

Why Does The World *Hate* America?

In the 1970s, it was the so-called "Arab oil sheiks." In the 1980s, the Japanese. At the beginning of the 21st century, the United States has become the world's chief bogeyman, the object of global spite.

To what extent is this sentiment a temporary reaction to the Bush Administration's perceived unilateralism? Or have more deep-seated resentments built up over time? Is this a love-hate relationship with America, a mixture of disgust and admiration? Does the hate relate to resentment of a perceived crass globetrotting American pop culture? Or is it tied to a growing disparity over national wealth and prosperity (and freedom)? Or to America's support for Israel?

Has resentment grown because the 1990s saw a global brain-drain to the

United States of a lot of the world's best talent? Or is the resentment tied to America's overwhelming military superiority? Or to the President's relatively "black-and-white" approach to moral and ethical issues ("Axis of Evil")?

In the end, is there much the United States can do about this global attitude? Or is the hatred simply a cost of success? Is the hatred a useful diversion for foreign governments against political and economic failure back home? Or is America today in real serious trouble around the world?

As with most things in life, no one answer tells all. But is there one factor that dominates all others?



The whole question is defensive. This is a battle of civilizations.

SAMUEL BRITTAN
Columnist, Financial Times

“Are you not satisfied with doing an important and useful job, and one for which you are not badly paid. Do you need to be loved as well?”

These words were uttered some time ago by the late Harold Lever, a British financial guru and former member of the Wilson Labour cabinet. He was talking to bankers in London. But his remarks could equally apply to the U.S. political and business elite.

The whole question is defensive and guilt-ridden. Since September 11, 2001, an informal coalition of Islamist apologists, wimpish European leaders, and U.S. “public intellectuals” have tried to switch the issue from the threat posed by fundamentalist terrorists to the question of “How likeable is the United States, its leaders or its culture?” Its most nauseating aspect was the remark “They had it coming to them.”

The West now faces a threat more difficult to deal with than the old Soviet empire. The latter was led by rational people whose ambitions could be deterred and with whom agreements could also be made. No such dialogue is possible with groups such as Al Qaeda. Any wishful thinking that their aims were confined to the United States should have been dispelled by the atrocity in Bali. But will it take similar atrocities in Berlin, London, or Paris to bring the so-called intelligentsia to its senses. I hope that this lesson will not be taught while this contribution is going through the press.

Of course much is wrong with U.S. foreign policy. The basic fault is believing “My enemy’s enemy is my friend”; which led to the support of the Taliban against the Russians and Saddam against Iran. My advice would be to stop supporting Saudi Arabia and to put pressure on the Israeli government on the issues of West Bank settlement and Jerusalem. But do not expect a model Saudi democracy to take over or be surprised if terrorist attacks continue to provoke Israeli over-reaction. The world is not a pleasant place.

When Winston Churchill became British premier in 1940 he made it his job to defeat the Nazis and only secondarily to understand them. There is a battle of civilizations and our first job is to protect ourselves from our enemies and only secondly to understand them.



It’s a resentment of U.S. policies.

LEE HAMILTON
Director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and former Chairman, House Committee on International Relations

Anti-Americanism around the world takes two distinct forms: hatred of the United States in the form of international terrorism, and growing resentment of U.S. policies. This resentment is more elusive, and harder to quantify, than international terrorism. It is not just a trait of a militant ideology or political fringe—opposition to U.S. policies is part of the mainstream political culture in Europe, and is gaining momentum in Latin America, Japan, and South Korea.

Resentment of the United States has four main sources: the U.S. proclivity to act unilaterally in international affairs, the style and tone of U.S. foreign policy, opposition to particular U.S. policies, and the way that the United States projects its overwhelming military power. While developing anti-Americanism may do little to constrain immediate U.S. policy objectives, it could increasingly hinder our ability to obtain cooperation on international security issues and other matters of global concern, and is thus a serious threat to long-term U.S. interests.

A certain amount of resentment of the United States is inevitable because we are the only superpower. But the United States is, and should remain, a benign superpower. Our power and influence overseas rests on the idea that that we want to spread our values and prosperity, prefer to work with friends and allies, and use our vast power to protect our national interest and the common interests of those who share our values.

