

THE HIDDEN POWER OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

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THE HIDDEN POWER OF THE
AMERICAN DREAM

**Why Europe's Shaken Confidence in
the United States Threatens the Future
of U.S. Influence**

Giovanna Dell'Orto



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For my parents, Dario Dell'Orto and Paola Casella Dell'Orto.

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Whether America in the twenty-first century is perceived across the Atlantic with deeply felt identification or disparaging distance has consequences that go well beyond understanding if speaking of the West still makes sense. In fact, this book argues that the answer to the question of where do we go from here now that the United States is indisputably the world's biggest power lies in whether non-Americans keep believing in the American dream. The extraordinary resilience of Europe's American dream that this book portrays gives reasons to hope as well as motives for caution.

This book shows that a treasure-trove of goodwill still lies barely beneath the surface in Europe's words about America. Because Europe's dreaming is to such an extent America's power, it is a trove that should be brought out in the open for public discussion, for better mutual understanding across the Atlantic and anywhere worldwide where the United States and Europe wield influence. But more importantly even than dousing the flames of anti-American rhetoric and establishing a sound basis for a U.S.-E.U. partnership, this book's lessons from history suggest how that goodwill can be used to help the United States' exceptional power remain so and be a reason for hope for the new world of the twenty-first century.

This book is the culmination of my personal, professional and scholarly interest in America's power in the world. It would have been impossible without a variety of people too numerous to be fully acknowledged here, beginning with the journalists who work on both continents to translate the United States for Europeans, especially those interviewed for this research, whom I thank for generous availability and professionalism: Ennio Caretto, Martin Fletcher, Alberto Flores d'Arcais, Alain Frachon, Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, Philippe G  lie, Amelia Gentleman, Suzanne Goldenberg, Patrick Jarreau, Stefan Kornelius, Wolfgang Koydl, Paolo Lepri, Vincenzo Nigro, Gianni Riotta, Tim Reid, Pierre Rousselin, Matthias R  b, and Daniel Vernet. For kindly giving me permission to use their copyrighted images, many thanks to Werner D'Inka at the *Frankfurter*

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At Praeger, I am especially indebted to Hilary Claggett, my acquisitions editor, and Robert Hutchinson, whose encouragement and advice have been crucial. Many of the ideas for this book originated while I was studying and working at the University of Minnesota's School of Journalism and Mass Communication. I am especially indebted to the unwavering support of the School's director, Dr. Albert Tims, his staff, the faculty in general, and those at the University with whom I had the fortune to work most closely—Professors Hazel Dicken-Garcia (my Ph.D. advisor), T.K. Chang, Ken Doyle, Bud Duvall, Nancy Roberts, and Martin Sampson. The staff at the University of Minnesota's libraries offered crucial resources. I also want to mention the invaluable suggestions and help of Prof. Marco Cesa, SAIS-Bologna campus, Johns Hopkins University; Carroll Doherty, The Pew Research Center, Washington; Prof. Ferdinando Fasce, Università di Genova, Italy; Dr. Daniel Hamilton, Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS-Washington campus; Dr. Pierre Hassner, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, Paris; Prof. Romano Prodi, E.U. and Italian governments; Charles Ries and Stephen Thibeault, U.S. Department of State; Dr. Lutz Görgens, Consul General of Germany, Atlanta. The years spent working for The Associated Press in Minneapolis, Rome, Phoenix, and Atlanta also provided valuable experience.

Most personally, I want to acknowledge my friends, this side and the other of the Atlantic (and even the Pacific), most of all Alessandro Bellia, whose support has been crucial in always reminding me I am capable of "skiing in the desert." At heart, this book has had two inspirations. I am fortunate to count among friends scores of scholars who have left home and comfort in Europe to further develop their talents in the United States. Whether their remarkable contributions lie in protein expression, neuropsychopharmacology, or jazz, I find their courageous faith in all the American dream represents to be a constant inspiration. Also, I have kept returning to what has been for me one of the most touching lessons of the tragedy of 9/11—that so many of the desperate messages left by victims were words not of fear, hatred, panic, or anger, but of concern for those they were about to leave behind. I find tremendous hope in their testimonial that a person's ultimate instinct can be to imagine the pain of others and love them, instead of centering on one's own pain and hating others. I hope this book can be a small step toward better understanding among cultures, particularly in the memory of those murdered on September 11.

Because they have opened my eyes to the world, giving me life first in Italy and then in the United States, and they have always supported me, I dedicate this book to my father and mother.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Europe's Dream, America's Power

The Northwest Airlines flight attendant hovered near my seat with an air between worried and annoyed puzzlement, holding tissues and a cup of water. The London-bound plane was merely taxiing at the Boston airport and already this distraught teenager was sobbing loudly enough to turn heads. I reassured her that I was feeling fine—I could not explain to myself, let alone to her, why leaving the United States after my first, month-long visit was physically painful. Why should the end of a vacation to Disneyland, the Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone churn my stomach as no in-flight turbulence had ever done? Fast-forward to 2001 and here went the same gut feeling—even though I had been living in the United States nearly a decade then, mostly practicing or studying mass communication, a field that lives off idealistic skepticism.

This time I was in Oklahoma, inching my way northward on Interstate 35, the spine of America's heartland, when the dazed reporter on the radio announced that the second of the Twin Towers was crumbling and that more planes were still on the loose somewhere in the brilliant fall sky, possibly in the hands of terrorist hijackers. The terrified glance I immediately shot up across the windshield found no plane aiming at my old Ford from the cloudless blue, but something had told me there could have been—whoever was attacking the United States was after me personally, after my car, after my laptop and my bike packed in the trunk and, most of all, after the road that lay ahead and on which I had every desire and every intention to keep going. Again I did not understand why I had taken it so personally, and I kept not understanding a week later in Europe when I realized that I had been far from alone, even outside the United States. Headlines in many languages affirmed proudly, "We are all Americans." Somebody had crossed over the typically disgruntled "Amerika" graffiti on a freeway containment wall outside Milan, Italy, and had sprayed next to it "God Bless America," in English. It clearly was not a mere question of passports, of patriotism, of solidarity in the face of tragedy. What was the connection? What was it that made everyone American?

In the years since 9/11, what had appeared then as a beautiful friendship between Americans and Europeans evaporated, leaving in its place a growling resentment so deep that Americans traveled overseas with Canadian flags stitched to their backpacks while Europeans held candle-light vigils for the removal of President George W. Bush.¹ The war in Iraq sunk relations between the United States and many European powers to rock bottom and all seemed to point to the conclusion that the 9/11 all-American love fest had simply been a fluke in the history of two continents resolutely drifting apart. The 2004 U.S. presidential campaign broke even the United States in two, with one half painting itself as starkly blue as Europe, and Bush's reelection threatened to become biblical—to part the sea, or rather the Atlantic Ocean. Even Bush's "new era" trip to Europe in February 2005 to mollify European leaders was carefully choreographed so that he would not come into contact with the deeply skeptical average Joes. In the middle of all this, an Italian friend, discussing career choices over email, wrote me that at least I, who live in the land of opportunity where everything is possible, should not give up pursuing my dreams. Knowing him well as a prime example of the intellectual leftist who has made of anti-Americanism a creed, I replied that he did not need to be sarcastic—and he stunned me by saying that he had believed every word he wrote.

That is the belief that "makes us all American." It explains not only my gut feeling but also, much more importantly, the essence of transatlantic relations. In spite of everything, including some recent literature, this research will show that Europe still buys American—not just Cokes and Starbucks, but the American dream. Perhaps even more unquestioningly than Americans themselves, Europeans believe in the promises of the American dream, which to them means the hope that there can be a society where you can pull yourself up by your bootstraps all the way to the top. And they still trust in the United States, which they see as an immense country without history, the paradise of immigrants that has become the sole superpower at the dawn of the twenty-first century, to represent that dream. Outside its borders, the United States *is* the American dream. Whether or not they abide by the ideals of the American dream is the standard against which U.S. actions are judged. But that standard is a double-edged sword because it makes people, on the one hand, believe in the essential goodness of this dream America of theirs and, on the other, expect the United States to constantly live up to it. Those expectations have only increased as the United States has come to rule the West, if not the world, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. If America fails to answer such exceedingly tall call, at least in the world's eyes, then the whole dream is in trouble, and that is a terrifying prospect that touches everybody, regardless one's permanent residence.

Until we understand what Europe's America is, we cannot grasp transatlantic relations, let alone where they might go in this turbulent moment. In 2006, a comprehensive study of public opinion abroad has looked at what American traits and attitudes might be fueling anti-Americanism abroad²—but this book argues that before and beyond that, we need to understand how others see America, their expectations and perceptions, because they influence behavior at least as much as reality. To know what is Europe's American dream is to uncover the discourse beyond surface statements of pro- and anti-Americanism, that is to find the underlying, deeply ingrained, rarely challenged ways of thinking about America that make ways of talking about it commonsensical in a particular society at a particular time. There is no point in pondering whether Europeans like what the United States does unless one discovers first what they think America is. That is the key to truly mending the fences between Europeans and the American people, not just between a U.S. president and a few of Europe's heads of state. It is essential if we want to throw water on the spreading fires of anti-Americanism, the tendency to disparage all things American that has taken an ominous turn through terrorist propaganda and that Americans are too keen to ignore, believing they do not need the rest of the world, as polls suggest.³ And once we begin looking at what Europeans have thought about America since they started considering it a factor in world affairs at the end of the nineteenth century, then we are on to something much bigger than diplomacy.

The belief that America is exceptional—that its history and constitution have made it into a unique experiment in democracy with global repercussions—and not the ups and downs of opinion polls and political machinations, is what has swayed transatlantic affairs. It has made the United States into a world power before, above and beyond what any material factor could have done. Power cannot be separated from the perception of it and therefore from the realm of meaning. The success of U.S. power—hard power, not just the “soft” kind public diplomats advocate—depends on America's ability to be seen as the incarnation of a universal dream, because that creates deference born of respect. The day even Europeans—America's historical allies, cultural neighbors, and overall best friends—stop believing that there is something special to the United States will be the day that marks the beginning of the end of American power. No superpower in history has survived long on naked power alone, no matter how many times it professes it is wielding that might for the good of humanity. When the balance of power is thrown off, realists tell us that, sooner or later, the weaker ones join forces and fight the dominating giant until he is down and out for good.

This does not need happen to America because, so far, the belief in the universality of the dream it represents has been extraordinarily resilient. It has survived the two sets of disappointments that have made

Europeans repeatedly furious at the United States: The superpower's perfect nonchalance in caring only about its own ways (the usual laundry list of complaints about how the United States does not even bother to listen to multilateral initiatives to alleviate global poverty or pollution) and, more critically, its penchant for solving somebody else's conflicts by stepping in armed to the teeth. In 1898, Washington decided to attack Spain under the rationale that somebody needed to help the Cuban rebels throw off the imperial Spanish yoke. The first time it forcefully entered world affairs, the United States did so proclaiming its role of disinterested defender of freedom worldwide—a rhetoric it has not abandoned during the second Bush administration more than a century later.

But this book shows that Europe has never believed it, except when the United States was also clearly endangered, such as in World War II and the Taliban-toppling operation in Afghanistan. In the 1890s as in the early 2000s, the overwhelming majority of Europeans dismisses the notion that wars can be waged indiscriminately with the sole purpose of protecting the supposed best interests of the attacked populations. It smacks too much of the imperial hauteur they have seen repeatedly end in blood and disgrace. They find that logic especially disappointing for the United States because they have long believed that, if there is one power that could be above the greedy empires of the past, it is the democratic republic of America. Europeans have been almost subconsciously willing not to challenge the overall ideology behind U.S. actions as long as they have believed America to be a hope for the future. That is the single greatest guarantee of safety America the superpower can have—and time might be running out on it.

If you say the two code words, Europe and America, you will start one of two arguments, regardless whether you are at an Ivy League seminar or a coffee shop, in Brussels or in Washington. One says that America is and will be the only power that matters in the world, while the most cultivated but irrelevant Europe can do is shut up with its hatred for the United States and fall back into the ranks. The other says that America's trigger-happy swashbuckling has already spelled the end of U.S. power, because what the world needs now is the kind of love for diplomacy and universal wellbeing the "United States of Europe" alone can provide. One author has even declared the death of the American dream of work and individualism in favor of the European dream of fun and community.⁴ There is some, even a lot of, truth to both arguments. Virtually all serious observers of both sides of the Atlantic agree that Europe is on its way to becoming a second superpower; that each power owes a lot to the other, whether in cultural heritage, economic aid or defense armies; that the United States needs to go easier with the guns, and Europe needs to push harder with the good words.

But that is still missing a crucial point. Neither argument explains the gut feeling. They do not explain how Washington intends to survive by making more enemies than any superpower could possibly fight off and they do not explain why a 30-year-old Italian man would want to live on \$300 a month to get a doctorate in archaeology from a university in Minnesota. Because they overlook the history of Europe's deep feelings and America's reassuring potential, they do not tell us what America has meant and still means to Europe, nor why that is crucial for the role that the United States will play in the twenty-first century.

This book does something no other analysis of the transatlantic relation or of U.S. power has done—it shows what Europe's America has been and still is, and why that is critical to the survival of the United States as a power capable of being a good influence in the world. For that reason, the focus here is not on what the press, public opinion, and policymakers in Western Europe expressly say about the United States, but on what discourse lies beneath those words and what its effects are on foreign policy decisions, historically and especially now that new communication technologies speed information across a world where the end of the Cold War has left a wide open space for drawing up alliances and communities of values. Unless things foreign and unknown are appropriated through one's culture and distilled into a common sense—particularly through mass communication and its ability to act as a “marketplace of ideas” and to establish accounts as facts—they cannot make sense. But once they are transformed into a collective understanding, once particular ways of thinking have become accepted culturally, it is nearly impossible to think outside of them.

To Europe, America means the personification of the American dream. That belief helped make the United States into a Great Power at the end of the nineteenth century and a superpower at the beginning of the twenty-first, and, because it is so hard to shake, it can keep it there in a way no amount of money, weapons, or diplomacy ever could. Europeans feel personally invested in the success of the American dream and they do not want to see it fail. For many reasons, however, principally that they find it out of character with ideals of freedom and democracy, they see the Bush administration's “war on terror” as one of those failures. For the first time, Europeans are beginning to suspect that they are wrong to automatically expect the United States to be the herald of the American dream. Even though they still hold on to the hope that America has just momentarily lost its way, they are wondering whether power has ended up changing all that was exceptional and worth admiring in the United States. More and more they are talking about picking up the torch and becoming the bearer of that dream, leaving the United States to turn into a non-exceptional power with the dubious honor of military supremacy. That is the one kind of counter-power America cannot afford.

Of course, Europeans rarely say all this out loud, but it is there, just beneath the surface, as the guiding principle of what Europe's press has said and of how its policymakers have acted for as long as America has mattered in international politics. How else do we explain statements that the Spanish-American War and the Bush administration, at times when each was supported by a majority of U.S. citizens, "hurt America"? Why else should Europeans shake their fists at the United States for not doing enough for the world's good, as if that had ever been the overarching preoccupation of superpowers? What other reason could the leader of a union of 380 million people comprising several of the most industrialized countries in the world have to say meekly that all Europeans want is for Washington to treat them with dignity? And what else is anti-Americanism itself if not the demonstration that the United States is considered a concept more than a country, since nobody has ever heard of anti-Britishism or even anti-Russianism?

"America is not a country, a community, but an ideology, a race, a stigma," as an Italian journalist covering the terrorist attacks wrote in 2001.⁵ While all nations are to some extent an "imagined community," to use Benedict Anderson's famous words, America is unique because it has always been associated with an act of choice (immigration) and, therefore, it has been consistently imagined as an identity born of an idea, not of a piece of land. That has made it exceptional, not better per force but judged differently. While Americans sort out bitter battles over their national identity and whose social values it embodies, Europeans' discourse leaves little room for doubt—their Americans are the rich, free, independent, optimistic, insouciant rulers of their destiny and, to an uncomfortable degree, Europe's destiny. European newspapers overflow with all sorts of news from America, and the average European debates heatedly all matters of U.S. life without ever having set foot on American soil. Already in 1855, German dramatist Friedrich Hebbel said it best: "Without ever having been there I can give you a picture of [the United States] as accurate as if I had been there."⁶

Noting how Americans had rushed to Amazon.com to buy books on Islam and Afghanistan after 9/11, *New York Times* foreign affairs columnist Thomas Friedman wrote he wished the rest of the world would share the same enthusiasm to learn about the United States. But Europe, for one, knows perfectly well what *its* America is like. That image is so strong that Europeans prefer to think that U.S. positions that do not fit it are somehow "un-American" rather than to adjust their perception, because it is only through their crystallized frame of reference, accepted as common sense, that events are interpreted. Without learning what America represents for Europeans, there can be no hope of productive transatlantic dialogue, because social beliefs, recognizable through the study of discourse, are among the best explicative tools for long-term

political decisions and the mechanisms of creation, maintenance, and transformation of power relations that are the core of the international system. To this end, it does not matter whether Europeans have good reasons for thinking about the United States in a certain way—the simple reality that they have a concept of America and that they read events as if they were part of that script is enough to deeply influence transatlantic relations.

