

## *Superpower Seeks Friends*

"America's Crisis of Legitimacy" by Robert Kagan, in *Foreign Affairs* (Mar.–Apr. 2004),  
58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Americans may be from Mars, and Europeans from Venus, as Kagan asserted in a controversial article and subsequent book, *Of Paradise and Power* (2003), but it turns out that for best results in ventures such as the preventive war in Iraq, the Martians need Venusian backing. "There are indeed sound reasons for the United States to seek European approval," he writes. "But they are unrelated to international law, the authority of the [UN] Security Council, and the as-yet nonexistent fabric of the international order."

Though the Iraq war and the George W. Bush presidency "may have deepened and hardened the transatlantic rift into an enduring feature of the international landscape," Americans and Europeans were al-

ready diverging in their views on international law and "what confers legitimacy on international action," writes Kagan, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Today, for the first time since World War II, most Europeans "doubt the legitimacy of U.S. power and of U.S. global leadership."

Though Europeans demand that the United States win international backing for ventures such as the Iraq War, Kagan thinks that's largely a smoke screen. Europeans didn't look upon the Security Council as "the sole source of international legitimacy" during the Cold War, and they joined the United States in Kosovo in 1999 without the council's sanction and in violation of "the sovereign

EXCERPT

### *Without a Country*

*Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land!  
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd  
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,  
From wandering on a foreign strand!*

*A contemporary answer to [Walter] Scott's question is: Yes, the number of dead souls is small but growing among America's business, professional, intellectual and academic elites. Possessing, in Scott's words, "titles, power and pelf," they also have decreasing ties with the American nation. Coming back to America from a foreign strand, they are not likely to be overwhelmed with deep feelings of commitment to their "native land." Their attitudes and behavior contrast with the overwhelming patriotism and nationalistic identification of the rest of the American public. A major gap is growing in America between the dead or dying souls among its elites and its "Thank God for America" public. This gap was temporarily obscured by the patriotic rallying after September 11. In the absence of repeated comparable attacks, however, the pervasive and fundamental forces of economic globalization make it likely that the denationalizing of elites will continue.*

—Samuel P. Huntington, chairman of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies, in *The National Interest* (Spring 2004)

equality of all nations, the bedrock principle of international law.”

The real issue is European influence over U.S. policy. During the Cold War, European influence was guaranteed by the fact that the protection of Europe itself from the Soviet Union was the paramount U.S. strategic goal. All that has changed.

Yet there’s still an important link. The United States “is and always has been a revolutionary power,” Kagan believes, a force for liberalism and democracy around the world. And that’s the real reason it needs the legitimacy that only Europe can provide: “The world’s sole superpower needs to demonstrate that it wields its great strengths on behalf of its principles and those who share them.” The American people won’t indefinitely

support efforts abroad “in the face of constant charges of illegitimacy by the United States’ closest democratic allies.”

Yet if the United States is to grant Europe influence over its exercise of power, possibly through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, there must be agreement on “the nature of today’s global threats and the means to counter them,” warns Kagan. Such agreement doesn’t currently exist. Most Europeans think that the United States has exaggerated the risks of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Kagan says it’s time for “the wisest heads in Europe” to ask themselves if they really want to bet that “the risks posed by the ‘axis of evil,’ from terrorism to tyrants, will never be as great as the risk posed by the American leviathan unbound.”

## *A Chink in the Armor*

“Missile Defence Myopia: Lessons from the Iraq War” by Dennis M. Gormley, in *Survival* (Winter 2003–04), International Institute for Strategic Studies, Arundel House, 13–15 Arundel St., Temple Pl., London WC2R 3DX, England.

America’s Patriot missile defenses, such a dud in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, worked far better in the Iraq War last year. But amid all the dazzling displays of U.S. firepower, it wasn’t widely recognized that the United States was still operating with “only half a missile defense”—a dangerous condition that now cries out for correction, contends Gormley, a senior fellow in the Monterey Institute’s Center for Non-proliferation Studies.

The Patriot intercepted and destroyed each of the nine Iraqi ballistic missiles that posed serious threats. (Ten others, mis-aimed, were allowed to land harmlessly in the desert or gulf waters.) But low-flying Iraqi cruise missiles and aircraft—hard to distinguish on radar screens from all the friendly choppers and planes flying close to the ground—were another story.

“American and Kuwaiti missile defenses and warning systems apparently failed to detect or intercept four of five” Iraqi cruise missiles that were fired, Gormley reports. One of those missiles “came per-

ilously close to a U.S. Marine encampment,” while another hit just outside a large Kuwaiti shopping mall. In addition, two Iraqi ultralight aircraft, which could easily have been carrying deadly chemical or biological agents, flew over a U.S. Army encampment—and thousands of American troops—before being detected.

This record provides what one missile defense officer called “a glimpse of the future,” in which cruise missiles and piloted or drone aerial vehicles such as ultralights could constitute “a poor man’s air force.” Simple, inexpensive kit airplanes that hobbyists buy could readily be adapted to serve as weapons. The very success of the Patriot in dealing with ballistic missiles, Gormley observes, makes the cheap alternative that much more attractive to potential enemies.

In addition to stronger diplomatic efforts to curtail proliferation of cruise missile technology, he concludes, the United States should seek closer coordination among the relevant army, navy, and air