The United States needs to go beyond dwelling exclusively on the negative aspects of the international environment—terrorism, security threats, flaws in multilateral agreements and institutions—and project a positive vision. If the United States articulates a form of global cooperation and economic integration based on the American values of freedom, democracy, free trade, the rule of law, security, and human rights, then the United States will serve its own and the world’s interest, and alleviate resentment that feeds anti-Americanism.

Why Americans Hate Europe

“You want to know what I really think of the Europeans?” asked the senior State Department official. “I think they have been wrong on just about every major international issue for the past twenty years.”

“They told us they could fix the Bosnian mess all on their own. Wrong.”

“They told us the Russians would never accept NATO enlargement. Wrong.”

“They told us that the Russians would never accept National Missile Defense. Wrong.”

“They told us that if we withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, the whole structure of inter-

national arms control agreements would come crashing down. Wrong.”

“They told us the Kyoto Protocol was a good and worthwhile treaty, more than just cosmetics. Wrong.”

“They told us that the European Union’s new common security and defense policy would improve the military abilities of the NATO allies in Europe. Wrong.”

“These were also the people who were wrong about Ronald Reagan and the Evil Empire, the same ‘friends’ who helped vote us off the United Nations Human Rights Commission. These are the people who whine about our Farm Bill when they are the world’s prime protectionists.

He went on to say, “They are not just repeatedly wrong. They are also a bunch of hypocrites. So why should we pay attention to a single thing they say?”

The official, a career diplomat who speaks fluent French and likes to vacation in Italy, sat back and took an appreciative sip from his glass of good red wine from Bordeaux.

“One more thing,” he added. “Whenever I use the word Europeans, I don’t mean the Brits.”

—Martin Walker

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The America much of the Muslim world hates is largely a concocted fiction. It's time to tell our story.

PETER G. PETERSON

Chairman of an independent Council on Foreign Relations Task Force on Public Diplomacy

Even after September 11, America appears to be more admired, envied, resented, and hated than ever. Even some of our closest allies openly say they are resentful of the heavy hand with which America sometimes wields its power. Rage and deep misunderstanding, of course, are even more marked in other parts of the world, particularly the Muslim world and, of course, the Middle East. These aggravated feelings of grievances directed at America must be viewed in the sense of decline, despair, hopelessness, and humiliation that floods the Arab world; we should not be surprised that virtually all of the terrorist attacks against the United States were committed by Arabs.

To the extent that one believes public opinion polls are valid and relevant in the conduct of foreign policy, public opinion polls validate these feelings toward the United States. According to a recent Gallup Poll, nearly 70 percent of Pakistanis say they take a dim view of

America. Even though U.S. troops rescued Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, today about 90 percent of Kuwaitis refuse to believe that September 11 was the work of Arabs. Instead, it is widely held throughout the Middle East that we started these attacks ourselves, or in concert with Israel, to blame the Arabs and justify seizing the region’s oil—which shows how far from reality their perception is.

As for our allies, many apparently see the United States as arrogant, hypocritical, self-absorbed, self-indulgent, and contemptuous of others. From the outright rejection of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change to the seeming dismissal of the International Criminal Court, we appear as obstructionists, not constructive critics. Better by far to have a different process: one that would produce a U.S. proposal to fix Kyoto’s flaws, rather than making us seem callous about global warming; or, one that would have offered up a mechanism to protect U.S. peacekeepers, rather than making Washington look indifferent to the prospect of war criminals walking free.

If you would look closely at the America much of the Muslim world hates, it is largely a fiction concocted to serve the interests of extremists and repressive regimes, which, in fact, are hijacking Islam’s soul. We have done far, far too little to counter these virulent lies.

During the Cold War, the United States spread its messages and values through overseas cultural centers, cultural exchange programs, libraries, local language books, and, of course, radio and television programming. We have allowed the apparatus of public diplomacy to

deteriorate. One of the painful lessons learned on that tragic day in September was that it is time again to tell our story—strongly, clearly, and to the world.



*Not much that
America can do.*

DANIEL PIPES

Director, Middle East Forum

I do not accept the premise of this question; I would ask “Why does the world resent America?” A country that is truly hated would not be under siege from illegal immigration, its popular culture would not dominate, and its model of government and economy increasingly emulated.

