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I. Key Texts


Bacevich presents a collection of twenty essays by authors ranging from supporters of American Empire, such as Charles Krauthammer, who praises the "unipolar era," to John Millbank, who calls on the West "to abandon our global idolatrous worship of sacralized absolute sovereignty, and [of] the formally neutral market". Although the collection includes some extreme views from both the right and left, overall the book markets itself as moderately in favor of America’s increasing global power.

Barber, Benjamin. *Fear’s Empire: War, Terrorism, and Democracy* (Norton, 2003).

The naïve “idealists” today are those who think terrorism can be fought through hegemonic wars on rogue states, argues Barber. By contrast, those who argue for a multilateral and cooperative approach, in a continuously interdependent world, are the “realists.” The current administration’s strategy of “preventive democracy” is naively idealistic in this way. Democracy imposed from the outside generally leads to anarchy, and requires a much longer process than that anticipated by the United States. Moreover, the notion of a liberal empire is a contradiction in terms: Empires disregard the international institutions that liberalism formally supports. Empires also adopt a politics of fear and preemptive strikes. The Bush administration engages the rest of the world not tolerantly (as liberalism requires) but as an Empire – on America’s own insensitive terms.


A Professor of Politics at the University of York, this leading British thinker offers a trenchant analysis of the Anglo-American conquest of Iraq and the politics behind it. The arguments of George Bush’s neoconservative advisors are dissected and interpreted as thinly veiled justifications for protecting American political and economic interests in the Middle East. Moreover, Callinicos argues the Iraq adventure has done little to combat terrorism. We need a better “understanding of the strange and frightening world that is taking shape” and neoconservative agenda must be resolutely resisted.


This text has been described as “the defining document of the antiglobalization movement.” The authors analyze everything from agriculture to international financial institutions as they develop practical economic alternatives favorable to human and democratic flourishing.


According to America’s most famous left-wing intellectual, U.S. foreign policy in the post World War II era has displayed all the hallmarks of terrorism. Chomsky calls America’s reaction to September 11 a continuation of its imperial foreign policy, which the World Court in 1986 described as “unlawful use of force” against Nicaragua – “international terrorism, in lay terms,” according to the author. He supports his arguments with documentation and examples of an American course of action propelled by a dominant elite, of which President Bush is the most powerful representative. For Chomsky, America is no longer governed by public opinion but by a handful of interest groups.


Clarke, a security advisor who served in the Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Clinton, and George W. Bush administrations, heavily criticizes each President’s approach towards terrorism. Having recently left his position as the White House terrorism czar, he attacks the current administration for its weak reaction to the Al-Qaeda threat before and after 9/11. He claims that his calls for security to be prioritized were met with apathy and delay in the early months of the administration. Moreover, in the months after September 11, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and Vice-Cheney swiftly turned their attention to Iraq, a nation not proven to have been involved in the attacks, drawing the focus away from defeating Al-Qaeda. Clarke’s book and testimony before the 9/11 Commission has generated a slew of reactions from senior officials and from the public.

Former Clinton National Security Council staffers, Daalder and Lindsay recognize in President Bush a leader who follows his own vision. They also insist that he is not a puppet in the hands of his advisors. Rather, he has adopted revolutionary tactics in his foreign policy, in which he sincerely believes. Despite this, and despite being avid realists, the authors prefer a more multilateral approach for the administration. The president's "worldview," they note, "simply made no allowance for others doubting the purity of American motives." If, however, America's great power can be used in a way that is perceived as legitimate, then the administration will find it easier to achieve its foreign policy goals.


What is unique about American imperialism is that it has been practiced in the name of anti-imperialism. The United States is an Empire in denial, argues the author, and he encourages policy makers to embrace the role and *raison d'etre* of empire. Ferguson compares America to the British and Roman Empires, arguing that America’s influence is necessary in unruly parts of the world. If America accepts its imperial character, then it will be able to practice long-term development projects and meet its global responsibilities. Instead, the United States is now an empire with attention deficit disorder that tries to implement change within unrealistic time frames.