Even more importantly, and surprisingly, Europe's discourse about America has long been a great hidden asset for the United States. Political scientists from the psychological and constructivist schools argue that nations strive to create an image of themselves to portray abroad that will help them intimidate or win over other states. The United States already has a uniquely positive image in Europe: The land of plenty of opportunity that beckons to people of goodwill everywhere. If one accepts that states are held together by shared ideas more than by material forces, then the propeller of international relations becomes not only the distribution of power, but also the distribution of ideas that buttress that power.⁷ Despite a long history of disagreements, protests, and disputes, this book shows the idea of America as exceptional has kept Europeans in awed admiration and their leaders in begrudging subordination of the United States and has paved the way for the first modern (if not historical) superpower that instills more than fear and resentment in the hearts of weaker nations. This idealistic heyday still survives—but are we close to dusk?

Because they equate the American dream with the United States, Europeans have exceptional expectations for the country, expectations that have only grown along with U.S. power. If the United States really is exceptional, it should have an indispensable global role. So Europeans find U.S. isolationism impossible, vulnerability like 9/11 shocking, and unilateralism downright frightening. The European Union is increasingly becoming a determining factor in international affairs, shouldering a part of the global responsibilities of the rich, educated West that rested squarely on America for most of the twentieth century. It expects to be told by the United States that it is a partner in the universal success of the values it associates with the American dream and instead it sees itself tolerated only as a yes-man to Washington's whims. That attitude is, in Europe's eyes, un-American and it does not deserve either respect or deference. Hence the continuous plunge in opinion polls—the very low rate of approval for the United States is not a sign of ungrateful Europe in an unpleasant mood swing, much less a paean of hatred or a declaration of ideological war. When they say they do not like what America does, most Europeans mean it as disappointed friends, not sworn enemies. The crucial problem is to prevent that they convince themselves that America has changed and no longer deserves all the credit the American dream has brought it.

This book aims to do three things to help address that problem by understanding where the transatlantic relation and U.S. power are going in the twenty-first century. First, it uncovers what Europe's America has been by showing how the American dream first became the root of U.S. power during the Spanish-American War, and how it beat all odds and reemerged unscathed on 9/11. It does so by analyzing the discourse about America in the press of four Western European powers—France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy—and then comparing it to the way Europe's policymakers and diplomats have discussed dealing with the United States during the first and latest U.S. moves on the international stage.⁸ While extrapolating discourses across periods of time does not imply a linear progression, the discourses from the two periods studied here have such striking, thought-provoking similarities and elicit such parallel reactions that they were compared directly, while the intervening century is looked at through secondary sources in Chapter 3. Analysis of primary sources approaches taken-for-granted knowledge critically and, through discourse, follows the links between ways of thinking/talking and actions based on them.⁹

For example, take this March 24, 2001, headline in Great Britain's newspaper of record, *The Times* of London, which, like the rest of the news media, is a less-than-perfect record of past events but an accurate representation of perceptions of reality: "The Bushies let the world go hang." The theme, both explicit and implicit in the linguistic choices, is straightforward enough—routine European complaint about the Bush administration's pre-9/11 stance of isolationism. What the headline takes for granted—the familiar script whence the themes and terms are taken, whose lack of representation in a text matters as much as presence—is substantially more significant: Without America, the world goes hang. America has an unparalleled power. The world needs that power, which is supposed to be unique and exceptional, as an influence for good. And that is precisely the same rationale that underlies European official outrage about the United States' refusal to join in multinational initiatives like the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto Protocol for the environment. The headline does not need to spell out all that because its readers know it already—not because they have been manipulated by the British government or journalists, but because it fits the image of their America.

Despite numerous crises over time, the essence of what America is in European eyes is extraordinarily unchanging—it transcends national ideology as it transcends strict partisan lines and even time. Until a shattering event like 9/11: The second purpose of this book is to study whether the attacks and their aftermath, which under the banner of the "war on terror" will likely last at least through the second Bush administration, can change what Europe thinks America is all about.

History counts many U.S. actions, vastly disliked in Europe, that have threatened to kill Europe's faith in the United States as the repository of the American dream. The way the United States put down the rebellion in the newly conquered Philippines in 1899, for example, was taken as conclusive proof that Washington had decided to cast off its exceptionally democratic ways and adopt the policies of all other imperial powers. But the "war on terror" seems to stand alone in its potential for nailing the coffin on Europe's admiration, perhaps because U.S. military and political power today is so utterly unmatched and U.S. actions are so momentous worldwide. Can Europe's American dream survive the "war on terror"? Can it continue to keep America's preferred partner in the historical oscillation between ecstatically and grudgingly recognizing that there is something special to the United States after all? Or will the prediction journalists and policymakers made during the Spanish-American War ultimately come true—America has become just like all other Great Powers, a realization that kills admiration and deference with one stone?

To answer those questions, this research seeks to discover whether Europeans' blatant contempt for America in the early 2000s hides more disappointment or crushes out the dream entirely. There are signs that it might go either way—on the one hand, Europeans are holding onto the hope that the problem is Bush and Bush alone, not the American people (despite the 2004 reelection, remarkably); on the other hand, polls show that Europeans are beginning to dislike the U.S. concept of democracy, which is crucial to the survival of the American dream, and not just the way it is implemented. What Europeans have admired in U.S. democracy is not the way representatives are elected, but, to cite just one example, the way a woman can grow up in segregation and become secretary of state of the world's biggest power. Take away that admiration and you have condemned a whole way of life, not just a political system. Europe's dream America has remained largely the same basis on which Europeans have judged Americans and their policies for more than a century; if it is changing now, it is the beginning of a whole new day not only for transatlantic affairs but for U.S. power itself.

That is the third aim of this book—draw lessons from the past to understand this post-9/11 world better than if we were going by the usual professions of Europe's scathing criticisms and America's unparalleled power. On both sides of the Atlantic, many are asking whether it still makes sense to speak of the West as a community of allies bound by shared values and interests. This book uncovers plenty of evidence that it does because at the heart of that community lies the lasting belief that the American dream is a universal aspiration. As the repository of that dream, Europe's America is not a country, a people, or even a set of policies. It is the revered "concept America"—the exceptional dream that the experiment in democracy can really work for all those who choose to

become Americans, in spirit if not in passport. As a concept, this America is larger than life, undefeatable, uniquely powerful. Europe needs that dream, especially as it establishes itself as a global player based on the same ideals.

So does the United States. All-encompassing beliefs are very hard to abandon and they set the limits within which one thinks. Because it was considered an exceptional concept, the United States became a Great Power virtually overnight in 1898 and no European state thought Americans would (or could be made to) just go away. Because the American dream is not dead, America the superpower has not inspired a cohesive will to overshadow it in Europe—so far. Discourse shows that it has not occurred to Europeans that the United States could be defeated and made to pass from the international scene by a combination of other powers, though this is what has always happened to superpowers. Most importantly, it has not occurred to them that it should be defeated, which is the first step in making it happen. But as the United States starts to lose its special status and comes to be seen as a regular, if giant, power, Europe becomes increasingly less content with playing second violin or aspiring to partnership at the most. Let Europe be convinced that the United States can no longer represent the American dream and no amount of Marines and Big Macs could win back Europeans' confidence and their policymakers' deference.

Expectations about what America is continue to drive Europe's reaction to what America does. Amidst the disastrous fallout over Iraq and the calls for a zero-sum competition between an overstretched and a nascent superpower, this book gives reason to hope for a rapprochement leading to partnership as well as motives for caution that the United States might lose what has made it overall a good power for over a century in Europe's eyes. On the optimistic side, belief in "concept America" is extraordinarily enduring. Alexis de Tocqueville could not have penned a more lavish tribute to exceptional American democracy than reporters in New York did on September 11. But before disregarding European criticisms as little-brother envy, we must note that the French admirer also wrote in the 1830s that the uniqueness of the United States and its best guarantee of continued democracy lay in its lack of interest in "military glory." Today's Europeans agree. The war against Spain was not seen as something befitting America, and neither is the "war on terror" (beyond Afghanistan). Europe's dream survived the first, but there are hints that we are in for a rude awakening on both sides of the Atlantic.

CHAPTER 2

The Newcomer

In 1898, America gave Europe a bad scare. When the United States first asserted itself on the global stage that year with the Spanish-American War, the Old-World powers had to scramble to find ways to deal with “the newcomer” in their assiduous colonialist scheming. The powers had no doubt that the United States was officially becoming a power-hungry, colonies-grabbing empire just like them. Europeans in general shared that perception—that is why, in 1898, America also disappointed Europe. The New World was not supposed to enthusiastically set out to imitate the Old World. America, for better or for worse, was the future—the American dream had promised a nation unlike any other, but the Spanish-American War was threatening to usher in merely a new player in business as usual. To understand how Europe reacted to America’s international debut, it is essential first to review here some of the basics of popular images of the United States as well as what the international political situation was like at the end of the nineteenth century, and how the 1898 war changed them.

At its core, America was one thing to nineteenth-century Europeans: modern. It was the “new” world, the “experiment” in democracy, undergoing an overwhelming and all-encompassing transformation from romantic wilderness into a capitalist, industrial society. At least since the mid-nineteenth century, “Americanized” literally meant “modern”—at the 1855 Exposition Universelle de Paris, French poet Charles Baudelaire spoke of the modern man as “américanisé.”¹ Apparently, it was a compliment: In the 1866 Pierre Larousse dictionary, “Américanisme” was defined as the “exaggerated, exclusive admiration for the Americans’ government, laws, customs, especially for the inhabitants of the United States.” It might surprise some Beaujolais-boycotting crowds that it took 118 years more for the term “Antiaméricanisme” to appear in a French dictionary.² Since the first part of Alexis de Tocqueville’s immensely popular *De la démocratie en Amérique* was published in 1835, French intellectuals—who took the lead in interpreting the United States for Europeans—tended to see in the United States the solution to the problems of the decline of European society, its class inequities, its poverty, its political intrigues.³ There was, however, a price to pay to adapt to modern American ways—“américaniser,” “to give the American

character," meant also to forgo characteristic European sophistication, according to an 1877 French dictionary.

Modern also took on a darker side—the United States was the modern society par excellence because it was all business and mass production. The stereotype of Americans as obsessively and successfully money-minded emerged early and, by the turn of the century, left-leaning Europeans joined conservatives in deprecating the United States' unbridled capitalism—not because it did not conform to Europe's aesthetics, but because it betrayed supposedly American ethics. They saw a "colossal metamorphosis through which, from the quiet cocoon of political and social equality of the United States of Washington, of Franklin and of Lincoln, has come out this lugubrious butterfly with wings in black and blood of MacKinley's [sic] and the monopolists' imperialism," as a prominent socialist Italian journalist wrote in 1900.⁴ The Spanish-America War was a catalyst for both sentiments: Politically conservative Europeans were disappointed and fearful because of the victory of a vulgar newcomer over a grand old power, Spain. Politically progressive Europeans were disappointed and fearful because the experiment in democracy was donning the mantle of Old-World imperialism. Europeans of all political shades shared a new concern vis-à-vis the United States—it had become a concrete, major power to reckon with.

In the 1890s, European powers, concerned chiefly with maintaining and reinforcing—at each other's expenses—their colonial possessions across the world, saw as particularly threatening the entrance of the United States into their "diplomatic tangles." Even though the powers felt threatened by economic competition (Germany especially, because that country was also a booming industrial power at the turn of the twentieth century), politics vis-à-vis America determined how each power responded to the "American entry into the arena of world affairs."⁵ In Italy, "the smallest of the big" powers, the conservative and monarchic establishment, strongly Catholic, perceived an "American peril," while progressive and populist leaders were influenced by the image of America as land of the free that was equally dear to the staggering numbers of emigrants and to the leaders of the Italian *Risorgimento*.⁶ At the beginning of the war, members of the socialist press supported U.S. intervention against colonial Spain and rooted for a bourgeois victory under the slogan, "The Stars flag is the flag of civilization."⁷ Victory achieved, however, scorn for "militarism born of capitalism" made socialists and conservatives agree that an era in U.S. politics had regrettably closed: "The egalitarian America of our fathers' times, refuge and hope of despairing Europeans, has long since died, buried under the heaps of billionaire Attilas."⁸ French opinion leaders also accused the United States of meddling in affairs entirely not its own by following the example of its kindred English Empire in "grabbing" lands other powers owned. Adding insult to injury, Washington

was slighting Europe's diplomacy, proving Americans thought it a declining force in world politics—and might even fall for a rapprochement with Great Britain, sidelining France even within Europe. As Americans were winning in the Philippines, *Le Temps* editors, who had asked European powers to band together against U.S. intervention as early as in 1896, warned that “that which gives supreme importance to what passes before our eyes is the appearance on the scene of a new power of the first order.”⁹

Like French and Italians, Germans worried about the victorious newcomer, entirely disbelieving Washington's self-proclaimed disinterest and finding plenty of rewards in the war for the “land of King Dollar.” In fact, many Germans pragmatically saw the war as an occasion for profit: The colonialist press depicted the war as an opportunity for Germany to get “compensation” for lands acquired by other powers, a splendid idea according to the German government, which worried that popular anti-Americanism would alienate Washington and sought to rid newspapers of unfavorable images of the United States.¹⁰ Shortly after the end of the war, a *Kölnische Zeitung* writer argued: “The European powers must reckon with the fact that the Union has abandoned for good its policy of isolation, and entered upon a course which must bring her in contact with other nations in all parts of the world.”¹¹

To that, the British would have answered, bring it on—the closer the United States came into friendly contact with Great Britain, the better. The enterprising crowd of British newspaper correspondents at the Cuban front solidly stood up for U.S. soldiers, disparaging the Spanish armies and singing brotherly praises for the Americans: An article in *The Times* said that U.S. Admiral George Dewey, who conquered Manila Bay on May 1, was “showing himself worthy alike of the great traditions of the navy of the United States and of his kinship with the race that produced Nelson.”¹² Such chumminess was surprising given that, only three years before, those correspondents might have been covering a war between the United States and Great Britain over Washington's meddling in a border dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela. It also jarred Europeans, especially the Spanish. Spanish Ambassador to the United States Dupuy de Lôme wrote to a Madrid newspaper editor: “I don't think sufficient attention has been paid to the part England is playing.... England's only object is that the Americans should amuse themselves with us and leave her alone.”¹³

London professed a much loftier rationale (for the time, that is): It wanted the United States to carry its share of the “white man's burden.”¹⁴ To quote *The Times*: “Probably the best thing for the world at large and for these populations themselves would be that America should boldly assume the burden of giving them [Cuba and the Philippines] a strong and honest Government through her own officials.... We would rather

see the Philippines in the hands of our American friends than in those of any European Power."¹⁵ Once the United States followed the British colonial example, the two countries would have "palpable" reasons to be allied: "Our interests, our language, our attitude on religious and moral subjects, our traditions, and no small part of our laws and of our social habits are the same. The difficulty is to find reasons why we should not be allied."¹⁶

The dawn of the twentieth century marked a profound change in international power relations—focus was turning away from the former center of things, Europe, and resting on the newcomer United States. The establishment of the United States as a power in international politics as well as its rapprochement with Great Britain were the most important and enduring political consequence of the Spanish-American War. America was becoming a Great Power because it was coming to be thought of as a Great Power—and that it did, not only in Europe, but in Washington itself. The "splendid little war," in Secretary of State John Hay's words, changed Washington's mind on what the nation's world role should be, inaugurating an era of global interventionism and, with it, the paradox of forcefully imposing American democratic values abroad.¹⁷ In a September 1898 Republican campaign speech called "The March of the Flag," Senator Albert Beveridge said America was "a greater England with a nobler destiny. . . a people imperial by virtue of their power, by right of their institutions, by authority of their Heaven-directed purposes—the propagandists and not the misers of liberty." His arguments for imperialism ranged from the "need" for "new markets for our produce" to the spread of the "empire of our principles" "over the hearts of all mankind." He added a touch of what has been called "democratic fatalism"—Providence had provided the United States with a unique mission and the country could not "fly from our world duties."¹⁸ Other Americans saw America's postwar global role as the Europeans did: The opposite of exceptional. In the 1901 words of future U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, "We have shown ourselves kin to all the world, when it came to pushing an advantage."¹⁹

To have made America into a world power, either as the propagandist of liberty or as an Old-World colonizer, was an extraordinary effect for a war that, militarily, had hardly been strenuous.²⁰ Cubans had long rebelled against Spanish rule, with a new insurgence starting in 1895. Spain had reacted with a brutal policy of "reconcentrating" natives into prison camps where epidemics of tropical diseases decimated the population. Often exaggerated accounts of Spanish brutality, the ruin of American property on the island (U.S. trade with Cuba had amounted to \$100 million), and the jingoism reflected in sensational U.S. newspapers all contributed to making Americans push for intervention on the behalf of an oppressed population. Even after the still-unexplained explosion of a

U.S. warship in Havana in February 1898, which was in many eyes a *casus belli*, Republican President William McKinley, sensitive to the peace interests of the business community, tried diplomacy with Spain, despite arguing—for the first time in U.S. history—that America had a right to intervene if citizens of another country were mistreated by their government.