But accepting your question as posed, it suggests that the United States finds itself in a position comparable to the Arab oil sheiks of the 1970s and Japan during the 1980s. This points to an answer: in each of these three cases, the offending party enjoyed a power that others perceived as overweening, somewhat illegitimate, and threatening.

The resentment against Americans presumably will continue until their power diminishes—note how little animus is directed toward the Japanese these days. Short of becoming less dominant, Americans can do little to reduce the hostility directed their way.

That said, acting with care and modesty, making concessions where these do not harm vital interests, is a good idea and could go some way to improve the general mood.



*American success is
a sad reminder of
their failure.*

MEYRAV WURMSER

*Director of the Center for Middle East Policy,
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After September 11, one way to look at the question “Why does the world hate America,” is to ask, “Why does the Arab world hate America.” Although we are

not only hated by Muslims or Arabs, it is a specific brand of hate born in their world that spilled over and resulted in the largest terrorist attack in human history.

Why do fundamentalist Muslims and a variety of Arab nationalists hate us? What great sin has the United States committed against them? Is there anything that we can do to stop the hate?

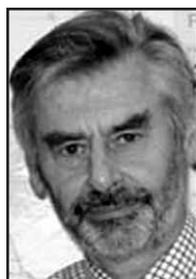
The answer for many of these questions has to do with what America is and what it represents. More than anything else, Islamic fundamentalists and Arab nationalists hate America because it stands for democracy, freedom, and human rights. America’s free and democratic culture made it not only the world’s most prosperous land but also the world’s dominant power—politically, militarily, economically, and even culturally. For many in the Middle East, our success is a constant and sad reminder of their failure. Even before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent division of the Middle East into modern nation-states by Western powers, the Arab world has been on the decline. Today, its governments are dictatorial, its populations largely uneducated and impoverished, and its politics violent and oppressive. The defeat and subsequent humiliation of this world, its inability to face the challenges of modernity and secularization, have bred feelings of resentment toward the West. These sentiments today characterize much of Middle Eastern culture. Yet this sense of humiliation and resentment is paradoxically mixed with feelings of admiration. Many Middle Easterners cherish the ways and achievements of the democratic, open Western societies but at the same time are also revolted by what they view as their moral corruption and failing spirituality and values. They disdain certain aspects of our freedom, but also recognize with a sense of fear and admiration that our culture and values color the dreams of their children.

But this hatred of the United States does not only result from the clash of cultures or civilizations. Much of it has to do with American policy toward the region. Many in the Middle East, particularly its men and women of letters, hate America because it chose to abandon them and their hopes. For generations, but even more so since the 1990s, America, the world’s ultimate beacon of freedom and liberty, has been the ally of some of the region’s most corrupt and oppressive regimes. It has tolerated some of the worst cases of human rights abuses among its allies, the oppression of women and minorities, and the denial of basic freedoms. When it chose to align itself with regimes such as those in Syria, Egypt, or Saudi Arabia, it turned itself into the ally of tyranny. For those in the region who strived for a free, democratic, modern, and politically moderate Middle East, this betrayal was inexcusable. America was viewed as hypocritical at best or racist (believing that Arabs are incapable of being democratic) at worst.

As Professor Bernard Lewis once noted, Arabs hate us both for being imperialist and for not being imperial-

ist enough. While some resent our success and domination, others wish that we would save them from the ills of their world.

In this regard, the horrific events of September 11 have presented America with a rare opportunity to set the record straight. The war against terror is ultimately a war against tyranny, which leads people to search for empowerment and salvation in an extreme interpretation of Islam. If America is to win this war and reshape the region the way it did Germany and Japan after World War II, then it must pursue its most cherished ideal—freedom—and choose its friends and allies in the region accordingly.



The “hate” is for a hypocritical, inconsistent foreign policy.

