesia, highlights some instructive distinctions. The predominantly ethnic Arab states are not democratic (post-Baathist Iraq is emerging as the first counter-example, and it may be followed by Lebanon now freed from Syrian occupation). As non-democratic systems, they share features of the Chinese example: attitudinal anti-Americanism measured by public opinion polling may have little significance for the formulation of foreign policy, since institutions of democratic legitimation are minimal

and primarily propagandistic. Anti-Americanism as elite opinion among policy-makers may play role, but it may not represent an impediment to pragmatic cooperation: for example, the Saudi regime is tied, in terms of conservative values, to a profound suspicion of aspects of cultural modernization typically associated with the US, but it has also shown itself quite prepared to cooperate with the US despite these suspicions.

Yet despite the fact that non-democratic institutions shield policy formulation in most Arab countries from public opinion, it is hardly useful to pursue an analysis oblivious to the wider population. The surprise here is that high negatives in polling results with regard to opinions of the US may not necessarily translate into political resistance to US foreign policy. Indeed, if the connection between opinion poll results and political activism is, at best, weak in democratic contexts, the plausibility of extrapolating from polling data in non-democratic settings is even lower. Thus in the build-up to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, opponents of the emerging Bush administration policy issued dire predictions with regard to the “Arab street,” the popular masses who, so it was imagined, would pour out of their homes, topple moderate or secular governments, and establish radical Islamicist and rabidly anti-American regimes. In fact, nothing of the sort took place: anti-American demonstrations in major Arab cities were relatively minor, especially when compared to the enormous gatherings in European capitals. In addition, the moderate states do not appear to have emerged from the process in a weakened condition. There has however been an introduction of admittedly small democratic practices in Egypt, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Alongside the toppling of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, this suggests the argument that the best way to

overcome anti-Americanism is to promote democratization. Supporting democratization with practical measures undercuts at least one of the sources of anti-Americanism, the irritating discrepancy between US rhetoric and US policy. Democratization does of course run the risk of electoral success for anti-American groupings, but it may lead to more reliable partners and certainly more stable political systems in the long run.

Non-Arab Islamic regimes range from the credibly democratic (Turkey, Bangladesh, Indonesia) to the brutally authoritarian (Iran). Despite high rates of negative attitudes to the US, it is not clear that anti-Americanism explains political interaction with the US. The most salient question would be the Turkish decision not to cooperate in the Iraq War. Detailed analysis would be required, but surely other issues entered into the Turkish political calculation: the status of the Kurds, the border with Iraq, the potential of domestic fundamentalism. In the coming years, Turkish attitudes to the US may well become more a secondary consequence of European decisions: the more European commitment to Turkey prove to be weak, the more the US will appear an effective ally. Like Turkey, Indonesia's interaction with the US is complex, going far beyond the question of anti-Americanism. Major terrorist attacks have taken place in both countries, but they do not appear to have had the wedge effect that the Madrid bombings achieved, where terrorism was able to split the US-Spanish alliance. The difference between Islamicist terrorism in a Muslim country and Islamicist terrorist in a non-Muslim country is more important than any continuity of attitudinal anti-Americanism. In addition, the leading US role in the tsunami relief effort may have some impact on Indonesian attitudes. Iran provides a further instructive example: as elsewhere, a considerable

disjunction can exist between public opinion and government policy, particularly in a non-democratic setting. Here the twist is that there is considerable public sympathy for the United States (a reaction against the Mullahs' regime and an expression of an Iranian nationalism against an Islamic internationalism). The quandry for the US here is not how to combat anti-Americanism but rather whether there are productive ways to cultivate the pro-American bias.

Yet in the context of this investigation, the question is not the composition or diversity of anti-Americanisms in the very heterogeneous set of predominately Islamic countries. Instead the question is whether anti-Americanism, either as public or elite opinion, should be understood as a significant problem for US foreign policy. Does it make the US agenda more difficult, more difficult enough to be worth addressing, and if so, are there promising approaches to pursue? As in other parts of the world, it seems as if fixing attitudinal anti-Americanism is actually not the silver bullet for American foreign policy. More positive attitudes about the United States are unlikely to change Arab evaluations of US support for Israel (just as public relations about the American way of life will not convince the Chinese that the US is right on Japan or Taiwan). This however does not preclude the possibility that more effective presentation of the arguments for specific US policies may influence parts of the respective publics.