At the end of March 1898, U.S. Minister to Spain Stewart Woodford was instructed to propose to Spain that it renounce immediately the reconcentration policy, that the United States be the final arbiter in an armistice with the Cuban rebels within six months, and that Cuba be independent. Spain rejected American mediation, infuriating members of the U.S. Congress. McKinley demurred, and, upon request of the British Ambassador Julian Pauncefote, heard the appeal of the European Great Powers' ambassadors and of the Vatican on April 6, but the appeal had no impact. Three days later, Spain, which had abandoned the reconcentration policy, sent word through Woodford that it was willing to offer an immediate armistice. McKinley's only reaction was to include the message *en passant* in his own message to Congress on April 11. The president, arguing all diplomatic overtures had ended, asked Congress to grant him power to intervene and "secure in the island . . . a stable government," which Congress did early in the morning of April 19. Pauncefote tried again to promote a European demarche, but he was turned down by European governments, including his own. A day later, McKinley signed the resolution; upon his recommendation, the U.S. Congress declared war on April 25, to be made retroactive to April 21 in order to cover a blockade of Cuba that had already started.

The navy was the quickest to mobilize and by May 1 had basically won the Philippines after a brief engagement with the Spanish fleet in the Manila harbor. Invasion of Cuba began at the end of June, and one of its major cities, Santiago, was occupied early in July; at the end of July, Puerto Rico and Guam were conquered with minimal resistance. Riding on the tide of colonial successes, McKinley also annexed Hawaii on July 7. On August 12, sponsored by France, Spain signed the armistice, giving up Cuba, ceding Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States, and turning Manila over to Washington until terms for the Philippines were worked out in a peace treaty. The treaty was signed in Paris on December 10. The U.S. administration had been acrimoniously divided over how much to take of the Philippines, a debate that has been considered the first test of American "democratic imperialism," but the treaty's terms gave America possession of all the Philippine Islands, spurring an insurgents' movement there. The American Congress began debating the treaty on January 4, 1899, and ratified it a month later, after American soldiers and Filipino fighters had engaged. The War Department created a colonial affairs agency to handle the new U.S. possessions. Thus in the late 1890s,

America, having just closed the Western frontier, had quickly expanded across the ocean.

The war marked the U.S. passage from “rank of purely American power to rank of world power,” as a French historian wrote in 1905. Just like “the old European powers,” he added, “the young republic of the New World . . . has not succeeded in developing in peacetime.”²¹ Disappointment again mixed with fear: As popularly represented in New York *Herald* cartoons, the “Birth of a [U.S.] Marine Giant” was greeted with apprehension by the tiny figures drawn to symbolize European powers.²² The British, German, French, and Italian governments, all for different reasons but united by their own colonial interests, had tried to prevent the United States from intervening in Cuba, though their efforts remained ineffective largely because no single power dared take the lead and risk officially antagonizing the United States. At their core, inter-European politics in the 1890s consisted of an exceedingly complex and unstable game of alliances and counter-alliances, with far-flung colonial possessions as pawns. The United States, stretching its imperial muscle, could not be alienated before it chose its allies—all four European powers saw that, but England, basing its approach to America largely on kinship, was the one that managed to grab Washington, securing in the expanding United States the most effective “checkmate” against the other European powers.²³

Because trade with China was England’s foremost foreign policy preoccupation in 1898, the British needed an ally to check Russia’s and Germany’s expansion and maintain an Open Door policy that allowed all countries equal access to Chinese ports. With France out because it was on a war footing against England over disputes over African colonies, the British heavily courted the United States and, thanks to their barely neutral, pro-American stance in the Spanish-American War, managed to secure a lasting rapprochement. Having already informed Washington that England would like tranquility restored in Cuba for trade interests, the British leadership repeated often that it would not, in the words of British Foreign Office Chief Arthur Balfour, “propose to take any steps which would not be acceptable to the Government of the United States.” British support in Hong Kong was crucial for Dewey’s Manila victory, making England ever more interested in preventing any possibility of hostility on the part of the United States that now controlled international waters vital to England’s trade and its own control of the seas. England pressured America to acquire all of the Philippines. A friendly American navy in the Caribbean and the Pacific allowed London to concentrate its resources on a growing economic and military threat—in the North Sea, where Germany was building the largest fleet in its history.²⁴

Germany, landlocked between a hostile France that was seeking revenge from the land-grabbing after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870

and Paris' new ally, Russia, was turning to the seas to ward off a much-feared *revanche*. Spurred by population growth, one of the fastest-growing economies in Europe and the perceived need to become more of a world imperial power to compete with other powers, Germany's "Welt-politik" pursued imperialism with a vengeance in the 1890s. Like the other imperial powers, the German government saw the need to seek friendly relations with America, despite strong popular anti-Americanism, both in the effort to secure new colonies and to remain in the good graces of a principal trade partner. Germany tried in two ways to benefit from the 1898 war.

Having failed to impress the Americans with a show of ships in Manila, sent on the pretext of protecting very small German business interests there but really to scout what scraps of Spanish possessions Germany might take, Germany shifted to a highly conciliatory policy. The German Ambassador in London, Paul Hatzfeldt, suggested America be reassured that "our pretensions are more moderate than those of other powers, and America has nothing to fear from them as soon as we are satisfied." In the end, Germany got several Pacific islands, including a part of Samoa that had been shared with England and the United States, but at the price of creating in Washington the lasting impression that Germans were the enemy. England fanned that animosity because it had interpreted as a gauntlet in its face Germany's aggressive imperialism and accelerated fleet-building under Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz (the First Naval Bill was passed precisely in 1898). The drift between England, its new ally the United States, and Germany was such that proponents of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race now argued Saxon was really a misnomer and only English and Americans could claim it.²⁵

Germany, united in a single state in 1871, was formally allied with an equally young nation, Italy, in the Triple Alliance (also including Austria). Even though Italy was a Great Power in name only, hardly sustained by its unstable national social situation and its struggling economy, it was always part of the "Concert of the Great Powers" and it was also trying its hand at colonialism, in Africa.²⁶ More than all other powers, however, Italy needed and pursued a peaceful foreign policy: The Italian government sought an alliance with England, to fend off French antagonism in Africa, and with Germany and Austria, which still controlled parts of Northern Italy; but the fallout between England and Germany made such tiptoeing impossible. In 1898, its colonial adventures having failed, not to be resurrected until Mussolini's time, Italy turned to France and reached an economic agreement, which Paris tried to use to detach Italy from the Triple Alliance. Catholic, monarchical, and Mediterranean-centered, the Italian government strongly preferred Spain to the United States, but its precarious world position prevented it from offering anything more than moral support. Also pro-Spain, France was in addition

strongly anti-American and threatened by England's indirect aggrandizement through its U.S. friendship.²⁷ In 1898, France's chief concern was to keep the United States away from the Mediterranean and Africa, where Paris was facing off London. In the summer of 1898, with a new foreign minister, France's attitude turned toward seeking a lessening of hostility with England, and French diplomats played the mediator role between Spain and the United States—it was the French Ambassador in Washington, Jules Cambon, whom Spain asked to broker an armistice.

So at the dawn of the twentieth century, the United States became and was perceived as a major world power, tentatively allied with England, imperialistic in its peculiar politically missionary way. The European powers braced for this new elephant in their global backyard and, to their stereotypes of America as a place of idealism and vulgar materialism, they added another resilient American image—power. Even more than in foreign offices or in public squares, this major sociopolitical shift took place in the mass media, which were starting to be suspected of having a great influence on public opinion at a time when the voice of the masses was beginning to make itself heard. A new, “modern” form of journalism was becoming established in the United States and England, to the chagrin of the continental European press, especially the French, which lost no time in expressing its doubts about this “américanisation.” Like it or not, it was a press so powerful that contemporaries accused it of starting the Spanish-American War and all other sorts of diplomatic mischief.

While New York newspaper publisher William R. Hearst probably never told one of his illustrators in Cuba to simply send pictures and he would provide the war, people believed it at the time, believed that the sensational, irresponsible trend born along with new journalism and called “yellow journalism” had the power to start a conflict.²⁸ Two New York publishers, Hearst of the *Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer of the *World*, enmeshed in a fierce circulation battle, have long been thought to have whipped American public opinion into a war frenzy. Their coverage was quoted by members of the U.S. Congress when they debated the Cuban crisis. When the U.S.S. Maine was destroyed in Havana's harbor, Hearst offered on his front pages a \$50,000 reward “for detection of the perpetrator” and, after the war started, he asked readers from the front page: “How do you like the *Journal's* war?” Hearst and Pulitzer, who had earlier opposed U.S. intervention in Cuba, certainly liked what the war did to their circulation—in August 1898, both newspapers sold more than 1.25 million copies daily.

While the “yellow press” (so called because of a cartoon character called the “Yellow Kid”) did not single-handedly force the United States into war with Spain, it represented the exasperation of a new model of journalism that was recognized to have unprecedented access to, and influence over, the masses. Turn-of-the-century American journalism

had become a business that sold news, not a political or literary enterprise, and content changed accordingly as a product packaged for mass sale, full of dramatic stories and titillating details, illustrated in bold layout. Even though this “new journalism” also provoked positive developments, such as the establishment of the journalistic profession and of programs for educating journalists, its most visible characteristic—newspapers with tremendous mass circulation and daring reporters seeking the minutest details of a story—worried the political establishment in the United States as well as in Europe. When, just before the war, Spain asked whether the U.S. government would object if it expelled foreign correspondents from Cuba, U.S. Minister Woodford wrote to McKinley: “Foreign correspondents at Havana, who are a disreputable set, are doing all they can to raise a war scare between America and Spain, spreading no end of lies and succeeding in exciting bad feeling. In order to obtain peace the best would be to send away some of those correspondents.”²⁹

His censure most likely included European journalists, some of whom were going the way of American “new journalism,” though this “instrument of action and power,” as a contemporary French critic called it, clashed with the drastically different press tradition espoused on the Continent, especially in France.³⁰ Since the eighteenth century, when European newspapers began to appear in a modern form, daily and with varied content, the newspaper had been a vehicle for information about affairs all across Europe and, by 1750, it was an indispensable part of European society.³¹ Particularly on the Continent, governments kept a tight rein on the press because they feared its effects on the masses; press repression, either through licensing, censorship, prosecution, or indirectly through financial constraints and individual punishments, was not banished completely in Europe until after the first World War.

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, European newspapers, like their American counterparts, were leaving the elite political ring and entering the business sphere, chiefly because they were starting to reach a mass readership of newly educated people. The press became increasingly depoliticized, especially in England, which was the fastest and most complete in emulating American journalism. In Paris, where a New York *Herald* European edition was published since 1887, many criticized the importing of Anglo-American fact-centered journalistic practices, dubbed *newyorkheraldisme*. Where European entrepreneurs imitating Hearst and Pulitzer created popular newspapers with mass circulations more than 30 times those of the old political sheets, critics saw the huge commercial success of general interest newspapers across the English Channel and the Atlantic Ocean as the demise of the literary tradition on which French journalism was based.

The way “new journalism” was received in France reflects the blend of distrust and excitement with which Europe greeted all things American.

In the early 1900s, a French journal ran a series on transatlantic press differences: In America, “the blessed land of journalism,” journalism was “in perpetual ebullience,” “propaganda through the fact,” “in the image of modern life.”³² American reporters did not need “literary qualities,” just “an alert spirit, open ears and active legs”; like eggs, European news stories were “well done” and “served well,” American stories were “fresh” and sometime announced before they were “laid.”

Just as in business, finance, industry, and science, Americans were clamoring for “supremacy of influence and of communicating force,” a French critic noted in 1903.³³ At the dawn of the twentieth century, the American newspaper was a miniature of America: It embodied modernity, it was the way of the future, and Europeans reacted to it either embracing its democratic appeal, its freshness, even its spontaneous uncouthness, or resisting its crassness, its unhistorical newness, and its vulgar focus on the dollar value.

But again like its newspaper, capable of swaying the masses, America became something more—a power to reckon with. Until the Spanish-American War made the United States into a world power almost overnight, Europeans might love it or hate it, but they could leave the United States alone. The war with Spain, and the resulting change-of-hands of strategic islands in both the Atlantic and the Pacific, made it impossible to keep Washington out of the giant Twister game European powers were playing with the world as their board. Bending and stretching and overreaching in whichever direction, they still came up against the United States.

France, Germany, and Italy never believed America’s professions that it was up to a different play—the wholly altruistic expansion of American liberty to the world’s downtrodden peoples, carried on the back of U.S. soldiers. They adjusted to the war trying to carve out a profit, like Germany, to show they still mattered, like France, or to escape unhurt, like Italy. Great Britain made the smartest move. Relying on unsurpassed familiarity between Washington and London—all except one U.S. president between 1865 and 1914 were of British stock³⁴—and playing the chord that the U.S. assertion of its principles in other people’s land was really just an extension of the British pledge to carry the burden of a civilizing empire, London made itself into Washington’s best friend. A declining power, Great Britain tied its fate to that of the nascent international star, a relationship that would last for more than a century. Outside diplomatic circles, Europeans of opposite political stripes watched America’s rise with hardly hidden disappointment—either because this nouveau riche seemed suddenly resolved to impose its ways where the old Great Powers had reigned, or because the entrepreneur of democratic freedom and material success suddenly turned into the Old-World-styled imperial conquistador.

In April of 1898, editors at *The Manchester Guardian* wondered if the United States understood what price it would pay for giving up its own splendid isolation and becoming “one among the Powers of the Old World.”³⁵ Part of that price would be two world wars in the next 50 years and the entire legacy of a century dubbed the American century, which the newcomer of 1898 would cross to emerge into a new millennium as the world’s only indispensable hyperpower.

CHAPTER 3

The Hyperpower

In a hundred years, the “newcomer” of 1898 had become “the indispensable power,” to use the definition by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Two things make America a factor that cannot be ignored at the dawn of the twenty-first century: It is literally the sole superpower entering the post Cold-War era of globalization and it is, in many eyes, globalization itself. In the 1890s, Europeans looked at the awakening giant across the ocean with a blend of fear and disappointment, doubting that the United States could be the different power the American dream seemed to promise and fearful of the consequences if the popularly governed, exceedingly wealthy New World set out on the colonizing path well-trodden by the old powers.

If they had feared then that Europe would be relegated to second-tier power, by 2000 Europeans had come to accept as a fact, and often resent, U.S. leadership, just as they accept that the globalizing world is an Americanizing world. In 1898, Europeans had worried that America was becoming like Europe and had tried either to intimidate or seduce the new imperial power. Today, Europeans are increasingly unsure they want to become like this America they perceive changing for the worse, and they are trying to go from subordinate ally to counterbalancing partner of the lone hyperpower. To understand how and why, this chapter looks at the way Europe—at the political and popular levels—has been constantly adjusting to the overwhelming U.S. presence.

Especially since the demise of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, America’s unmatched power has provoked a general resentment in Europe against what is perceived as an all-encompassing dominance not only in the military and economic arenas, but also in politics and culture.¹ Already blossoming in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, ambivalence has steadily grown toward a United States imagined to be both the progressive example to follow, either voluntarily or perforce, and the cultural hegemon to resist. To some contemporary critics, outright resistance is the only way to prevent that every nation loses its own identity under Americanization. Resentment and resistance breed a form of anti-Americanism that grows side-by-side with the worldwide spread of American customs and products. Paradoxically, the latter fuels the first—the more business McDonald’s cashes on overseas, the more people

make it a political gesture to smash its franchises' windows. America tends to be much less popular than its products—or much less popular than its wealth, perhaps the most immediately conspicuous American feature in foreign eyes after the second World War.

The popularity of all things American abroad has the unwanted by-product of turning criticism of the United States from the leisurely pursuit of the intelligentsia into a popular sport: Crowds across Europe rally against U.S. militarism with the same passion with which they pursue American university educations and American employers. The same European elites that dismiss the deficiencies of American culture with one hand use the other hand to try to grab scientists and literati before their steady, U.S.-bound exodus. A lengthy *Le Monde* article in 2001 about France's brightest students leaving to the United States was entitled "Have a nice trip, brains."² In 2001, the Italian Ministry for University Education and Research instituted the "rientro cervelli" [brains return] program to lure back Italian scholars. The "brain drain" from Europe to America was identified in 2004 as a crucial problem by European Commission President Romano Prodi, who said at a lecture that, without the return of "human resources," Europe could never stand its own against the United States—and adding that "everything else isn't worth a damn."