MICHAEL EMERSON

Senior Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels, and former EU Ambassador to Russia

Leaving aside Al Qaeda fanatics, the world does not hate America. However, Europe is unhappy, and even angry, at some very bad elements in U.S. foreign policy. Europe and the United States are the world's two pillars of democracy and globalization. Europe understands that the future governance of this world has to be some system of cosmopolitan democracy. That is why the present raw streak of militarist and preemptive unilateralism pushed by important parts of the Washington establishment is going against the grain, and is ultimately bound to fail. What arouses the most intense feelings is when the policies in question appear hypocritical in relation to assertions of global leadership that are presented in terms of political morality and values. Current instances are well aired: the proclamation that “Kyoto is dead” when the United States is the most irresponsible gas-guzzling country in the world; the refusal to support the International Criminal Court while proposing to act unilaterally against the “Axis of Evil”; and pro-Israel bias in the Middle East to the point of the ridiculous remark of President Bush that Ariel Sharon is a “man of peace.” The United States claims to be a principled state, and indeed the principles in question are largely shared with Europe. However, the United States is all too often these days expecting the rest of the world to be principled, while it may pick and choose when or whether to be prin-

cipled itself, depending upon how it suits domestic political interests or lobbies. When it is said that such domestic political interests are just facts of life, Europe is obliged to draw the conclusion that it should build up its own countervailing power in global strategic affairs, not to displace the United States, but rather to constrain it into a partnership of acceptable international behavior.



Not enough American passion and understanding.

IL SAKONG

Chairman and CEO, Institute for Global Economics, Seoul, and former Minister of Finance, Korea

The United States today is a military and economic superpower, unrivaled by any other nation in the world's history. The Roman empire was powerful, but its influence did not reach to all parts of the world. On the other hand, due to the digital revolution and globalization, even ordinary people and their children all over the world today are directly exposed to the U.S. way of life and pop culture, in addition to its military and economic prowess. It is therefore unavoidable for the United States to be the subject of all sorts of resentment. The resentment can be even stronger if the United States is perceived to be exerting its power in an unfair, biased, and arbitrary manner in pursuing its national interests.

Unfortunately, some major actions taken by the United States in recent years have generated such perceptions, particularly in certain parts of the world. Whether or not there are justifiable grounds, the way in which the United States unilaterally withdrew itself from the ABM treaty and the Kyoto Protocol, and adopted U.S. agricultural subsidy and steel safeguard policies, intensified such perceptions. No matter how noble the cause may be, e.g., fighting terrorism, an openly professed “if you are not with us, you are against us” type of righteous attitude certainly contributes to such perceptions as well.

Some of the global criticisms against the United States are based on the high standard set by the United States itself in the past. After World War II, it provided global public goods by devoting huge amounts of its own resources to maintain global prosperity. Most importantly, the United States introduced the Marshall plan and the Dodge plan, established the Bretton Woods system, and

unilaterally opened its market. The global community today expects the United States to exert such positive leadership with compassion and understanding for others.



It's because America, the only superpower, callously pursues national interests.

DIETER DETTKE

Executive Director, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Washington Office

During the Cold War, America built what Geir Lundestad aptly called an empire by integration. To counter the Soviet threat, America needed allies and Europeans were willing to join the United States in an alliance with a common purpose, a common strategy, and a joint decision-making process. American leadership was based on cooperation and consultation and America's allies, in spite of their relative weakness compared with American power, enjoyed a high degree of equality thanks to integration. Today, the old Soviet Union is gone and America is the only remaining superpower in a unipolar system. Instead of living up to its hegemonical responsibility—imperial responsibilities—the United States, today more than ever, is trying to run the world on the basis of strictly national interests. At a time of increasing globalization of economic, political, and unfortunately also criminal activities, the United States refuses to participate in the creation of an International Criminal Court or to assume responsibility for its own greenhouse gas emissions, the highest in the world. Because of its enormous military and economic power, America needs to live up to its larger-than-national responsibilities and again become an empire by integration. Instead of a callous pursuit of U.S. national interests for the narrow purpose of securing American pre-eminence, oblivious to world opinion, America must also seize this unique moment of history and unprecedented power for larger global purposes and not only the protection of its status as a military superpower. Former U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers suggested that America is one of the few examples of an outward-looking, non-imperial big country in history. This is a perfect description of American exceptionalism. The problem is that America needs more involvement in building a better world, and that requires a degree of cooperation and integration, commensurate with increasing global interdependence.



America needs softer rhetoric, less arrogance.

JOSEPH S. NYE, JR.