Yet the question of anti-Americanism and the Islamic world also calls into question the approach of thinking this material through solely in terms of "foreign policy as usual," i.e., inter-state relations. Beyond the processes of normal negotiations between states, the

current age stands in the shadow of the specifically non-state threat of terrorism. Anti-Americanism is important here not (only) because it may limit the flexibility of Morocco or Egypt on this or that issue of bilateral concern, but because it nourishes an Islamicist subculture which has been the breeding ground for terrorism. In order to cut off the flow of personnel into terrorist recruitment streams, one would have to address this populist anti-Americanism, in effect, a cultural “pre-emptive strike” in order to diminish the likelihood of later non-state acts of violence. Any such violence—Islamicist terrorism—has potentially enormous effects on the US and its conduct of its foreign policy, as evidenced by 9/11. Yet obviously, any efforts to combat the anti-Americanism that nourishes this violence would be far away from classic diplomacy. The international political importance of the non-state actors seems to push toward some redistribution of governmental responsibilities, or a redefinition of the scope of the agents of foreign policy. The beginning of such a policy shift would involve thinking through the alternative hypotheses regarding the sources of Islamicist violence: is it in fact a legitimate, non-sectarian reading of the Koran and other Islamic teachings? In that case, we are indeed caught in a “clash of civilizations” since Islamicist terrorism becomes a likely offshoot of Islam. Alternatively one can posit that fundamentalism and Islamicism, including its deployment of paramilitary violence and its millenarian aspiration to usher in a new world, are in fact recyclings of some of the more violent motifs of European modernism, especially apocalyptic visions of ending the bourgeois world and an aspiration to create a “new man.”⁸ Anti-Americanism, as a hostility to modernity, is a central piece of this puzzle.

Conclusions: Both popular and elite images of the US contribute to the conditions for the pursuit of US foreign policy. Negative attitudes to the US, that go beyond reasonable criticisms of individual policy points or particular features of US society and culture, constitute anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism takes on various features in different national contexts. America can be vilified as an impediment to democracy (“legacy anti-Americanism,’ in Latin America, recalling US support for dictatorial regimes), but American can also be equally denounced for promoting a democratic modernity that threatens traditional life-styles (fundamentalist Islamicism). In general, anti-Americanism is frequently ambivalent, admiring some features of the US and denouncing others.

In Western Europe and Latin America, anti-Americanism is available for instrumentalization by political elites in their domestic competitions for political advantage. Candidates who come to power thanks to the mobilization of anti-American sectors of the electorate may find their own policy flexibility limited (Schröder). Yet the genuine policy differences between politicians who appeal to anti-Americanism and those who do not may not be large (Merkel will not send troops to Iraq). Anti-Americanism in China is primarily a matter of nationalism, especially in orchestrated demonstrations, and therefore part of the regime’s strategy of rule. In its pursuit of its own Realpolitik, the Chinese government is not driven by popular anti-Americanism: public opinion does not determine foreign policy, least of all in a non-democratic environment.

Anti-Americanism in the Islamic world is comparable to anti-Americanism elsewhere, insofar as the conduct of ‘normal’ bilateral relations is not driven, or not driven primarily

by anti-American public opinion (as little as the pro-American public in Iran drives the Iranian government). Yet here there is a crucial distinction, insofar as anti-Americanism in the Islamicist subculture (both within the Islamic world geographically as well as elsewhere, as in Western Europe) is by far the primary recruiting ground for terrorism. Moreover, since 9/11 it is clear that this terrorism can have an enormous impact: not only in the sense of the immediate destruction but also in terms of the political consequences. For US foreign policy the challenge is to recognize and address the importance of these non-state actors (the terrorists themselves as well as the supporting subcultures) for international relations. Anti-Americanism may not impact on bilateral relations directly, but via terrorism it is extraordinarily important. The Islamicist subculture, and its critique of modernity (for which the US is the clearest symbol), is part of the “war of ideas” in the post 9/11 world. The rationale for a new foreign policy to engage anti-Americanism—through clearer articulation of policy rationale and an agenda for an elaborate and effective education about the US—is not to gain tactical advantages in bilateral negotiations but to win the war of ideas, for modernity and for the US, and thereby to dry up the sources of terrorism.

¹ See Michael Werz, "Anti-Americanism and Ambivalence: Remarks on an Ideology in Historical Transformation," *Telos* 129 (Fall-Winter 2004), 90-93.

² Alan McPherson, *Yankee No! Anti-Americanism in U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003), pp. 2,3

³ *Ibid.*, , 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 50

⁵ *Ibid.*, 22

⁶ Cf. Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Norton, 1979)

⁷ Yong Tang, "American Democracy or American Hegemony," *People's Daily*, 26 April 2005. Thanks to Charley Meng for the translation.

⁸ See: Jay A. Gupta, "Freedom of the Void: Hegel and Nietzsche on the Politics of Nihilism—Toward a Critical Understanding of 9/11," *Telos* 129 (Fall-Winter 2004), 17-39; Luciano Pellicani, "Islamic Terrorism," *Telos* 129 (Fall-Winter 2004), 41-53; Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 2003); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).