Certainly, no other country today has the kind of long and lasting reach into other cultures that the United States has, although reach does not necessarily imply acceptance or admiration. To some critics of globalization like Pierre Bourdieu, Samir Amin, and Robert Hassan, such spread of things American is the final realization of American imperialism, the completion of a Western project of economic domination and cultural penetration that began with the European colonial powers from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries. They see the ultimate intent of globalization as the transformation of the much-touted global citizen into a global consumer of goods produced by American corporate giants. Globalization in this view is a nefarious project of U.S. hegemony, the devious attempt to win the world's consent to its own subordination through the shining little rewards of merchandise made in the U.S.A.

So those critics advocate outright resistance by other cultures as the only available recourse, because they think only America can benefit from an Americanizing world. The argument focuses on the United States the same extreme rejection that Third-World critics once aimed at the whole West: No national development of non-Western countries could occur unless all ties were severed with the dominators.³ But that drastic measure seems destined to remain a theory. Not only people would reject it because fervor against the United States is nearly always ambivalent, but it would also be practically impossible because America, in some form, is everywhere. "The United States is not only the first world power, it is the world," in the words of a French professor.⁴ Just as nineteenth-century

modernity was American, so is twenty-first-century post-modern globalization.

In the collective imagination of twenty-first-century Europe specifically, with the developing European Union bent on achieving a larger, unified international role outside the transatlantic relationship, America looms much larger than brain drain and hamburger influx. For Europeans in search of a common tradition on which to establish a common identity and eventually a common face to the world, America comes in especially handy as the opposite pole, as the counterimage. The effort of creating a common European identity and culture is made both more difficult and more urgent by the fact that French, Germans, and all others were thrown together into the factual unity of the European Union before "being European" really made sense.

A unitary European future is already a daily occurrence in the life of the "uncultivated European, when without thinking about it, on vacation, he crosses a border that his forefathers had crossed rifle in hand," wrote prominent Italian intellectual Umberto Eco in 2003.⁵ He compared the common past of struggling European nations to the relatively unspoiled American history: Europeans have known "labor union struggles," "the failure of colonialism" and of dictatorships, and "war at home" to such an extent that "if two planes had crashed into Notre Dame or the Big Ben the reaction . . . would not have had tones of astonishment." But if pride for its historical scars can help Europe find and define itself, what makes feeling European necessary to the continent's survival is that America appears to be turning away. During the Cold War, European nations only had to pick sides; now, with the United States snubbing the continent to focus instead on the Middle East and the Pacific, Europe "left alone . . . either becomes European or falls apart." As a commentator argued in 2004 in the *Financial Times*, the George W. Bush administration might be wreaking havoc by publicly slighting Europe, "but [Europeans] can try to grow up a little."⁶

To proclaim that American means "not like us" has allowed Europe to build a relational identity and often to disparage the United States officially while privately lapping up American culture and values and again transforming them into fans for the flames of anti-Americanism. The cultural influence is so strong that many European criticisms leveled at America are also made in the United States—whether based on rejection of national values, capitalism, or modernization, critics abroad feed on the same sources of discontent vented by Americans in the 1960s and sometimes reflected in the U.S. media. A survey of teenagers in several countries, including Italy, suggests that they "learned" from the content of U.S. entertainment media that Americans were "violent," often engaged in "criminal acts," and that American women were "sexually immoral." European media also have a rather critical track record.

The American image in the foreign press hit rock bottom between 1963 and 1973, partially because of the Vietnam War, but also because of fading memories of World War II, the growth of leftism among the intelligentsia, the belief that Europe received insufficient consideration in major international decisions, and French nationalism under De Gaulle. A partial reversal came in the 1970s because of America's economic downturn and the fear of its repercussions abroad. In fact, all countries perceived America to some extent in relation to how they perceived their own identity and role.

In addition to helping deny the evidence of the popularity of American products and give "being European" a meaning, Europe's criticisms of the United States have also been a politically expedient excuse. Accusing the United States of leveling cultures to impose its own can be the rallying cry for European elites to promote and defend their definition of whatever national culture is described as threatened by Americanization. As it was in the 1890s, the American scarecrow is based on different U.S. images depending on what political class is standing to profit: Conservatives have built it on a perceived threat to culture and leftists have founded it on dislike for unabashed capitalism. In the end, however, this contradictory image also means that people have always managed to find some reason to like the United States after all. In Italy, for example, the dichotomy still exists that made two intellectuals from the 1940s entitle their reminiscences of the United States, respectively, *America amara* (Bitter America) (Rome: Einaudi, 1945) and *America primo amore* (America, first love) (Florence: Sansoni, 1940). Italians continue to waver between the sour image of crass American commercialism at the service of imperial ideology and the loving image of America as the avant-garde of modernity, democracy, and youthful energy.

Even the two generations of Italians that should have unreservedly hated all that America stood for—the fascists of the 1930s and 40s and the communists of the 1970s and 80s—lived a complex transatlantic love affair. In post-WWII Germany, more than in the other countries, American military presence has been the most conspicuous and complicating factor in perceptions of the United States. Once the threat from the Eastern front died out, however, U.S. soldiers became the evidence of what Germans now condemn as the "trigger-happy" power. In England, the American image, certainly the friendliest in Europe, is also contradictory. It embodies both sardonic condescension for an unrefined sibling who cannot speak proper English and a politically savvy pride for Anglo-Saxon superiority, dating all the way back to the sanguine kinship statements of the 1890s.

Perhaps no group of Europeans has been more consistently and intellectually critical of America in the last half of the twentieth century than the French, for whom America alternatively represented a "modèle ou

repoussoir," a model or element of contrast. For the French leftist intelligentsia especially, America became an "evil" power in the 1950s, only to be restored to admiration as the skeletons started coming out of the Soviet closet. After the Soviet Union collapsed, America has become again the target of new antipathy. France too is caught in the dichotomy of seeing the United States as the herald of social progress and modern ways as well as the promoter of numbing mass culture and imperialist, arrogant, simpleminded violence. Globalization in the 2000s only exacerbates this thorny dilemma for French intelligentsia: Can France provide a different way to be global and modern that does not imply also being America-like?

In an effort to start that process, France, unable to be a global leader, has taken on the role of "herald of resistance to American imperialism," as a *Le Monde* correspondent put it, and made of distancing itself from Washington an official policy.⁷ Despite the United States and France's sharing a democratic tradition dating from the revolutions, the United States, in the view of the French, relegates France to a lesser nation, which the French find all the more difficult to accept because they share with Americans the belief that they embody universal values the world could use. Believing America's self-image as the defender of universal values to be followed and adopted, the French see the United States as threatening directly the spread of French *civilisation*.

French criticism implies a complete rejection usually linked to concepts rather than to a country. The image of America is negative or positive based on terms that have never been applied to judgments of other nations. As a matter of fact, in addition to its ambivalence and its political expediency in unifying Europe, the European strain of "anti-Americanism" has another unique characteristic: It reflects the belief that the United States is not a mere nation but the embodiment of an idea. Some of the criticisms hurled at the United States—like that of not doing enough for the world's good—stem from a way of judging America according to extraordinarily high expectations. And those expectations are paradoxically in line with some American rhetoric that portrays the country as the defender of liberty, the pursuer of democracy, the promised land of self-elevation and opportunity.

The actions that are interpreted as incompatible with those ideals exacerbate the easy criticism that is already a useful tool for a Europe united more in fact than in thought and that feels both attracted and threatened by the promises of globalization. In just more than a century, the power of the New World has gone from wilderness to the very essence of global culture—the underlying threat or promise of modernity and post-modernity. Because Europe perceives itself as living in an American world, the United States is criticized for not measuring up to the standards of different interpretations of a universal model, and it is blamed

for collective wrongdoing. Nowhere was this attachment of guilt more irrationally displayed than in the reaction to the September 11 attacks by those who said the United States either deserved it or "had it coming." No matter how many mistakes the U.S. government might have made, as an Italian journalist said, "It is only the United States that keeps forever the shame of the past (nobody would applaud a suicidal Jewish squad that commits a massacre in Berlin as a revenge for the Holocaust)."⁸

Fortunately, those exasperated views were far from representative of Europe's reaction to the September 11 terrorist attacks. On the contrary, 9/11 generated widespread condemnation for the perpetrators and a wave of sympathy for the American people in Europe. British, French, German, and Italian journalists and politicians rallied around the flag of Western civilization and argued, for a brief moment, that, "We are all Americans." Nevertheless, the aftermath of 9/11 has left anti-Americanism as a "river overflowing its banks," according to pollsters and observers.⁹ An Italian journalist wrote that 9/11 inaugurated "the era of Empire."¹⁰ A 2002 book that called 9/11 "the big lie" and sold 300,000 copies in France alone accused the U.S. "state apparatus" of masterminding the attacks, apparently based on the appalling logic that nobody else could have enough power for similar destruction.¹¹

The Tony Blair government in England and the Silvio Berlusconi government in Italy, both ardent supporters of the United States' military reprisals, quickly lost the support of their newly and increasingly critical constituents. The staunch unwillingness of Germany and France to go along with the United States in war against Iraq, promoted by the U.S. government as early as six months after the 9/11 attacks, has widened what many see as a growing deterioration of the transatlantic alliance that has been a staple of international relations since 1945. The war in Iraq, which the United States launched in March 2003, has been criticized as an instance of American willingness to use military power alone and to step over the concerns of its allies and the international institutions.

The terrorist attacks and their aftermath did in fact highlight the strength of American power. Most markedly before the end of the Cold War, European administrations were ambivalent toward American power; they were glad that America took care of defense and worried that it mattered so much that America did, with Germany at the satisfied end of the spectrum and France at the concerned one.¹² Increasingly in the second half of the twentieth century, the suspicion that Washington was treating European nations more like subordinates or satellites than friendly allied powers gnawed at the self-respect of London, Paris, Bonn, and Rome. Such constant, pervasive military and economic interdependence marred post-WWII relations between the United States and Europe. Already in the 1950s, European governments, with Washington's approval, started pushing for European unification, a movement that would later be spearheaded

by France and Germany. Less than two decades after the liberation of Europe, Europeans showed remarkable differences in their perception of the United States as a global leader; a 1963 poll showed that 75 percent of Germans, 61 percent of Italians, 51 percent of British, and only 33 percent of French had confidence in America as the leader of the West.

With or without the world's confidence, U.S. dominance was a fact 30 years later. Throughout the 1990s, the conflicted legacy of the American century was freedom from totalitarian regimes in most of Europe and the establishment of the United States as the world's often arrogant policeman. Europe saw the role of American power in world affairs through two opposite prisms—the crazy sheriff bent on changing the status quo with his military might versus the benign hegemonic guarantor of world order. The ambivalence was reflected in European media: While many Europeans saw the United States as acting out of its own interests in intervening in other countries' affairs, they also harbored the fear that it was growing more isolationist—the “damned if it does and damned if it does not” approach. At the core of this dilemma lies the question of the future of America's lone superpower status—the “hyperpuissance,” as French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine called it in 2001.¹³

The doubt that America can keep it up despite overstretching its resources and engaging in excessive commitments abroad dates from at least the mid-1980s; the year the Berlin Wall fell, half of the American public said the United States was in decline.¹⁴ Still, America seemed to enter the twenty-first century poised to retain a dominant position—militarily, technologically, economically, and culturally—albeit in a more interdependent world, especially if it devoted more resources to the “soft power” of trying to win hearts and souls abroad. American public opinion in the 1990s also stood by internationalism rather than isolationism, more than did U.S. leaders, although the public was skeptical of U.S. efforts to promote American values abroad. Then came the shock of September 11 and its aftermath of the “war on terror,” which was declared by President Bush in a September 20 address before a joint session of Congress and has affected all aspects of international affairs.¹⁵

On the morning of September 11, 2001, nearly 3,000 people were killed when 19 young Arab men hijacked four American airliners and used two to destroy the Twin Towers in New York City, flew another into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and crashed a fourth in a field in Pennsylvania. The Bush administration declared Osama bin Laden, leader of the terrorist organization al Qaeda, to be the main suspect. Less than a month later, American and British forces began the “Enduring Freedom” campaign to topple the Taliban government in Afghanistan, accused of harboring bin Laden. A new Afghan government, comprising a coalition of the four largest anti-Taliban groups, was installed in Kabul on December 22, 2001. Operations against Taliban fighters continued into

the spring of 2002, when Washington started to officially push for the extension of the "war on terror" to Iraq, which American troops invaded in March 2003.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Europeans thought the United States was rediscovering the advantages of multilateralism after a period of increasing unilateralism and isolationism, both with deep roots in the American tradition of thinking of itself as one-of-a-kind and in the inherent tendencies of "the leader of the flock" that is easily annoyed by the flock's tardiness in accepting its lead. The United States was showered with a tremendous outpour of official sympathy and solidarity. For the first time, NATO invoked Article V of its charter, proclaiming an attack on one of its members to be an attack on all and calling for "collective defense." European states temporarily ceased their internal bickering and bonded among themselves in trying to present a united response supportive of America. France and Great Britain cooperated with American intelligence services; they, as well as Germany and Italy, also provided troops for a military response against the perpetrators of the attacks and nations harboring them. German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder professed "*uneingeschränkte Solidarität*" (infinite solidarity), although criticisms, led by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* editors, surfaced with the announcement of his decision to make German troops available to the United States.

That wave of support toward America quickly subsided and evaporated, mostly due to what a former French ambassador to the United States called "*inquiétudes*" (apprehensions) about the military intervention in Afghanistan, the extension of hostilities to Iraq, and a return to the "cliché of the Wild West."¹⁶ Europeans began to fear that September 11, instead of being the day when everything changed, had only made the United States become more stubbornly attached to its own self-sufficient, overpowering ways. What the head of E.U. foreign policy, Javier Solana, has called the "transatlantic rift" has grown even larger as wounded America reasserts its power in ways with which most Europeans disagree, especially France and Germany ("the old Europe," in the words that then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld used to disparage those European countries that did not support the U.S. invasion of Iraq).¹⁷ Paradoxically, and unexpectedly in Europe, September 11 did not teach Washington that it too was vulnerable, but rather reinforced its inclination to use unparalleled U.S. power at will.

"Somewhere between Kabul and Baghdad, then, the United States and Europe lost each other":¹⁸ While a broad international coalition supported war in Afghanistan in 2001, millions gathered in European capitals to protest war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq little more than a year later. Schröder won reelection on an anti-war-in-Iraq campaign in 2002 and was congratulated by the staunchest U.S. supporter, British Prime Minister

Tony Blair. When U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney went to London around the six-month anniversary of the terrorist attacks to promote the Iraq war, *The Times* editors wrote that Cheney's position on nuclear arms was "immensely irritating" to Blair, who was trying to stem the "immensely controversial" nature of an "Anglo-American entente against Iraq."¹⁹ Rumsfeld's divisive comment also showed that the Bush administration had no qualms in pitting one European country against another, a break with the long-standing U.S. support for a united, integrated Europe that had lasted through the Clinton administration. Those who had predicted that the "special relationship" between Western Europe and the United States would not outlast the Cold War have found themselves vindicated and some have even suggested that a U.S.-Russian alliance might replace it. One American historian said that "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus: They agree on little and understand one another less and less."²⁰

While they might not hail from different planets, it is a fact that as the European Union—especially central members like Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy—becomes more active strategically and politically, it is doing so on a model that broadly differs in both power and ideology from America. France, fearful of its own decline and loss of identity from at least 1898, has pushed for European integration and for an alternate model of global influence to that of America. Italy, the smallest of the four powers, finds its habit of siding squarely with the United States increasingly frowned upon in Europe, a disapproval it cannot afford. Great Britain, which enters the twenty-first century with the strong advantage of having its language as the official idiom of the global information economy and with a long experience in the tricky art of remaining a world power despite decreasing capabilities and increasing dependence on the United States, risks to find itself drifting if America and Europe break up. Germany, free from the strategic threats that marked most of its post-unification history, has developed a "German way" of foreign policy based on multilateral diplomacy, cooperation, institutions, and reluctance to rely on the military—directly opposite to what some see as the American approach to power politics and national interest. In fact, Europe in general might have learned from the horrors of two world wars on its soil that blunt shows of force are not the most effective or even desirable uses of power.

At the level of ideology, Communism brought down with it the justification for America's antithetical worldview. The particularly devout form of American patriotism reflected in Washington's post-9/11 official rhetoric, often swathed in religious terms, makes uncomfortable a Europe that has become largely secular. Europeans are equally put off by the penchant of U.S. administrations, especially the Bush one after 9/11, to judge other nations as "evil." Védérine has called the expression "rogue states"

an "ostracizing American terminology" and Europe's media are full of contempt for the simplistic, Manichean division of the world in those who are with America and those who are against it, as Bush phrased it after the attacks. Consequently, the European Union, while still unwilling and unable to challenge America's military might, is increasingly portraying itself as capable and desirous of providing an alternative power center.