Dean, Kennedy School of Government, and author of The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone

The world does not hate America, but many people in the world are ambivalent about us. That is natural. The big kid on the block is always the subject of both admiration and resentment. Good policy tries to enhance the former and reduce the latter. As President Bush said in the 2000 presidential campaign, if we are a humble nation, they will respect us; if we are arrogant, they will not. Alas, some members of his administration have at times ignored his advice and that of Theodore Roosevelt. Since we have a big stick, it would behoove us to speak more softly. Our ability to attract others gives us "soft power"—getting outcomes we want without having to use coercion or bribes. That soft power grows out of our culture, our values and our policies. But it is not universal. In some parts of the world, such as Islamic fundamentalist countries, our soft power is limited and resentment of the United States is reinforced by cultural differences. Our culture of freedom, including opportunities for women, is threatening to some religious conservatives. And with some extreme groups, such as Al Qaeda, hard power—military force—is the only effective instrument we have. But as we use that instrument, we must be careful to consider how it affects our soft power. Otherwise, we increase the resentment side of the ratio and become unwitting recruiters for Osama bin Laden.



It's largely envy, but also a general distrust of power.

JEFFREY GEDMIN

Director, Aspen Institute Berlin

It's not just the terrorists, our principal adversaries. Our allies seem angry at us, too. In Europe, the immense solidarity America witnessed in the first weeks after Sep-

tember 11 evaporated quickly. Today Europeans fret as much about George W. Bush as they do about Saddam Hussein. It's strange.

After all, in the last year we have generally done what the Europeans wanted us to do. Afghanistan? The United States was patient, proceeded multilaterally, cooperated closely with the Russians, worked assiduously to prevent the destabilization of Pakistan (while staving off war between Pakistan and India). Iraq? We took the matter to the United Nations. Again, in truth, patience, consultation and multilateralism have been the order of the day.

In the past twelve months, the United States has announced its intention to rejoin UNESCO, increase its foreign aid budget and pay United Nations arrears. In May, Mr. Bush came to Europe and charmed the German parliament with a speech at the Reichstag, then dashed off to Moscow, where the United States signed a major arms control agreement with the Russians. In November, Mr. Bush was in Prague supporting Europeans in an historic enlargement of the Alliance. America, the reckless "rogue" superpower? Hardly.

True, the way the Bush administration handled Kyoto was a fiasco. We have honest disagreements about issues like the International Criminal Court. We can be unilateral and arrogant. There's much to suggest, however, that even when we behave the way our allies say they want us to behave, America still gets tagged as the villain.

Is it envy? Of course. But Europeans seem inherently ill at ease with American power. Their own experience has taught them not to trust themselves. Perhaps that makes them incapable of trusting us as well.



*A mismatch between
U.S. words and deeds.*

NORBERT WALTER

Chief Economist, Deutsche Bank Group, Frankfurt am Main

There is no such thing as the world hating the United States. On the contrary, the United States is important to many people around the globe: the vote by exit bears strong witness to the positive affection felt toward U.S. society. U.S. citizens do not leave the country in droves, and people from elsewhere seem anxious to immigrate—hardly a sign of hatred. The vote by voice

sounds different on a considerable number of accounts, though, and for a myriad of reasons and emotions.

The sheer might of the superpower United States—especially in the military field, but in politics and the economy as well—and the boastful attitude sometimes shown by U.S. citizens in the international arena do spark resentment, perhaps since these factors could nourish a feeling of inferiority in other parts of the globe.

Some of the negative reactions worldwide likely result from America's (natural) focus on itself and its (sometimes benign) treatment of other peoples' views, also when looking for consensual answers to international issues. The recent farm bill and steel protectionism enacted to please parochial interests in some parts of the United States are cases in point.

"Hatred" may result from a felt mismatch between U.S. claims of pursuing universal human rights on the one hand and the promotion of U.S. security and economic interests (Middle East oil supplies, for example) on the other. Additionally, U.S. action is in many cases misunderstood as worldwide proliferation of U.S. values, standards, and products, and often perceived as interference in the philosophical, religious, or economic thinking of other societies. Such feelings might be the source of the emotional aggression against the United States in a number of Muslim countries, and probably a major reason for the rejection of the U.S. military approach by some other people.

In Poland, people love America!

CHRISTINE BINDERT

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