From a former Bush speechwriter who invented the phrase “axis of evil,” David Frum, and a former chairman of the Defense Policy Board, Richard Perle, comes a neo-conservative manifesto that maps America’s potential reactions to the terrorist threat. “An End to Evil” argues for stronger domestic security, a more daring foreign policy, and “a new boldness in the advocacy of American ideals.” The authors support a more alert and “self-policied” America, a firm pro-Israel position, and a wariness of China as a growing countervailing power. The authors are in favor of the administration’s preemptive stance when there is suspicion of a threat from rogue actors, and urge the administration to consider the French and the Saudis as the enemies they truly are.


A professor of literature at Duke University and a revolutionary inmate of Rebibbia prison in Rome argue that the imperialist system of nation-states and competition between capitalists has been replaced by a system of Empire. This new system is based on "immaterial" production networks dominated by transnational corporations and "global juridico-economic bodies" such as the World Bank. The possibility of revolution no longer rests with the working class but rather with the “multitude”.


Johnson, former defense analyst and consultant to the C.I.A. during the Cold War, now believes that America bears a striking similarity to the Soviet empire that strove to keep border countries in line. He accuses “boy emperor” George W. Bush of using 9/11 as an excuse to rapidly transform the United States from a republic into a “New Rome,” freed from obligations to international institutions. In prophetic language, the author describes an administration obsessed with maintaining military governance through 725 bases abroad, while power shifts from Congress to Pentagon. Excessive spending on the armed forces dictates that U.S. policy is that of “a military juggernaut intent on world domination.”


Co-author Kristol, editor of The Weekly Standard, was instrumental in developing the argument, along with Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, for a militarily attack on Iraq. They maintain that intervention in Iraq would be the catalyst for a "New American Century." In this book, Kaplan and Kristol argue that the Bush Doctrine of pre-emption should become the foundation for future U.S. foreign policy. They applaud the president for his determination not to follow a course of apathy, and for refusing continued unsuccessful engagement with the tyrannical Iraqi regime (as did prior administrations). Instead, President Bush not only speaks about the disarmament of Iraq, but also "of liberating Iraq, and creating democracy in the land that for decades has known only dictatorship." The war in Iraq, however, is only a small part of the administration's effort to “[engage] the world in accord with American principles." The authors attempt to show why and how America's efforts in freeing Iraq will prove to be a model for promoting America's values and global influence in the future.
Mann, Michael. *Incoherent Empire* (Verso, 2003).
There are four types of power that cause the rise or fall of a state or empire: military, political, economic, and ideological. Adopting these categories to assess the United States, Mann argues that America is “a military giant, a back-seat economic driver, a political schizophrenic, and an ideological phantom.” He argues that America’s “imperial project” relies upon an inflated measure of its power, and that this hubris provokes the growth of intolerant nationalism and religious fundamentalism in the rest of the world.

“Soft power,” a term Nye introduced in his book *Bound to Lead* in 1990, is more relevant than ever in today’s world: it is “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion.” Neo-conservatives who guide the president are focusing on the nation’s hard military and economic power and neglecting the influence it could achieve through soft means, such as cultural exchange, economic aid, and refining relationships with allies. Nye claims that a more extensive use of soft power will improve America’s image in the world and enable the country to regain its international credibility.

Prestowitz delves into the historical origins and practical applications of the unilateralist urge in U.S. foreign policy. He concludes that a multilateral strategy fits better with the liberal ethic and long-term interests of the U.S.

In order to meet the goals of political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity, The United States security strategy specifies a framework that formally aims to: strengthen alliances to defeat terrorism and prevent attacks; defuse regional conflicts; prevent enemies from threatening with weapons of mass destruction; ignite global economic growth through free trade; expand development by opening societies and building democracy; develop agendas for cooperative action with other countries; and transform its national security institutions.

While the rest of the world “is on the verge of discovering that it can get along without America, America is realizing that it cannot get along without the rest of the world.” Todd criticizes the United States for being a plutocratic society that has destroyed its working class and middle class. He also maintains that its economy is in decline, dependent on imports, and does not produce anything valuable itself. In short, America is frail, not strong. Thus it is a “predatory” empire whose unilateralism and “theatrical micromilitarism” are signs of decline. The author predicted the fall of the Soviet Union, but his insistence that America will meet a similar fate has been met with much skepticism.

Wallerstein claims that it is U.S. weakness, not strength, which has inspired recent imperial posturing. He writes that hawks have swept into control on the winds of 9/11 and are working to reverse the trend of American decline begun in 1968. War in Iraq is the latest desperate chapter in an attempt to maintain U.S. dominance by discouraging nuclear proliferation, checking the European rival, and protecting economic globalization.