To some observers, it already is—in the early 2000s, several scholars had come to the conclusion that "the old continent is back," because of its ability to spread democracy through the lure of membership, its "social vision," the allure of its more leisurely way of life, and also its power in trade.²¹ In a complete reversal from the 1890s, when Europeans feared the entry of America into their way of handling diplomacy, Europeans now want to establish a new alternative to the "old" American military way and promote an approach to international affairs that would provide a "delicate but indispensable balancing act," in Védérine's words. More than a dwarf, less than a superpower, as one scholar put it, the European Union is eager to use its increasing political capital, even though it gets little recognition for its efforts.²²

Before and after 9/11, however, such a widening gap among traditional allies has been considered as detrimental to both the United States and the European Union, especially because many recognize that it would be mutually beneficial if those two powers strove instead toward becoming equal partners. The United States is seen as alienating even its best friends by continuing to assume that working toward prosperity and security in its own way would automatically create alliances and, in the process, by being dismissive of European disagreements with, or suggested alternatives to, American approaches. Europeans are growing increasingly unhappy not only with America's reliance on military solutions, but also with what they perceive as a growing tendency on Washington's part to think and act unilaterally, showing a disdainful indifference for what the world wants by refusing to support the land mine ban in 1997, the International Criminal Court in 1998, the ABM treaty in 1999, the Kyoto environmental protocol in 2001 and, most controversially, by invading Iraq in 2003. Ultimately, the future of America's global role might depend on the development of the transatlantic relationship and on whether it capitalizes on the new purposefulness and closeness it took immediately after the attacks or it falls apart in the acrimonious disagreements exasperated by the "war on terror."

Europeans and some Americans argue that such revealing shows of disunity have prevented not only the European Union but also America from being effective in solving out-of-area crises (such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) and global issues (such as epidemics and pollution), in promoting a market economy to which they both subscribe, and in

assessing what threats either region faces. "When we agree, we are the core of any effective global coalition. When we disagree, no global coalition is likely to be effective," said in 2003 Daniel Hamilton, who held several senior positions at the U.S. Department of State until 2001.²³ Some members of the U.S. House of Representatives' subcommittee on Europe have also argued that Europe's becoming a more equal partner only benefits the United States—"I do not see a prosperous future for America without a strengthening relationship with Europe," the ranking member wrote in 2001.²⁴ On both sides of the Atlantic, the prescribed remedies for a twenty-first-century partnership between America and Europe are political, economic, and strategic integration in the European Union accompanied by willingness in Washington to give Europe an equal voice in global, multilateral decision making—in other words, the completion of an alliance that, while far from perfectly harmonious, has proven striking in its historical closeness.

Another part of the remedy should be a better understanding through international communication, which instead has often been the battlefield of the kind of transatlantic sniping that has widened the vast gulf between the way the United States sees itself and the drastically different interpretation the rest of the world gives to American actions. To an unprecedented degree, today's news media play a part in how nations imagine each other to be and in the foreign policy positions that result from mutual impressions. According to a recent poll, European majorities ranging from 77 to 55 percent said the media were not only their main source of information about international affairs, but that media had a "very or somewhat good influence" on their country.²⁵ More British, Italians, and Germans interviewed praised the media as beneficial to their societies than praised either their national governments or religious leaders.²⁶

E.U. diplomats are also aware of the media's influence on foreign policy: At a 2001 E.U. conference on transatlantic relations, a foreign policy advisor to the British Prime Minister said that among Britain's "assets" that allow the country to "still deliver a punch in international relations" was "the standing of the BBC."²⁷ In December 2006, France's 24-hour, state-funded international news channel, "France 24," went live, a pet project of Chirac who thus described its rationale in the newscast's first interview: "It is essential that a great country like France can have a view of the world and broadcast this view, in conformity with our traditions and our conception of civilization, peace, humanism and globalization."

Because of that influence, it is especially disappointing that the media mirror the way America's global presence is perceived—at the same time dominant of and uninterested in the world's affairs. As the world's media became more American, Americans (and their media) become less interested in foreign news. As an increasingly interconnected international communication system brings the same messages instantaneously to

audiences worldwide, the depoliticization and commercialization of the news media gives those audiences little framework within which to understand the information. The disturbing pictures of cheering crowds in front of television screens featuring the burning Twin Towers on 9/11, or of children sporting bin Laden shirts and New York baseball teams caps, graphically show how sending images across the world does not mean informing a global public.

Throughout the 1990s, Americans showed decreasing interest in foreign policy matters and in international news.²⁸ Such low American interest in foreign matters caused drastic reductions in the very expensive international news coverage in U.S. media; television coverage of foreign news dropped by half in the 1990s. Briefly, the September 11 attacks created the perception that Americans were finally willing to learn more about—and from—the rest of the world. The quick fading of that perception left Europeans very disappointed. While the Western European press has historically had significantly higher amounts of international news than U.S. newspapers, the increasing “Americanization” of the world’s press—first noted in the 1890s and put under the spotlight again by the Internet—makes it unlikely that this trend will continue.

The declining coverage of foreign affairs is just one facet of the crisis of credibility journalism is suffering in the United States and elsewhere at the dawn of the twenty-first century as its market-driven dynamics, including readership fragmentation and ownership concentration, raise concerns about the diminishing role of serious political and social news. Press scholar James Carey argued that modern journalism as it developed in the 1890s (an independent, general-interest content “objectively” provided by professionals) carried with it the flaw of economic concentration and unwittingly contributed to the public’s disenchantment with politics. The press increasingly became the entertainer of the masses, damaging its role and reputation as public servant. Some critics argued that the scant attention in American media to international happenings made it virtually impossible for Americans to be prepared for the possibility of a terror attack of the magnitude of 9/11. In the aftermath of September 11, when the news function appeared again crucial, Carey and other media critics asked whether objectivity, the defining characteristic (or, at least, aspiration) of U.S. journalism, would fall prey to the Bush administration’s disloyalty rhetoric and shroud of secrecy. That would be especially worrisome because the attacks, in shattering people’s sense of identity, had also given back to the media the role of creating an “imagined community” through in-depth analysis, for which the print media in the first post-September 11 days have been praised.

When it comes to the political role of journalism, the gap between American and European practices has widened throughout the twentieth century, because the European (continental) press has maintained political

affiliations, largely disregarding concerns of neutrality and in some instance even objectivity in favor of commentary and interpretation. The distinguishing difference between the Anglo-American model of journalism and press practices in continental Europe is that continental reporters continue to be expected to assess events for readers, above and beyond facts. Market pressures and pressures to conform to the international press in news selection and coverage, however, are making headway in Europe's media. In addition, the wide-reaching dominance of American and British media (including the most important international news agencies, The Associated Press and Reuters, and the networks CNN and BBC) and giant conglomerates like Time Warner and Rupert Murdoch's News International are seen as a clear manifestation that "the media are American"²⁹ and, in some eyes, that amounts to electronic colonialism.

The recent vicissitudes of *Le Monde* and its American supplement give a great insight into how U.S. journalism still raises questions of identity and resistance in Europe, where language itself is seen as vital to national identity. Every day in the week after 9/11, the French daily ran a page of news from the *New York Times*, prompting *Le Monde* readers' representative to write an editorial assuring readers that it would not become a habit and sarcastically adding that it would be a "generous and improbable" gesture on the part of an American newspaper to run a page "in Molière's language."³⁰ Early in 2002, however, *Le Monde* editors decided to publish a weekly supplement of stories from the *New York Times*, selected jointly by staff of both newspapers and printed in English in the original layout.

Le Monde international relations editor Daniel Vernet argued that the supplement would give French readers "direct access to the image America gives itself," implicitly highlighting how different the two images are supposed to be, but he said one of the newspaper's journalists protested in writing that such supplement would make *Le Monde* a vehicle for U.S. culture.³¹

With the partial exception of the British press, closer to the American model in the 2000s as it was in the 1890s, the European press offers a highly opinionated and overtly political perspective on America as the world's sole superpower at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Since 1898, the media have been either praised as the educators and the voices of the democratic masses or condemned as the hegemonic government's mouthpieces. Either way, they are one of the sites of struggle over what America really is about. As such, they not only provide a great window into the European mind, but they also are a crucial player in the conduct of transatlantic relations, and ultimately in their success or demise, which are destined to have a great impact on the United States' global role and on its power.

At the dawn of both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Europeans talked about the United States in terms of power—the new power in 1898

adopting the ways of the Old World, then, in the era of globalization, the world's lone superpower bent on making the world one democracy (or one free market), even if it had to do so alone. Across the twentieth century, aside from England's "special relationship," Western Europe in general has struggled to adjust to this power, oscillating between condemning it, not risking alienating it, and sharing in the spoils—be they Pacific islands in 1898, reconstruction contracts in post-Saddam Iraq in 2003, or career-making graduate degrees in between.

First perceived by Europe as a symbol of modernity, America has become by 2000 the byword for globalization, among critics and supporters alike who make of the stereotypical American the symbol of all kinds of virtues and vices, from individual empowerment to greed. Since the first time the United States stepped onto the world stage, Western European imagination has beheld America in a way unlike any other nation—for better or for worse, it has represented the future, with all the subsequent hopes and fears.

The next four chapters unearth popular and political discourse about America in Europe at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. They illustrate how even the recurring negative stereotypes of the uncultivated, dollar-worshipping, blissfully ignorant American unconcerned with anything but his power—discussed so far and often taken for rising anti-Americanism—usually reflect admiration for the promises of the American dream and the inevitable disappointment in a country that falls short of fully embodying it. They show that today's actions of the "hyperpower" are judged along the parameter of the "exceptional power" just as those of the "newcomer" were a century before. Therefore, Europe's reaction to America's post-9/11 moves is bound to be driven by expectations about what America is and about what its role should be. It is those expectations and reactions that have combined to shape transatlantic affairs, and U.S. power worldwide, since the Great Powers of Europe first took notice that a new power was rising across the ocean.

Unstoppable Americans

Only a few days had passed since the United States had launched what everyone except Washington saw as an imperial war and the European press was already stunned by fear. In an editorial published four days after the April 1898 declaration of the Spanish-American War, editors at *The Manchester Guardian* wrote that Europe “views the action of the United States with an air, to say the least of it, of disapprobation and almost of apprehension, wondering where these Americans will stop.”¹ Europeans predicted that the new power would not be satisfied with defeating Spain and grabbing a few of its overseas colonies. It was a new kind of Americans they were dealing with, and that “these Americans” had the resources to embark on a full-scale colonial enterprise was beyond doubt. But could Americans really want to come into an Old-World-styled competition with Europeans?

The possibility was stunning, and not so much because Europeans feared for their own countries’ fate faced with a newly powerful competitor. Rather, they feared for America’s fate—they thought they were witnessing the end of the “great Republic” and, with that, of the world’s “hope for the future.” The American dream—the belief in the land of infinite opportunity for the resourceful ones—had made Europe believe that the United States could be uniquely powerful, and U.S. power did emerge from the 1898 war as an unquestionable facet of world affairs. But the American dream had also made Europeans believe that it would be a different kind of power, that the United States would be unlike the Great Powers of old and their colonialist scheming. The 1898 war was the first challenge to the survival of the American dream abroad. This chapter explains why the war between the Spanish, for whom all but the English sympathized and who nobody thought could prevail, and the Americans, who were thought to be following the Old World’s colonialist steps, marked the beginning of Europe’s doubt about the exceptionality of the United States. Could the United States truly be different from the Empires of old?

Less than a year before the war, Europeans’ political interest in the United States was mostly as a trade partner and stories about the United States in Europe’s newspapers focused on the New York stock market, trade and tariffs, and the gold rush in Alaska. The occasional reports

about rumblings of war over Cuba became a veritable flood of news in late April and early May 1898, when the major newspapers published several articles about the United States and the Spanish-American War in every issue. While the vast majority of the British press supported the United States for reasons that varied from humanitarian interventionism to feelings of kinship among Anglo-Saxon populations and their "white man's burden," the rest of Europe's press brimmed with criticism. *Le Figaro* wanted France to support the Queen Regent of Spain; *Le Temps* repeatedly warned against the emerging American power. The major German newspapers chided the new assertion of the Monroe doctrine; the *Frankfurter Zeitung* predicted Great Britain would seek American partnership in colonialism, while the *Kölnische Zeitung* asked Europe to band and contain American "lust for conquest." Italian newspapers lamented the beginning of U.S. imperialism, for its social and also commercial implications. While news agencies like Reuters took care of the detailed accounts of military moves, European correspondents tried to provide a broader analysis of the situation and its consequences for world politics.

The most enterprising were the large corps of reporters sent by English newspapers.² Richard Harding Davis, the conservative New York *Herald* and *The Times* correspondent, who firmly believed in the global superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race, led a charge and received official commendation for his role in the advance toward Santiago in Cuba. In Puerto Rico, the mayor of a village surrendered it to Davis and three other correspondents who had landed unintentionally before the U.S. Army. The rest of the European newspapers largely made do with a plethora of editorials and, in the case of Germany, with news from governmental press bureaus.

Even though the European press provides a precious window into Europe's mind in the 1890s, it should be noted that it was also prey to political interests: Correspondents and editors of virtually all newspapers complained about the rigid censorship established by the Spanish and American authorities in the theater of war.³ "We who accompanied the [U.S.] army as correspondents were intolerably restricted in opportunities," wrote John Black Atkins of *The Manchester Guardian*. Editors at *The Times* wrote that the discrepancy between their correspondent's saying U.S. President William McKinley had signed the war resolutions and Reuters' saying he had not done so illustrated "the difficulty of getting exact information upon simple matters of fact."⁴ Some also criticized the new, "very American," news-oriented journalism: "Wars are now reported so fully and quickly that one almost looks on at them while sitting at home; one has the excitement of war without its antiseptics of personal loss, suffering, and danger, and in this way we have acquired, by help of the telegraph, a remarkable equivalent to the shows of the Roman amphitheatre of the worst period."⁵

And yet, the American press was after all a good fit for the energetic, mass-ruled, bustling United States Europeans felt they knew. It is one of the ambivalences in Europe's approach to the New World that journalists who lamented the consequences of the war for U.S. democracy should also write extensively and disparagingly about the influence that public opinion—(mis)informed by the press—had on U.S. political life. For example, one correspondent for *The Times* wrote of "the attempt of the more impatient newspapers, mostly 'yellow,' to bring *what they call public opinion* to bear directly on the President."⁶ *Corriere* lead correspondent Ugo Ojetti said that "public opinion is the only ruler"; the Milan daily's editors referred to the U.S. government as being "in a frenzy over popular turmoil and almost prisoner of the breathless mob" and the "most dangerous effervescence" of American public opinion, where prudence was suffocated by "the furious clamoring of triumphant warmongers."⁷ The *Kölnische Zeitung* recoiled at the "screams of the coarse crowd" that made Congress "a disgusting thing to watch" and took away from negotiations "the character of diplomacy."⁸ *The Times* was lapidary: "It was not the thinking people who made the war, and it is not they who will bring pressure to bear upon those who conduct it."⁹ In the newspaper's year-end review of the international scene, President McKinley was called nothing "more than the servant and interpreter of public opinion."¹⁰

Paradoxically, such negative views of the importance of public opinion betray the fundamental underlying European idea about the United States: America was the most complete embodiment of democracy, not so much in the sense of the perfection of a political system, but in the chance every American had to be somebody and to be heard. Being the apparently successful experiment in democracy made America both exceptional and formidable. A display of naked power like the war against Spain, while highlighting the establishment of the United States as one of the Great Powers, brought into discussion whether at the root of U.S. power still lay the country's uniqueness. No European doubted that America was taking its first steps on the international stage, meaning it was on the way to imperialism, and that this amounted to "a break in the history of the world," as *The Times* editors put it.¹¹

It was a "break" because the United States had been unique: Europeans were astonished that America would abandon its isolationist policy to follow "old Europe," because they were convinced that America could not do this and remain its own self. No matter how much American rhetoric was promulgated to prove the contrary, colonialism and exceptional democracy were incompatible from the Europeans' viewpoint. As the United States boldly ventured beyond its geographical borders, Europeans wondered how this new kind of power would change American identity and what they had thought America was all about.

Many of the recurrent images of the United States that filled European newspapers were by default ambivalent. Virtually every positive characteristic could be fearsome if it belied a show of force instead of the exceptionality of a unique nation. First and foremost, Europe's America was grand—Italian climbers on Mt. Rainier said that even pine trees had “amazing height and massiveness”—and titillatingly untamed, with Americans “wild as their land is wild.”¹² The country was awash in a sea of flags, a sign of the peculiarly tangible kind of U.S. patriotism, a formidable and “exceptionally” American characteristic. “The American flag was everywhere,” both Atkins and Ojetti noted in 1898. While Europeans would do well to imitate “a kind of patriotism convinced calm[,] serene[,] secure[,] and] unending,” they should also fear “a national pride exasperated into a spasm,” the Italian correspondent contradictorily wrote. Again, the contradiction is in line with the tension between any part of American identity that was talked about as worth imitating and yet became fearsome when America was seen to betray its nature in the war.

