

In ESSENCE

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FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

The Flavors of Anti-Americanism

THE SOURCE: “Anti-Americanisms” by Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, in *Policy Review*, Oct.–Nov. 2006.

THE FOUNDERS WERE STILL scraping up votes to ratify the U.S. Constitution in 1787 when Alexander Hamilton fought back against the anti-Americanism that was already popular in Europe. Only “arrogant pretensions,” he wrote in one of the early *Federalist* papers, allowed serious men to claim that the American continent was so degenerate that “even dogs cease to bark.”

Two hundred and twenty years later, anti-Americanism hasn’t tapered off. It isn’t even a single phenomenon, according to Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, political scientists at Cornell and Princeton, respectively. It reaches far beyond what the United States *does* to what the United States *is*. The complexity and kaleidoscopic nature of American society trigger a similar broad and complex range of anti-

American feelings, and their examination has become something of an academic cottage industry. Katzenstein and Keohane wrestle the phenomenon into six categories.

The most benign, “liberal anti-Americanism,” thrives in some former colonies of Great Britain, the authors write. These and other advanced industrialized communities mourn America’s failure to live up to its high principles. They see democratic America as a hypocritical, self-interested power, for example, supporting dictatorships or advocating free trade while protecting its own farmers from competition.

“Social anti-Americanism,” found most commonly in Scandinavia and Japan, decries Uncle Sam’s relatively unfettered capitalism and go-it-alone exceptionalism in international affairs.

“Sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism” is particularly strong in China, where the history and aspirations of the ancient kingdom combine

to trigger virulent outbursts in response to any perceived lack of “respect.”

“Elitist anti-Americanism” is not confined to French intellectuals, but they form its epicenter. Americans, Katzenstein and Keohane write, are viewed by this small but vocal group as uncultured materialists without concern for the finer things of life.

“Legacy anti-Americanism” lingers in societies such as Iran, where American intervention in the past supported despised rulers.

The most dangerous form is “radical anti-Americanism,” whose adherents see America as so depraved that it must be destroyed. This brand of hatred animates suicide bombers and



An anti-American slogan is displayed on a street in Caracas, part of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez’s crusade against President George W. Bush.

the remaining Marxist-Leninist rulers. Only America's renunciation of its political-economic system and culture can rectify the situation, the radicals say.

Unitary grand explanations for anti-Americanism are futile, Katzenstein and Keohane contend. The phenomenon is too broad and diverse, reflecting the attitudes of America-haters as much as the America they hate. The most puzzling thing about it is why Americans care so much. Americans had an insatiable need for praise in 1835, said Alexis de Tocqueville, and apparently they have not yet had enough. Perhaps, the authors conclude, it is because they lack self-confidence and are uncertain themselves about whether the nation should be a source of pride or dismay. "Anti-Americanism is important for what it tells us about United States foreign policy and America's impact on the world," they write. "It is also important for what it tells us about ourselves."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

The Bad New Era

THE SOURCE: "The New Middle East" by Richard N. Haass, in *Foreign Affairs*, Nov.-Dec. 2006.

THE SUN HAS SET ON THE brief American era in the Middle East, writes Richard N. Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations. A modern, Europe-style region marked by democracy, prosperity, and peace will not arise. Instead, the emerging Middle East is far more likely to cause harm to itself, the United States, and the world.

Napoleon's entry into Ottoman Egypt in 1798 with archaeologists,

linguists, and poets in tow opened the region's modern era. The collapse of the Ottoman caliphate at the end of World War I began a second new era of colonial rule, followed by Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. With the demise of the Soviets, the United States enjoyed unprecedented influence and freedom in the region. But after less than two decades the American period is over, according to Haass.

The principal reason, he writes, is America's decision to attack Iraq. The war stripped power from the Sunni religious minority in Baghdad, which had kept Shi'ite Iran in check, and propelled Iran into position as one of the two strongest countries in the region. Israel, the other strong power, is weakened by its military involvement in Lebanon and will be further weakened if Iran matches Israel's nuclear arsenal.

Haass says America will have more influence in the region than any other country, but its position will be increasingly undermined by competing foreign interests of Europe, China, and Russia. No viable peace process seems likely. "The United States has lost much of its standing as a credible and honest broker," he concludes.

Iraq, at best, will remain a divided society with a weak central government and regular violence. At worst, a civil war will overwhelm Iraq and draw in its neighbors. The price of oil will remain high. Militias will be emboldened by their role in Iraq and the survival of Hezbollah in Lebanon. "Islam will increasingly fill the political and intellectual vacuum in the Arab world," he predicts. Arab regimes will "remain authoritarian

and become more religiously intolerant and anti-American."

The new Middle East will threaten America, but its dangers can be turned up or down by U.S. policies, Haass writes. Relying on military force to remove threatening governments or nuclear installations would make things worse. Counting on democracy to produce friendly regimes is wishful thinking in the short run. Talking to Iran and Syria, reviving diplomacy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, shoring up America's defenses against terrorism, and reducing dependency on Middle Eastern oil are numbingly familiar ideas and slow to bear fruit. "It is all enough to make one nostalgic for the old Middle East," Haass says.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Give Peace a Pass

THE SOURCE: "Cowboy Nation" by Robert Kagan, in *The New Republic*, Oct. 23, 2006.

THROUGHOUT THE IDEOLOGICAL vicissitudes of the Clinton and two Bush administrations, the United States deployed troops to or bombed Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, averaging a new military adventure every 19 months. A new direction? Surprisingly, no. "Americans stand almost alone in believing in the utility and even necessity of war as a means of obtaining justice," writes Robert Kagan, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and author of *Dangerous Nation: America's Place in the World From Its Earliest Days to*