When democratic ideals bleed from the political sector into culture at large, the result is informal governance by popularity and polling. Zakaria explores this trend and attempts to show how democracy and liberalism are not always compatible. Democracy should sometimes be put on the backburner until prosperity and security are achieved.
II. The American Empire Debate

Leadership, Hegemony, or Imperium?

Suggested Text:

Bacevich argues that the post-Cold War ‘strategy of openness’ is actually a purposeful attempt to perpetuate a stable economic and international order in which America is the lone superpower. He maintains that such expansionism amounts to contemporary imperium reminiscent of Rome. Resistance to this strategy has fueled the militarization of U.S. foreign policy.


Ferguson, Niall. “Hegemony or Empire?” *Foreign Affairs* (September / October 2003).


Petras, James F. Empire or Republic?: American Global Power and Domestic Decay (New York: Routledge, 1995).


**Ascending or Declining?**

*Suggested Text:*


One of Britain’s top political theorists argues that U.S. post-Cold War strategy, even when multilateral, has been about preserving geopolitical dominance. The Bush Doctrine and National Security Strategy are the latest attempt to secure the future of American capitalism and control of oil reserves.

Barry, Tom. “Hegemony to Imperium,” Foreign Policy in Focus (September 26, 2002).


**Rivals to American Empire?**

Suggested Text:

Comprised of two essays Negri wrote in prison, this book asks whether resistance is still possible in today’s capitalist society. The first essay investigates the weaknesses of capitalist society, which cry for an emergency solution. The second essay explores in depth the essential notions of empire and “multitude.”


Bennis, Phyllis. “Going Global: Building a Movement Against Empire,” *Foreign Policy in Focus* (May 16-17, 2003).


Everts, Steven. “Unilateral America, Lightweight Europe?: Managing Divergence in Transatlantic Foreign Policy,” working paper, Centre for European Reform (February 2001).


Lobe, Jim. “Thinkers Launch Anti-Empire Drive,” *Inter Press Service* (October 17, 2003)

McMahon, Robert J. *The Limits of Empire: The United States and Southeast Asia Since World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).


Stokes, Mark A. *China’s Strategic Modernization: Implications for the United States* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1999).


### III. Unilateralism vs. Multilateralism

*Suggested Texts:*


Former security advisor to the president of the United States, Brzezinski argues that America’s interests and the world’s are intertwined. Narrow anti-terrorist measures and apathy towards international political objections do not improve national security; neither do they work towards providing the world with much-needed American leadership and security. The author warns that America could be left alone in the world, unless it succeeds in creating a balanced “co-operative” hegemony. Idealistic internationalism, Brzezinski argues, is “the common-sense dictate of hard-nosed realism.”


The authors propose that U.S. foreign policy be reformed to meet the challenges of global interdependency, above all by engaging in more effective multilateralism. They advocate the streamlining of governmental jurisdiction over multilateral initiatives and funding, partnering with private actors like NGOs, and greater public involvement in redefining America as a good global citizen.

Unilateralism


### Multilateralism


IV. Globalization and Governance

The US, the UN, and International Institutions

Suggested Text:


Nye contends that “soft power”, the exercise of international influence, will become more important than military and economic dominance in a world increasingly affected by nongovernmental actors. Multilateral cooperation is the tool for maximizing such influence and solving problems of global dimensions.


Globalization and Nation-States

Suggested Text:


Columbia professor and senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, Bhagwati presents a strong and easily comprehensible argument in favor of globalization. He explains in detail how globalization operates and what can be done to enhance its positive effects. Bhagwati shows why it is no surprise that the strongest contestations against the current system come from wealthy, rather than poor, countries.


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**Economics of Empire**

**Suggested Text:**


Financier and Open Society founder George Soros characterizes some of George W. Bush's decisions as serious mistakes made under the guise of post-September 11 patriotism. His critique ranges from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to what he argues is the equally appalling condition of Bush's domestic policy. Soros proposes practical solutions such as increasing foreign aid and improving international trade rules.


Preeg, Ernest H. *The Trade Deficit, the Dollar, and the U.S. National Interest* (Indianapolis: Hudson Institute, 2000).