Not surprisingly, flag-hugging was found menacing when the hand opposite that raising the flag was brandishing a rifle. Some Europeans scoffed at the “war desire” that they found reigning supreme in Washington for it caused “every word and every action favoring peace” to be seen as “hostile for the homeland,” while others chided “a slightly exalted patriotism!”¹³ Italian editors noted that before the official declaration, “the war has already virtually started in the streets of Chicago and St. Louis,” and *The Times* correspondents wrote that “the delirium of war” “had raged” in Washington for many weeks; even “the best Americans” who thought the war “needless” gave “their hearty support to the President in carrying on the war that might have been averted.”¹⁴ “There are classes who embark in this enterprise with less enthusiasm than other classes, but with equal determination and patriotism. . . . The United States are united,” the newspaper's Washington correspondent wrote.¹⁵ In one letter describing physical education in the United States, a French correspondent in New York found patriotism attached even to bodybuilding: “If they make saintly spirits and robust bodies, it is to serve the country.”¹⁶

A slate of other popular images of the United States—youthful, naïve, independent, modern, even hypocritical—shows that Europeans not only looked at the New World as intrinsically different from old Europe, but also approached it with unique expectations. The most striking example is the disdain several newspaper editors directed at the United States for its alleged ill treatment of minorities and the poor. *Le Temps* argued whites kept blacks, “above all in the United States, in so marked a state of social inferiority”; the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, describing the U.S. Army's situation in Key West, Florida, noted “the general hatred for blacks is particularly strong”; the *Kölnische Zeitung* criticized a new tax for passengers leaving

America by sea as a way to keep in the country and recruit people who could not afford the tax.

A writer in the same newspaper had dire predictions for the future U.S. governing of the Philippines: "Bullets are not enough, because the complete destruction of the Malaysian race is not as easy as that of the Indians, who far from their prairies and confined by modern culture die like flies."¹⁷ Those criticisms can seem absurd because they were being aired by newspapers of record in countries with long histories and active records of colonialism and blatant class inequalities. But they make sense if they are taken rightly as hints that the United States was held to a different standard because it embodied that democracy where, as de Tocqueville had written, "equality of conditions" was expected to be the rule. Mistreatment of minorities and the poor could only raise the eyebrows of Africa colonizers because it was found in America.

Admiration for the promises of the American dream is then a double-edged sword: When everybody knew what the United States was really up to with the war, Europeans felt that hypocritical was the only way to define U.S. postwar rhetoric extolling "American power, American valor, American expansionistic force, American superiority and many more virtues still with which Americans cover themselves with satisfaction."¹⁸ Admiration for the values of U.S. independence, progressivism, and optimism was clothed in derision and condescension for inferior manifestations of those same ideals. Americans' "extreme independence" (in Atkins' words) was apparent in McKinley's ridding himself upon entering the White House of all diplomats from the previous administration, "obsequious to the good North-American traditions."¹⁹ Ojetti described as "cloud-crushing" those New York buildings that are usually referred to in much less violent terms as skyscrapers. He also wrote about another aspect of American "modernity"—the role of women, who were not banned from bread-winning professions, however high or low. A news item from Berkeley, California, started with the words: "A woman regent in higher education in America"—and only in America, a reader could infer.²⁰ French readers were told that there was a full "role reversal" between genders in America, with women "courting men."²¹

Yet, despite all the derision, Europeans longed for America's progress and modernity. They admired "minds open in the modern way" and wished that some of that energizing rush of the New World would rub off on them, as Ojetti said: "And energy is in the air; and love for the impossible, the manic passion for what has never been dared before after an hour penetrate your nerves and make your eyes shine and your hands shake and you run..." Strength, willpower, and energy that waste no time were a fundamental part of American identity and they logically went with the image of youthfulness of the New World: "One goes fast and sees big in America."²² American "ambition" was "immense and

condensed."²³ "Strong character" was for Americans the solution, much as it was the question for Europeans; a *Frankfurter Zeitung* writer in New York in 1897 to cover the gold rush praised the "strong enterprising spirit."²⁴

Even time ran differently in the United States: "Nobody has time to waste," "on the street nobody talks," Ojetti observed. Even the way Americans talked burst with energy, like "the expressive American phrase" "gets there." "Matter of fact" was "the single lord of the typical American," while "Go ahead" was the password of "every domain in the activity of the new world," resulting from "a certain haste to live that makes particularly breathless the rush to riches."²⁵ Where Cuba was concerned, Americans' willingness to "get there" made it so that "many of the best and most inoffensive of Americans feel their hands fairly itching to be at Spain's throat."²⁶

Europeans were both repelled and lured by the "impatience of the American people" and their desire to see military action. Theodore Roosevelt was treated as the prototype of "the bold and full of activity Yankee."²⁷ The American Congress "does not do things by halves," so that any delay in military action was "incomprehensible and unjustifiable" for those whom a *Corriere* writer described as the "boiling-hot people of the *times-money* [sic], of the 'hurry up,' the 'get there first,' the people of the *raids*, the *records*, the *express*, and the railway crashes."²⁸ English editors lost no occasion to highlight a common ground in "that *pertinacious energy* which is one of the standing evidences of that community of blood, of origin, and of temper between them and ourselves, . . . they [will] carry on the contest in the Anglo-Saxon manner. They will probably make some mistakes, as we almost invariably do, but with them, as with ourselves, mistakes only increase the *dogged tenacity of purpose* which knows how to convert mistakes themselves into stepping-stones to success."²⁹ Italians were a lot less self-congratulatory: The war had shown "the persevering energy of the American people," "the sure and energetic rapidity with which American life develops and progresses," *La Stampa* wrote in reviewing Europe and America at the war's end.³⁰ Precisely in that energy shone the contrast between "old Europe, torn and divided by deep disagreements among State and State," and "young America, well united, wealthy, relatively unanimous in ideas." In the conclusion to his collection of correspondence, Ojetti said that what Europeans needed to learn from America was "trust in ourselves."

Once again, Europeans were both incredulous and haughty when they contrasted Europe and the uniquely young America with its peculiarly naïve "vigueur de jeunesse." Correspondents like Ojetti and Atkins declared themselves astonished by the optimism of the population, "that certainty in the goodness of the future," as well as by the optimism of the volunteer soldiers, like the man who "was coming to America because

he *seriously* believed that his knowledge of rough life might be turned to some account among the United States forces." "Invincible optimism" seemed to be the common character trait of the American people.³¹ Some thought that followed logically from Americans' living in a new world: "It seems to me that these people owe a bit of their freshness and their confidence to the purity and the lightness of their sky," a French correspondent guessed.³²

Much as they admired this optimism, Europeans also looked down on such confident spirit, treating it as naiveté. Noting the patriotism of a U.S. soldier in Cuba who believed his country to be always in the right, Atkins commented, "It was a *simple, trustful* point of view that did him a *kind of credit*." German editors said that, "The American people let themselves to be easily driven by resounding words and let themselves be infected by a strong enthusiasm."³³ Referring to the newly completed Library of Congress, Ojetti wrote it showed a "thirst for knowledge" "in all its frantic, almost *childish* exaggeration and yet in all the beauty of the noble, superb, indomitable desire [to learn]."

Americans seemed to embark on the imperial war with such unthinking self-confidence: "A host of unreflecting Americans are evidently making war, *as young men sometimes make themselves tipsy*, under the delusion that they are gaining an enlarged experience."³⁴ Only after looking "at the war from a business point of view," Americans found "*with surprise* that it is a bigger thing than they expected."³⁵ "Faced with reality, Americans are calmer," a French journalist thought: But the quick successes of the Spanish-American War did not offer much in the way of sobering reality and seemed instead to leave Americans even more blissfully and blindly optimistic and naïve.³⁶ Right after the victory at Manila Bay, editors at the *Frankfurter Zeitung* said that, "Even those sympathizing with the United States would not have been unhappy if Americans had sustained some defeats at the beginning, so that they would understand war is serious."³⁷ After the final victory, no worries cast a shadow on Washington's brow: "The country isn't worried: Our resources never appeared more gigantic or our future more alluring; and the few Cassandras who talk about the financial burdens sure to be entailed by Imperialism are simply laughed at for their pains."³⁸

Such youthful optimism, naïve as it might be, was supported by "immense resources"³⁹—Europe had long gaped at the enormous wealth of America. Europeans thought America was obsessed with doing lucrative business. That materialistic rat race they treated with scorn emanating from their apparently more spiritual high horse and, at the same time, with fear stemming from the realization that big America would make for an economic competitor from whom it would be difficult to be wholly independent. Already in 1897, an occasional correspondent for *The Times* linked "the cheerful feeling of the community" to the "confident belief

among all classes that the country has entered on a stage of advancing prosperity."⁴⁰ Americans were described as "gens pratiques," "suave people of instantaneous calculators," always ready to ask "how much?" as the only standard of beauty.⁴¹ Ojetti boasted he could know American party politics "dollar by dollar" and described a Chicago businessman as "the beautiful and strong machine that builds millions out of everything." Even mountain climbers, "cold and calculating," did not like mountains as their Italian counterparts did, unless climbing "is not entirely unaccompanied by some gain."⁴²

In the wild, untamed country, American riches grew "in colossal, monstrous proportions," supported by the United States' "immense industrial activity."⁴³ Numerous articles in the summer of 1897 reported on the frenzied "gold fever" leading thousands to Alaska and, in April 1898, on the "individual millionaires" who volunteered their fortunes for the war.⁴⁴ With some of the Old-World-proud reasoning that Americans might be bigger but not by default better, Europeans scorned Americans for believing war "only demanded sacrifices of money": "The material is not everything," wrote *Le Figaro* editors, adding that the nobility and legitimacy of Spain's cause would help make up for its inferiority in men and arms.⁴⁵ Some conspiracy theorists saw the dark work of American capitalists behind the war: "Perhaps everything is a trick in order to have after the war in the country an imperial army and the capital wants to create a protection for itself against the proletariat," the *Kölnische Zeitung* suggested.⁴⁶

Well before talk of the global economy would be commonplace, European newspapers discussed American trade protectionism and its effects. French and Italians said that American intervention "threatened the world's wealth" and identified as the war's gravest consequence the disruption of the "growing solidarity" established among peoples by the increasingly interconnected world of business.⁴⁷ They wondered how the war would affect the stock markets in London, Berlin, Hamburg, and Frankfurt, revealing a surprisingly early belief in the interdependence of global markets and the way American doings shook them up. German editors called "insufferable" any wartime restrictions on sea trade between Europe and the United States, because "freedom" in sea trade was "necessary" to European business and it was "urgently desirable" to keep Southern U.S. ports free from epidemics.⁴⁸ Some Europeans did not refrain from harping more idealistically on the subject of U.S. wealth and, again showing that America was supposed to be different from other powers, argued that Washington should open its coffers for the world's good. *Kölnische Zeitung* editors wrote this about the United States' plan to build a canal in Nicaragua that would join the Atlantic with the Pacific: "The civilized world would think it very positive if the United States put their hands in their abundantly filled pockets to do this favor to the whole of humankind."⁴⁹

As it entered the Spanish-American War, Europe's America was a mélange of unparalleled wealth, youthful energy, and power of the confident, patriotic masses that, if not without its faults, stood in a stark contrast to the Old World. And yet, its new desire for military glory seemed to put all of its characteristics at the service of a mad pursuit of old-style power, *Le Temps* explained in this editorial, significantly entitled "Démocratie et Conquête":

This opulent, this glorious democracy of the United States that runs over with resources and energy, with gold and men. . . puts the same ardor in getting itself a coat-of-arms of glory that its least new families use in turning aristocratic and finding themselves an ancestry. There is no sacrifice of money or even of blood that can outweigh in this crowd's eyes that need, eternally human, that it starts to feel, as it comes out of its childhood. With self-consciousness, it gets ambitious.⁵⁰

America was energetic, rich, gloriously democratic, but also young and ambitious. Whatever else it might have been, America's successful war represented the country's "coming of age." The New World had suddenly grown not only old but Old-World, because it was abandoning what had made it different for a chance at guaranteeing itself those same ambitions and "glories" that Europeans considered human, eternal, and universal—in a word, it wanted an empire.

That is how a common Western identity embracing Europe and the United States was imagined at the dawn of the twentieth century: America was understood to be transforming itself into the newest of the "old Great Powers," although the last vestiges of the belief in the promises of difference of the American dream made it into an unusually powerful one. What would de Tocqueville think, the *Le Temps* editor wondered in the editorial above, had he seen that "the democracy as democratic as a human society can be" had "moved toward a State already closer to the other States of the old world, that arms itself like them, aggrandizes itself like them." Exceptional as it might be, the United States had European roots after all, Italians nostalgically noted—roots it had betrayed "ungratefully" by going to war against the nation that discovered the continent right during the celebrations in memory of explorer Amerigo Vespucci.⁵¹ Germans and the English, in more practical terms, wrote of their own countries as powerful, imperialist nations that stood by America's side and, hopefully, shared the spoils won by the new Anglo-Saxon conqueror.

Frankfurter Zeitung editors proudly asserted, "We go at the same speed as America"; a long article in the same newspaper referred to the Christmas tree as the "royal" German contribution to holiday-making in the United States.⁵² The English newspapers repeatedly insisted on the kinship between Great Britain and the United States, following squarely

the official foreign policy line. *The Times* patted itself on the back in noting often how Americans appreciated the kind of British support that was pouring out of its pages. "Our brothers in blood," "a better understanding" "in the interests of both countries and of the world at large," "cordiality begets cordiality," "some day in some way there may be co-operation on a great scale between England and the United States"—all were recurrent themes in the newspaper.⁵³

Such entente solicited unfriendly comments from the continent, where editors at *Corriere*, for example, wondered whether "Uncle Sam" would make of the Philippines a present to "comrade John Bull."⁵⁴ The Anglo-American understanding seemed nothing more than the definitive proof that America, tired of its uniqueness, was returning to the fold of the fatherland: "The politics that the two most democratic countries of the old and the new world, England and the United States, proclaim at this hour is called imperialism: that is, if words still have a meaning, the exercise of force at the service of the spirit of conquest and domination. After this lesson in fact, good luck to who would repeat after Montesquieu that 'democracy is founded on virtue.'"⁵⁵ An imperialist America meant an America that could no longer be the ideal model of a nation of European heritage that dared dream of itself as different from the old powers.

Gone seemed the admiration that, however ambivalent, had made Europeans hold the United States to a unique place in the history of nations. No longer a model to be imitated, America was now a competitor to be feared. The belief that America's power was exceptional because it was fueled by ideals was shedding its vestiges of approval. One thing only was remaining of the long-held European belief that America's power was different—it was not any longer better, but it was still stronger than that of ordinary powers. The foreign policy consequences are vastly different—a unique power promotes admiration, even longing, as well as deference, but an overwhelming power only breeds proportionately stronger fear and resistance.

In all its exaggeration, this description of McKinley on the eve of war, which will recur in almost identical terms to define President George W. Bush after September 11, shows just how exceptional U.S. power was considered: "The future is a secret of God and McKinley, His stock broker. . ."⁵⁶ Hardly a stronger metaphor of America's mythically powerful status can be imagined than a depiction of the U.S. president as handling God's affairs. God's affairs, one can safely infer, are global in extent—and such, many Europeans worried, was the extent of the Americans' newfound ambition. Abandoning their peaceful isolation, Americans might interpret the Monroe Doctrine, known by the aphorism "America for the Americans," on an improved scale: "The world for the Americans!" as *La Stampa* editors wondered before Congress had

even declared war.⁵⁷ Unstoppable, unbridled power was the defining characteristic of the America that Europe saw undergoing the regrettable transformation from hamlet of democracy to Old-World-styled global player during the Spanish-American War.

Just how invested Europeans were in America's difference is evident in the way a French editor wrote about what Europe had expected the United States could be, before seeing its hopes crushed by the rush to arms: "This war that risks to *dim* the reputation of a *great free democracy* and, at the same time, to push into disaster and into decline a noble, historical nation—thus compromising with one blow the glories of the past and *the hopes of the future*."⁵⁸ The United States might not have a glorious history, but it did hold the promise of a better future—an astonishing statement of faith in the tenets of the American dream. Belief that America should be something special was so strong that Europeans seemed to hold on to the irrational logic that the Americans whose military fervor they chastised were "un-American." Could Americans not see that donning the new mantle of imperial power was regrettable not only for Europeans, who lost a model, but for themselves, who were giving up everything America was founded to be—and especially their freedom? *Le Temps* editors put it best in January 1899:

It is impossible, really, to conceal from oneself that the United States has *bid farewell forever* to that *idyllic era* in which it could do without a permanent army and it could laugh at *the responsibilities* imposed by their international situation to the powers of the western continent. . . . When the evils of militarism that the *founders of the Constitution had wanted to spare their country* will have added themselves to those of the pseudo-parliamentary corruption; when a permanent army, for which there is no place in the federal organization, becoming the predestined instrument of that *imperialism that is latent in every democracy*, will have been manned at every level by the hierarchy of the creatures of those politicians to whom the whole of politics consists in dividing up positions and distributing spoils, *it will be difficult to recognize the traits of the model Republic that the kinds of Laboulay and Bryce do not stop offering to our admiration and our imitation*. . . . We dare saying that there is not a democrat, not a friend of the principles of modern society who does not *deplore bitterly the inoculation of the spirit of conquest and territorial expansion in a democracy up to now peaceful and liberal*. . . . In the bottom of his heart, [McKinley] must feel some anguish the more poignant because it was not foreseen; he must tremble under the burden of a crushing responsibility and wonder if the price of annexation is not too high, if history will not have very justified penalties for those who have launched the Republic of the United States ahead. . . . on this way, alas!, too well-known and populated with the debris of many free governments, of militarism and chauvinism. . . . Mr. McKinley will be able to *bid farewell for the free America to the era of peace, of goodwill, of reforms, of economy, of domestic progress and of self-government*.⁵⁹

Even English editors marveled at the regrettable identity change sweeping the United States: “[The war’s] chief indirect result—the probable launching of the United States upon a course of the ‘expansion’ which the wisdom of their founders forswore—will be truly lamentable.” Some castigated Americans’ excitement for “gaining an enlarged experience, as if they were not *depriving* themselves of an *infinitely rarer and finer* experience in the *unbroken maintenance* of the foreign policy of Washington.”⁶⁰ It seems ironic that Europeans would become the defenders of the U.S. founders’ intent against the completely incompatible new “course” Washington wanted—at a time when virtually all European powers, old and newer, made of expansionism their credo. In everyone’s interest, they defended a simpler, pure—if “coarser”—America from the more European, imperialist America that they saw developing:

One traces everywhere in Continental comments upon the war a feeling that the United States, with *their foreign policy conducted in public, their half-trained Foreign Ministers and Ambassadors, their coarse way of talking about human liberty as if it mattered*, are a public nuisance that may go to great lengths and ought somehow to be abated. . . . It is their freedom from *such cares and such acquisitions* that made the position of the United States *more enviable than that of any Great Power in the world*, and it would be better for them than any actual alliance with a power cumbered as we are with *complicated cares of empire* that once this Cuban adventure is creditably over they should, *if possible*, restore to their foreign policy *something of the simplicity it has lost*.⁶¹

Even before the war, Europeans were incredulous that the United States, “belonging to what may be called the inner circle of the civilized world,” would embark on such a drastic change in policy or that it would “throw itself crazily in a politics of adventures.”⁶² Ojetti said that “a century’s worth of traditions was boldly renounced” as Americans were “obsessed by the illusory greed of obtaining in a month all the military glory of old, hated Europe.” Even those who appeared willing to accept the justification offered for going to war, namely freedom for Cuba, seem to have considered it too meager a reward for “a new departure in United States policy.”⁶³ The Washington correspondent of *The Times*—whose editors believed in the righteousness of “extending civilization”—argued that in all the turmoil of 1898, “the violated Constitution of the United States” “hardly” had any defender: “We are too busy attending to the rights of the oppressed Cubans to look after our own. . . . While we are engaged in that inspiring operation known as making history, what does it matter if we unmake the Constitution?”⁶⁴ Even the Monroe Doctrine, once “essentially harmless,” had been wrung out through “jingo versions and perversions” into a worldview that was a bit too “elastic.”⁶⁵

After the war, Europeans thought the identity of the formerly peaceful Uncle Sam had changed forever, and that the consequences would also

affect internal U.S. politics. As evidence, they offered the attempt to deny the vote to African Americans as it was denied to Cubans and Filipinos:

Only a few months ago Americans would have been shocked at the suggestion that [George] Washington was old-fashioned when he laid down the principles that all men were equal, and that Governments derived their powers from the consent of the governed. Now it might almost be said that he is a marked man in America who extends to Washington more than good-humoured toleration. . . . If ever an Imperialistic policy was forced upon a nation, it has been forced upon the United States.⁶⁶

That policy was “understood only in the vaguest way by the American people,” apparently because it was so different from what America was supposed to be about.⁶⁷ It was too hard to dismiss entirely the notion that there was something inherently good about the United States—so much so that, contrary to their own reports of the crowds’ enthusiasm for war, writers said imperialism had to be “forced” on Americans. There lay the appalling consequence of the war, one with repercussions worldwide—not the demise of the Spanish empire, but “the apparently definitive adoption of a new imperial and military policy by the United States.”⁶⁸

By January 1899, the United States was dealing with the first real field test of the new imperial policy—insurgency in the Philippines, where people objected to American occupation as much as they had to Spanish rule. There could be no more blatant proof that Americans, once the defenders of freedom, the banner-carriers of modernity and democracy, had become suddenly the oppressors: “For the first time in history the United States will have to shoot down men of an alien race who honestly believe that they are fighting for freedom and the interests of their country,” wrote editors at *The Manchester Guardian* in January 1899.⁶⁹ One would expect the British of the 1890s to be the last to be shocked by what was then common colonialist practice—yet they were, because, of all nations, the exceptional United States should not be carrying itself in this way.

Well before the war began, the irony of bringing freedom through war and occupation did not escape even those who approved the alleged humanitarian motives of ending Spanish rule overseas. Some English editors said that Americans called “good Americanism” what in England was simply known as imperialism.⁷⁰ To McKinley’s professions of acting solely for humanitarian purposes, English writers retorted, “This is not wholly believed in Europe.”⁷¹ French editors were blunter: “[Americans] still hide their interest under the mask of humanitarian sentiments,” wrote *Le Figaro*, adding that “grand principles of humanity and civilization” were used to justify “the aggression” only “to allow McKinley to look better in front of the two worlds.”⁷² Ojetti sarcastically wrote imperialists were looking for “populations to dominate, *pardon*, to make worthy of *self government* and Christian civilization.” The Germans spared no criticism

either: "Americans pride themselves in being humanitarian [but] are shown in an ambiguous light"; bringing war to calm an insurrection was akin to "replacing Satan with Beelzebub" and therefore "not a demonstration of great humanity," *Kölnische Zeitung* editors said, adding that "Uncle Sam's logic" seemed to have "suffered."⁷³ "Seventy million free Americans do not make millions of enslaved Filipinos happy," they trenchantly concluded.⁷⁴

Some Britons thought that as a matter of fact they would—and welcomed the United States to share Great Britain's burden in bringing civilization to the primitive world. *The Times'* Washington correspondent wrote that Americans had "a fixed belief" "in the self-governing powers of all races" "under the protecting arm of the United States."⁷⁵ After the war, Americans in Cuba were "giving to its distracted and impoverished population the blessings of strong and orderly administration"—the "best thing that could happen to [Cubans]," who suffered from "the sheer lack of the habits of thought which are natural and spontaneous among *English-speaking peoples*." One could only hope "that their political education will be rapid and complete, since we may be sure that the Americans will not tolerate, any more than we should in their place, the impatience of law which a long and demoralizing struggle has engendered in a population *never accustomed to government according to Anglo-Saxon notions*."⁷⁶ Aside from the explicit racism, something subtler underlies the insistence that "English-speaking peoples" share the bonds of civilization. Great Britain saw that America had become a power to contend with, so it was doing its best to attract these new conquerors to its side and prevent a coalition with some other European power. European equilibrium was compromised by America's entry on the world stage and, in the realignments that would surely follow, American benevolence was the ultimate prize.

The other European powers saw the eyes Great Britain was making at Uncle Sam, and that only reinforced the impression that this new America was a threat to Europe—"the new unknown that appears on the political horizon and is full of grave consequences."⁷⁷ Beyond its blossoming friendship with London, what made American power such a foreboding unknown was the perfect nonchalance with which Washington kept steering into a course of collision with the Old World. At the beginning of the war, *Corriere's* London correspondent, in an article entitled "Europe against America," wrote that "Europe should renounce being the nucleus of world civilization if it allowed such cynicism of American demagoguery to triumph! . . . Everybody believes that Europe will be able to prevail over America."⁷⁸ Alienating Europe by going to war would show America the extent of its "responsibility"; "Americans will no doubt observe that there is little sympathy and even little toleration for them anywhere" except in the British Empire.⁷⁹ Americans themselves might not have been prepared for Europe's reaction or even for their own change in policy,

since they had to start a colonial apparatus from scratch: "How the United States will manage the changes due to their entering in world politics remains to be seen."⁸⁰ Europe would "regret" not having prevented "so peremptory and direct an interference by the United States in colonial affairs" and thus "forbidding the creation in the New World of a military, sea and land power that has in itself all the moral, intellectual and material elements to develop, grow and make the voice of its cannon heard in the twentieth century also in Europe's affairs."⁸¹

Where they had seen the beacon to the world's downtrodden masses, Europeans now saw the mouth of a cannon pointed squarely at them. The future of U.S.-European relations seemed to be frighteningly combative. In a *Le Figaro* editorial titled "Europe's duty," Denis Guibert wrote that Europe had "duties to fulfill, perhaps even precautions to take" because "Europe's interests are in play."⁸² It was "to be feared that Americans, inebriated by their small success," would prey on all European colonies in their hemisphere, German editors wrote shortly after the war started; when it was over, they warned, "Nations with colonies, learn from [the war], because the next time it will be you. . . . So, British cousins, do not even think of making the jingoes angry, because they do not kid around."⁸³ Once peacefully isolated, Americans had only whetted their appetite with the war as, as the adage goes, "appetite comes by eating. . . ." ⁸⁴ Ojetti wrote that he left a Fourth of July speech by a U.S. congressman illustrating his country-by-country plan for "world liberation" "before [the Congressman] could get to Europe": These Americans really seemed unstoppable. In the "shock of the confrontation between what the new-comers are, and what we do not know how to be," Ojetti felt like a shipwrecked man holding onto the "only lifeline" of European artistic beauty.

The compounding of American power with the superior ideals the United States was supposed to incarnate created a surprisingly early sense of European decline in front of the overseas threat. Ojetti, for example, described with these words his departure from the United States: "I felt a bit of the exile's bitterness as I left the magnificent land of victory." The Old World seems to have already taken a step back when juxtaposed to "the magnificent land of victory." The sense of being exiled from something grander had political undertones: As early as 1898, some Europeans feared not only attack but also neglect if that newly powerful Washington turned away from them and rescinded the kind of kinship ties the British so incessantly pointed out. *Le Figaro* editors wrote: "It would be deeply regrettable that the United States, whatever the consequences of the current war might be, would find in it a sufficient pretext for taking away from us their friendship and slacken the ties that bind our countries."⁸⁵

That Americans did not care about Europe, or what Europeans thought of them or of the war, was taken for granted, and it highlights the fear that the giant across the Atlantic would cast its shadow over Europe.

Americans had a reputation for blatant, almost instinctive, disregard for the rules of international law and diplomacy: To believe in breaking international treaties, for example, "was truly a bit on the strong side, certainly not for a full-blooded Yankee, but for all those to whom law and rights mean something."⁸⁶ The United States had a tradition of being blissfully ignorant of European affair and customs: "Trained diplomats are scarce in America," and even the Secretary of State "does not know Europe nor know how his official acts would impress the European mind."⁸⁷ While urging Europe "to get out of a passive attitude," some dejectedly argued there was no point in "duping ourselves": Any attempt by European powers to repeat "the pompous and empty demarche" against war at the White House, given "the state of U.S. people's spirit," would only be a "solemn diplomatic comedy."⁸⁸ America's ingrained disregard for Europe was so taken for granted that a Washington correspondent for *The Times* marveled at "the *new-born* conviction in the minds of many Senators that European friendship and respect are a desirable thing to have."⁸⁹

Still, getting Americans to understand that they would not be able to enter world affairs without getting entangled with other powers seemed an uphill road. Speaking of a possible alliance between Great Britain and the United States, *The Times'* New York correspondent warned that it was "imperfectly understood in England how slowly the American mind is likely to move in that direction—the official mind slowest of all."⁹⁰ Others were taken by surprise by how tactful the United States had become in handling its new government of the Philippines: "It is understood here [in America] that the question is one in which other powers than the United States have an interest," and so, "The Americans, it will be observed with satisfaction, are displaying a laudable anxiety so to conduct the war as to avoid needless annoyance and anxiety to friendly powers."⁹¹ But to some, such new willingness to mind the niceties of diplomacy was a sign that America's statesmen were losing their "pure" nature: It was the "occasionally impolite downrightness of despatches" that had most "grate[d] on the nerves of the statesman of the European Concert."⁹²

From the jumble of contradictions with which Europeans approached warring America, one certainty stands out clearly: The United States they thought they knew was changing from the "model Republic" that represented the best "hope for the future" to an Old-World-like power that had an exceptional might to impose its ways globally, disregarding Europe. This editorial from the *Frankfurter Zeitung* says it best:

That the Americans would make war in 120 years of existence only twice and because they had to, that is *unheard* of. . . . Of the United States it is said that they violated in a bad way international rights and against them there is a long line of supporters of people's rights who do not remember that the

development of European political and social history is a continuous violation of these rights and have forgotten how many changes they themselves defended. Truly the hypocrisy attributed to Americans has many representatives in Europe too. . . . One should rejoice that in the world *there is still a people* to whom humanity is not an empty word and that in anger still takes up the sword to eliminate evils. Americans never worried too much about diplomatic questions. *Wild as their land is wild*, they make their own opinion, their own politics and their own diplomatic code; *economically and psychologically they have all that is needed* for this. They go forward on the road they believe they must travel and *they do not care at all about what Europe says*. . . . If the Americans have easy victories, they could attempt more *liberations*. For that reason, it is very important that Europe, while staying perfectly neutral, follows *very carefully* the Americans. . . . The law of moderation is valid for Americans, as for all humankind, because those who do not obey this law have always lost. If Americans do not obey this law, *not even being Americans will save them* from the disastrous consequences of their *exuberance*.⁹³

First, the writer defends America's unique place in history, arguing U.S. peacefulness is "unheard of," and then he praises American progressivism, turning the accusation of hypocrisy on its head. He even finds something good to say about the Americans' almost quixotic willingness to make their own rules and fight for humanity; power (spiritually and in resources) permits that, just as it allows for not caring about the Old World. In that, the writer foresees a threat to Europe, especially if Americans "attempt" to "free" more peoples. Finally, the most significant sentence in the editorial says Americans should not get inebriated by their own success because, if they are too "exuberant," not even their being American will spare them consequences. The implicit presumption that being American could be considered a safeguard against the universal laws of history crystallizes how Europe saw the United States at the dawn of the twentieth century: Unique, powerful, and regrettably intent on building its global identity on a new combination of the two.

At a pivotal moment in U.S. history, Europe looked with new interest across the Atlantic and saw a rapidly changing United States. Virtually all descriptions of things American, from battlefield reports to features about mountain climbing, were imbued with a sense of America's uniqueness. The "experiment in democracy" was freer, more liberal, more youthful, more vibrant, more economically successful, more blissfully unconcerned with the rest of the world and its "cares" than any other powerful country. Its founders had set the country on a course unlike what history had seen before and the New World found itself far better off than all the other Great Powers. Certainly Europeans found faults in America: They accused it of being hypocritical, full of class and racial inequality and rampant materialism, incapable of the subtleties of diplomatic conduct that a history of uncomfortable neighborliness had taught old

Europe. But those very accusations, stemming from people who themselves were cheerily engaged in a rush to capitalism and colonialism, only underscore how deeply they felt America's difference, its exceptionality.

With dismay bordering on disbelief, Europeans saw Americans throw all that away with the Spanish-American War. An America with overseas colonies, much as the racist logic of the time allowed it to be judged for the good of the colonized, was a fundamentally different America, and on this the European perspective of America broke with a substantial part of American political sentiment. What Senator Beveridge had called in 1898 the "empire of our principles" could not be extended globally because, in Europeans' mind, to do so would be to abandon forever those very principles of freedom, democracy, self-government, and to adopt instead the Old-World ways. Europeans did not entirely let go of their lasting belief that America was exceptional, but now that belief stood bare of its idealistic connotation and focused on the particular strength of U.S. power. While America could benefit from being thought of as endowed with a uniquely better might, it was damaged by the new perception that its power was uniquely dangerous. Europeans, who had believed Americans unstoppable in their quest for freedom, democracy, and prosperity, now saw their power-grabbing as unstoppable. It was not long before America the new world power came to be perceived as a threat, discussed in fearsome, often martial ways. Much as Europeans might have aspired to "being American" in the sense of imitating an ideal, they found infinitely less appealing the prospect of becoming Americanized in the way Filipinos and the Puerto Ricans had.

Seeing the United States as the incarnation of an ideal had projected in Europe's mind a larger-than-life America. During the Spanish-American War, all the grandness that seemed to remain was the naked power Washington was showing. "Not even being American" had saved the United States from embarking, with characteristic energy and enthusiasm, on a course new for itself but well-trodden by the Old World. The only open question remained where *these* Americans would stop—whether either conscience pangs for having abandoned the original American ways or Europe's containment efforts would succeed in setting the United States back on the right track. Paradoxically, Europeans seemed to defend their America against this new persona that they found unworthy of what the New World should be. Certainly the idea of having this new, insouciant competitor also struck in Europe's heart the more pragmatic fear that the old powers would not be able to keep ahead. But that very fear, largely unjustified by the geopolitical situation, shows how deep the belief of America's exceptionality lay.