V. US Foreign Policy

Strategic Visions

Suggested Texts:


Perhaps the most famous voice on the left, Noam Chomsky discusses the ramifications of the Iraq war and other Bush administration policies. He examines the new norm of preventive war, the centrality of oil in U.S. strategy, engagement with Iran, the possibilities for Arab-Israeli peace, and the severe domestic consequences of maintaining an empire.


A former State Department policy maker and speechwriter, Kagan provokes vigorous debate when examining America’s and Europe’s different approaches on foreign affairs, and the rift in trans-Atlantic relations. He argues that the only reason Europe has the choice of proceeding in more diplomatic ways, through the rule of law, is because America shoulders the burdens of the use of physical power.


Drake, Laura. Hegemony and Its Discontents: United States Policy towards Iraq, Iran, Hamas, the Hezbollah and Their Responses (Annandale, VA: United Association for Studies and Research, 1997).


Joxe, Alain. The Empire of Disorder, intro. by Paul Virilio (Cambridge, Mass.: Semiotext(e), 2002).


Lake, Anthony. “From Containment to Enlargement,” Johns Hopkins University, September 21, 1993.


Stuart, Peter C. *Isles of Empire: The United States and Its Overseas Possessions* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1999).


Suggested Text:

An eminent historian provides a condensed history of empire, comparing imperial Britain and the contemporary United States in particular, and articulating a scathing critique of current American policy. He argues that aggressive military ventures are unsustainable and damaging to an already diminished U.S. economy; wars for democracy are costly and ineffective without international support and extensive planning for peace.


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**Terrorism and the New Wars**

**Suggested Texts:**


Winner of the General Wallace M. Greene Jr. Award, journalist Max Boot exposes the history of little-known U.S. military actions, from the Barbary Wars, the Boxer Rebellion, and the occupation of the Philippines, to the recent conflicts in Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, Kosovo and Afghanistan. The author relates in detail how this “forgotten side of America's military history” influenced America’s evolution into a global superpower.


America, Asia and Europe all have different views on approaches on combating terrorism. While America uses the term “war on terror,” Europe feels uncomfortable with the idea of a war, and prefers to deal with the problem of its internal terrorism with means such as police, intelligence and justice. The authors’ Trilateral commission comprised of an American, Asian, and European view, addresses these issues, arguing that the terrorist threat is a transnational phenomenon, and thus requires an approach that is far from isolationist.


Charny, Joel R. “The United States in Iraq: An Experiment with Unilateral Humanitarianism,” *Foreign Policy in Focus* (June 26, 2003).


Coates, Ken, ed. Ethical Imperialism: The War after the War (Nottingham, England: Published by Spokesman for the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 1999).


Dukuly, Abdullah. “UN Seeks to Transform Liberia from Failed State to Nation at Peace,” Inter Press Service (October 6, 2003).


Prashad, Vijay. War Against the Planet: The Fifth Afghan War, Imperialism, and Other Assorted Fundamentalisms (New Delhi: LeftWord Books, 2002).

Ramesh, Randeep. “Imperial History Repeats Itself: Once Again, Indians are Being Asked to Fight Iraqis for Empire’s Sake,” Guardian (July 3, 2003).


Thomas, Evan. “Rumsfeld’s War,” *Newsweek* (September 16, 2002).


**VI. Democracy and Empire**

**Goals and Strategies**

*Suggested Texts:*


The authors analyze America’s recent promotion of democracy around the world, and examine the positive and negative consequences of changing a people’s form of government. Although some of the contributors disagree with studies that argue America is spreading a form of liberalism instead of democracy, they do account that the promotion of democracy is favorable to America’s interests and stability in the affected regions.


Ryn argues that the policymakers and intellectuals behind George W. Bush’s decision-making have created an ideological movement that consumes their imagination and impulses. He draws attention to the underpinnings of an attempt at empire that promotes American values, principles that the ideologists mistakenly believe to be universal.


Suggested Text:

Shwarz, Benjamin. “Clearer Than the Truth: Duplicity in foreign affairs has sometimes served the national interest. But the case if Iraq is different,” The Atlantic Monthly (April 2004): Vol. 293, No. 3.

Shwarz contends that the Bush administration "massaged the truth" when seeking support for its war in Iraq. But, he says, such manipulation and selectivity is not unique to this administration. Shwarz cites McNamara's Vietnam era policies and Clinton's NATO involvement in Kosovo, arguing that government equivocation has long been excused on the basis that the public is not 'sophisticated' enough to understand the rationales undergirding foreign policy choices. Nonetheless, Shwarz acknowledges the missing link between the al-Qaeda threat and preemptive action against Iraq. This creates a difficult situation: In order to combat the terrorist threat, we must put much trust in the government and its secret services; yet this becomes more difficult when that trust has been abused.


Susskind, Yiffat. “Adjusting to Empire,” ZNet (July 12, 2003).


VII. History of Empire

The American Experience

Suggested Texts:

Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur M. *The Cycles of American History* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999). In this updated edition, Schlesinger analyzes the past two centuries of American politics and outlines an ongoing struggle within the American psyche. He presages an indecisive battle between idealism and pragmatism that could lead to political revolution in America in the 21st century.

Zimmerman, Warren. *First Great Triumph: How Five Americans Made Their Country a World Power* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2004). Zimmerman, renowned diplomat and writer, argues that imperialist America is hardly a new phenomenon. He analyzes the period from 1898 to 1903 and the attendant conquests of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, and (indirectly) Panama. America was led to its imperial nature, however, by five prominent political figures: Theodore Roosevelt, Alfred T. Mahan, Henry Cabot Lodge, John Hay, and Elihu Root. America’s stance today cannot be understood, he declares, without referring to the global aspirations of a century ago.


Wilson, James G. *The Imperial Republic: A Structural History of American Constitutionalism from the Colonial Era to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002).

**Lessons of British Empire**

*Suggested Texts:*


British historian Niall Ferguson sees Britain’s colonial empire as the first experiment in globalization. He calls it “Anglobalization.” He argues that the spread of capitalism, the rise of humanitarian values, the communications revolution, and the adaptation of parliamentary democracy can all be traced to Britain’s expansionist policies, which ended in the mid-twentieth century. Ferguson cautions, nonetheless, against the overextension of Empire.


Stephen Howe analyzes the historical arc of American Empire, with special comparison to the British experience and special emphasis on the U.S. as unprecedented hyperpower of the 21st century. He makes subtle distinctions between ‘empire’ and ‘imperialism’, and between ‘informal’ (mostly economic) and ‘formal’ control.


**Theory and Practice of Empire**

*Suggested Texts:*


First published in 1776, the same year as Adam Smith’s “The Wealth of Nations,” Gibbon’s account of the Roman Empire is still an historically and anecdotally rich depiction of ancient times. The accompanying introduction maps the Africa, Asia, and Europe of the time, and is a helpful guide to this three-volume work.


Hobsbawm explores the trajectory of industrial evolution over the past two hundred and fifty years, as well as industry’s influence on social and political institutions. Particularly, he describes Britain as an early industrial power, focusing on its unique relation with the rest of the world, its decline from dominance, and the effects of changes on the country’s ordinary people.


**VIII. Classic Texts**

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Recommended Texts:


Macnaught, William. Federation of the Empire...Especially Written for the Working Classes (Liverpool: James Gage, 1887).


IX. Key Speeches

Recommended:
Bush, George W. “President Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East,” remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy, United States Chamber of Commerce, Washington, D.C., November 6, 2003. President Bush attributes “the swiftest advance of freedom” globally to the “world's most influential nation,” which is “itself a democracy.” He emphasizes the development of democracy around the world and especially in the strategic Middle East. Democracy, he argues, is not intrinsic to the West alone, but to all, including the Muslim world. Distinctive and different religions and ways of life in fact strengthen democracy and are compatible with America’s essential values and goals.

Cheney, Dick. “Remarks by the Vice President to the Heritage Foundation,” Heritage Lecture, Washington, D.C., October 10, 2003. The Vice President discusses the war on terror and characterizes future threats as “the ultimate nightmare.” There is only one way to protect America, and that is to destroy the terrorists systematically, rather than on the ad hoc basis adopted prior to 9/11. A strong defense is not enough. He also maintains that acting with the consent of the whole international community in matters of defense is not in the best interest of national security. Finally, only America has “the might and the will” to lead the world to peace.


———. “American Foreign Policy and the Democratic Ideal,” campaign speech, Pabst Theater, Milwaukee, WI, October 1, 1992.