Americans would have been surprised—many thought that inaugurating the era of the "expansion of democracy" was the logical step in establishing the American dream everywhere. Europeans did not buy it, and

regretted the new American identity. In the self-congratulatory, ingratiating way characteristic of Great Britain's approach to the United States in 1898, *The Times* editors had written: "It may be observed that Englishmen and Americans speak the same language...and that this is a very important factor in international relations."⁹⁴ The way Europeans talked about the United States during the Spanish-American War, however, casts doubt on whether, by early 1899, Europeans and Americans really "spoke the same language" when they defined what the United States was about.

CHAPTER 5

Danger Looms

While Europeans pondered whether the exceptional America they had dreamed about would survive the Spanish-American War, which they thought of as Washington's first Old-World colonialist adventure, Europe's diplomats and policymakers focused on a twist on the same dilemma, namely just how great a danger a United States becoming like an old Great Power would pose. The French Ambassador in Washington wrote to Paris that the United States was "invoking the law of the strongest, pure and simple" and that approach made it a clear and immediate danger to Europe's worldwide interests.¹ Diplomats in Washington and policymakers in France, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy all argued, either explicitly or implicitly, that the United States was a grave threat and that all measures should be taken to prevent it from becoming the dominant influence in Europe. Their tactics differed—London bent over backward to sweet-talk Washington into an alliance, while continental Europe, careful never to be overtly hostile, tried to patch together an unlikely defensive coalition. But the overarching goal was the same: Do something to stop "these Americans" before it was too late. It makes no difference if European voices were bellicose, subdued, or even meek—the reality was that America scared Europe's ruling elites.

The extraordinary aspect of the "American peril" was that it had Europe quivering before it was a fact. At the outset of the Spanish-American War, the United States' actual position in world affairs was anything but established compared to the long imperial history of the Great Powers, especially Great Britain. And yet Europe's policymakers repeatedly insisted that none of their moves should unduly irritate Washington, unless such tiptoeing cost Europe its dignity—a strange caution for the world's Great Powers to bestow on a newcomer, and one that betrays how mighty America was already believed to be. The United States might be new at imperial war, Europeans thought, but chances were it would not take long to emerge as a global threat because it was immensely wealthy, modern, full of energy and self-confidence, happily nonchalant about the niceties of diplomacy. Before the United States had even launched the 1898 war, let alone conquered any colonial possession, the Portuguese government panicked that it simply would not be able to hold onto the Azores if Washington took it as a whim to seize the Atlantic islands

"temporarily or definitively."² The strength of an idea—America is an exceptional power and thus undefeatable—had antedated the reality of the United States' world power and predisposed Europe to face it with wide-eyed fear.

All European governments tried to prevent the United States from going to war against Spain, but their efforts resulted in one feeble, ineffective demarche and an aborted one to U.S. President William McKinley. The first attempt was a message redacted by the six European powers (the four studied here plus Russia and Austria) dated April 6, 1898. Before presenting it to McKinley, the ambassadors showed it to U.S. Secretary of State William Day, who had been contacted by the British Ambassador to verify the United States would not object to such a move. Day called the message that asked for more negotiations "good, very good"—small wonder, since the language from what were then considered the major world powers, on behalf of one of their own, to a nascent power could hardly have been meeker, more apologetic, or less antagonistic: "The Powers do not doubt that the *humanitarian and purely disinterested character* of these representations will be *fully recognized and appreciated* by the American nation."³ The one concession to pride European diplomats allowed themselves was writing the document in French, accompanied by an English translation—another measure of the importance attached to language in international relations, as *The Times* editors had argued.

After Spain, in a last-minute attempt to avert a U.S. attack, offered an immediate armistice to Cuban rebels, the Ambassadors of the six European powers redacted another note to McKinley, but their governments did not allow them to present it. The European representatives were keenly aware of their lack of influence on Washington's plans and, by default, global affairs, much as they endeavored to have the people at home think otherwise: "It is thought by the representatives of the great Powers that the *biggest publicity* will have to be given to that note, to release the moral responsibility of the civilized world from [the] aggression."⁴ The second demarche was nothing more than a publicity coup, and perhaps even Americans would appreciate the nice try, as French Ambassador Jules Cambon wrote in a confidential note to French Foreign Minister Gabriel Hanotaux, because Americans always valued "a frank and generous attitude."⁵ He later reiterated that Americans were "insolent" only "with the feeble and the hesitating. They appreciate, they respect, they love willpower"—little of which European diplomats actually displayed.⁶

Accepting their inevitable defeat, the diplomats sought to avoid alienating the United States, exhibiting a carefulness that borders on sheepishness. Great Britain and Germany, the great maritime powers, wanted a share in the spoils of the war, and the British government made the most successful effort to ingratiate itself with both the American government

and people. Other European powers rightly interpreted the profusion of British statements of kinship and common interests and the sanguine rhetoric of Anglo-Saxon transatlantic bonds as defensive measures against this new threat across the Atlantic. France and Italy, carefully straddling a changing system of protective alliances, never dared to transform their sympathies for Spain into actions against the United States and its ally in spirit, Great Britain. France, however, did become the main interlocutor between the United States and Spain by acting as intermediary in the peace negotiations that culminated in the peace treaty, signed in Paris.

A large part of the fear Europeans felt stemmed from the fact that the United States had caught them by surprise because it was not supposed to start on the path of imperialism. As Cambon marveled, Americans “want to launch themselves outside their continent”—“for the first time, they too,” despite all talk of U.S. uniqueness. “This continent that seemed immense, they have today almost completely drained it; it can no longer satisfy their activity or their thirst for speculation; one can no longer reap there billions unlike a short time ago; one must go look for them abroad. Cuba will be *the first step in this new way*,” the French Ambassador in Berlin wrote on the eve of the Spanish-American War.⁷

Sooner rather than later, this “new way” would bring Washington to meddle in the affairs of all of Europe, not just the declining Spanish Empire, because Europeans saw the war not as an isolated incident but as the beginning of the end of America as they knew it. In March 1898, British Colonial Minister Joseph Chamberlain said he had asked the German ambassador whether “the policy of non-interference in European affairs” that had been the rule “since the time of Washington” would last, and the ambassador had replied “Certainly not. Before long it must be changed.”⁸ No European policymaker doubted that the Spanish-American War was a radical change, even a contradiction, in the typical line of American policy and in the founders’ intent. If Americans thought they could set out to free Cubans and Filipinos from Spain and then settle back into their peaceful isolation, they were badly deluded—getting entangled in the web of colonialism amounted to a point of no return that officially signaled “the adoption by the United States of a policy of expansion and conquest.”⁹

Before the official declaration of war, Cambon still believed that the U.S. government would at least try to “respect the souvenirs of Washington’s policy”—much as a non-interventionist policy was already a souvenir.¹⁰ Immediately after the Spanish defeat at Manila Bay, Cambon abandoned that hope: Americans were set on their intent “to abandon the traditions of Washington and inaugurate an imperial policy,” so that “the right of conquest seems to have become for Washington’s heirs the basis of public law.”¹¹ In a ministerial note, Hanotaux wrote that American officials were still saying they had no “fancy of territorial annexation and that that was

contrary to their principles"—but then, when asked if they wanted to annex the Philippines, they replied they did not "think" so, Hanotaux emphasized sarcastically.¹² European mistrust for America's professions of a new brand of missionary imperialism ran deep. Writing that the rumor in the United States was that Americans would not stop with acquiring the Philippines and Spanish colonies in the Caribbean but might reach over to Spanish possessions much nearer Europe, Cambon quipped: "What would it be if they had not declared they did not want to make any conquests?"¹³

Much like the European publics who had made dire predictions about this new America, policymakers went so far as to ominously argue that the United States' invulnerability would be a victim of the new policy and that the United States would remain "unassailable at the bottom of its continent for a little while still."¹⁴ Such a drastic change of policy would alter the very essence of America, because "mixing in the United States with universal politics" would "profoundly revolutionize their domestic politics."¹⁵

Americans themselves seemed to Europeans unprepared for the turn of events, "faced with difficulties that exceed their expectations."¹⁶ Sheer "insolence" sustained America's optimism and its confidence in emerging unscathed from the Spanish-American conflict, although it could be hoped that the difficulties faced in the Philippines would make the U.S. government take another, harder look at "the path they set out on a bit lightly."¹⁷ Still, Americans had set out on the path of colonialism and there would be no turning back—this was the new America, imperialist "*bon gré mal gré*" ("willing or not").¹⁸ The irony is inescapable. Americans thought their Providence-guided Manifest Destiny made the country the bearer of civilization to an inferior world, but Europeans saw the United States almost unwittingly drawn by the war into the global arena and destined to become like other Powers, not to stand apart as a beacon for people of other nations.¹⁹ The 1898 war was nothing short of "the revolution" that carried America "toward a new destiny."²⁰

That destiny was not the glorious liberator of oppressed peoples, but the pursuer of an "Annexionsprogramms" (an imperialist policy) that was not new at all but rather resembled "a lot the one the English put forward to maintain their [colonial] troops."²¹ Forget about the professions of U.S. exceptionality—Washington was following London, the undisputed imperial superpower of the time, and becoming just like the Old World in its quest for colonial aggrandizement. Anglo-American rapprochement was a foregone conclusion, especially given the commonalities between the two countries as opposed to continental Europe. French and Italian diplomats noted that American and British interests in the Far East were "identical" and speculated that the United States

might offer to share Spanish spoils with Great Britain.²² British diplomats, among them Lord Salisbury, who was both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, also discussed that the United States might cede the Philippines to Great Britain.²³ The British director of military intelligence argued that the new U.S. global presence was “sufficient to modify very materially the strategical position both naval and military, of Great Britain.”²⁴ Just as many British editors were doing, Great Britain’s policymakers put the shared civilizing mission of the Anglo-Saxon race at the basis of that community of interests they hoped to establish between Americans and themselves.

The British Ambassador in Paris, Edmund Monson, wrote of “the sympathy which has been unmistakably shown in Great Britain for the humanitarian grounds on which the United States declared war.”²⁵ In November 1898, Chamberlain argued that “cordial understanding” between American citizens and the subjects of the British Crown would be “a guarantee for the peace and the civilization of the world.”²⁶ Underneath the humanitarian veneer, Great Britain had a very material advantage to gain if it could win over the United States to its side and perhaps even convince it to share a few war spoils with its new ally. After the war, the other Powers also hastened to acknowledge and ingratiate U.S. might. Asking Ambassador Saverio Fava to get Washington’s support for Italian negotiations with China over a naval station there, Italian Foreign Minister Felice Canevaro wrote: “We trust the United States will greet with pleasure a *friendly* nation contributing to the opening of China to trade and world civilization.”²⁷ The dispatch was sent in February 1899—less than a year after the start of the Spanish-American War, a major European Power wanted the United States to approve of how it was conducting its foreign policy, a remarkable sign of just how powerful America was already considered.

But nobody played the chords of alliance and kinship more successfully or more jarringly than Chamberlain. In a May 1898 speech in Birmingham, he spoke of Americans as “our kinsmen”:

*They speak our language, they are bred of our race; . . . their feeling, their interest, in the cause of humanity and the peaceful development of the world, are identical with ours. . . . The closer, the more cordial, the fuller and the more definite, these arrangements [with the United States] are with the consent of both people, the better it will be for both and for the world. And I even go so far as to say that, terrible as war may be, even war itself would be cheaply purchased if in a great and noble cause the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack should wave together. . . it is one of the most satisfactory results of Lord Salisbury’s policy that at the present time these two great nations understand each other better than they have ever done since, more than a century ago, they were separated by the blundering of a British Government.*²⁸

The themes of common language and common cause to shoulder the "white man's burden" and benefit "the world" are crucial to his speech, but Chamberlain takes his point much further. He first calls Great Britain and the newcomer United States "these two great nations," forgoing the typical condescension and instead putting both on an equal footing. Then, stunningly, he suggests that America was more powerful than the British Empire by arguing that Great Britain should be on America's side at all costs, including war, and that, if ever the two nations did not "understand" each other, it was the fault of London's "blundering" (by which he apparently meant Great Britain's fighting to retain all its colonies in North America).

Nothing but a great fear of American power in the face of European decline can account for such statements. Chamberlain was going out of his way to seduce the United States in a bold defensive and preemptive move. That is how he justified himself: Attacked by the opposition in the House of Commons in June 1898, he wondered if there was "a possibility in the future that Anglo-Saxon liberty and Anglo-Saxon interest may hereafter be menaced by a great combination of other Powers? Yes, Sir, I think that such a thing is possible, and, in that case, . . . I hope that blood will be found to run thicker than water."²⁹ As long as the powerful Americans fell for making British interests their own, Great Britain was safe. The most powerful imperialist nation at the dawn of the twentieth century looked with deference across the Atlantic, invoking common blood and common interests to prevent Anglo-Saxon conflicts and to side with the likely winner in possible future global conflicts. America was a mere rookie in global affairs and already London's money was on Washington as the future world champion.

Chamberlain's attitude did not go unnoticed in diplomatic circles across the Channel. Italy's ambassador in London wrote to Canevaro that Great Britain had shown "great scruple not to displease the United States."³⁰ Léon Geoffray, the French representative in London, said that British politicians were "rivaling" each other "to assure their brothers on the other side of the Atlantic of 'the immense satisfaction'" about American victories.³¹ On Chamberlain's speech in particular, he spared no sarcasm: "To have heard proclaimed for years, as Mr. Chamberlain did not miss an opportunity to do, that England was the grandest, the most powerful, the first nation in the world, and to learn all of a sudden from the mouth of the same government man, that he needs allies to maintain its position in the universe, that is a discovery that is not precisely made to satisfy minds as precise as are those of the English." Geoffray said that such rhetoric underscored "preoccupations" that the United States would become a danger to Great Britain because of its wealth-based power. Any resistance in British aristocratic circles to alliance with the United States, Geoffray said, was due to "the disdain that they feign for the *Yankees, people who*

are little sophisticated, but rich, and who, thanks to the consideration that great fortunes enjoy here, are imposing themselves more and more in the world."³²

Part of that U.S. lack of sophistication made America into a peculiarly dangerous competitor: America's "law of the strongest" seemed destined to prevail over the niceties of European diplomatic rules. There was something natural or even supernatural to U.S. power that made it into an immediate fact: Even before war was declared, the French ambassador sardonically equated U.S. and divine power by stating that "as everybody knows, the Anglo-Saxons are the mandate holders" of "God's secrets."³³ Despite its newness, the American might seemed to European policymakers the inescapable factor of international politics in the dawning twentieth century. With the same exceedingly cautious tone used in the ambassadors' demarche to Washington, German Foreign Minister Bernhard von Bülow recommended to the German Emperor that Germany must only approach the Spanish-American question jointly with all other European Powers, so as "not to arouse distrust among the other Powers and *even* in America itself"—"even" the United States had become of concern, because Germany could ill afford to incur in its displeasure.³⁴ The British were so concerned that the military intelligence director, worried about the "distant risk" of war against the United States, found that swatting aside an international treaty to allow the United States full control of the proposed Nicaraguan canal would be a perfectly adequate quid pro quo "to receive a treatment calculated to cement the ties and promote the intercourse which should bind us together, and which *is now desirable more than ever* to maintain on a secure basis."³⁵

By December 1898, the war had made one point clear—American power, new and unsophisticated as it might be, was not to be trifled with. In fact, good relations with the New World were more desirable than ever. Von Bülow's note to his office during the summer of 1898 was lapidary: "A friendly relation with America is for us of the highest value."³⁶ After the war, now that Germany and America were strange bedfellows in Asia, he hoped the two governments would realize that their "unavoidable relations" should "turn out as friendly as possible" in the interests of both countries.³⁷ In early 1899, during the dispute over the British, American and German joint protectorate of Samoa, von Bülow told his ambassador in London to "negotiate with America directly without letting England know anything about it" and he told the German Foreign Office to "handle America more cautiously than England"—hardly an assertion of British prestige in world affairs and a statement of the extraordinary importance attached to the newcomer United States.³⁸

What especially grated on Europeans' nerves was the attitude of entitlement Washington was showing—not only was the new Power behaving like one of the Great ones, but it was perfectly nonchalant about its new

role. In the summer of 1898, possibly discouraged by the deaf American ears on which German sweet talk about sharing war spoils was falling, German Ambassador to the United States Holleben warned the Foreign Office that "Americans' selfishness finds its limit only in its vanity."³⁹ Early in 1899, the French Ambassador in Berlin, Noailles, similarly wrote that Washington was trying to "keep the momentum of a nation that believes it is permitted everything."⁴⁰ Europeans too, however, believed that America would get whatever it wanted. At the beginning of May, Cambon predicted that, "Judging from the way things are going, the Pacific will become an American Ocean"—this when the United States had no single possession yet in the Pacific, since Americans had defeated the Spanish fleet in the Manila Bay but had not landed in the Philippines.⁴¹ Still, Cambon believed that American expansionism would "develop beyond measure" as the war wore on.⁴² Nor was America gracious to the defeated: On the conditions the White House demanded for peace, Cambon referred French Foreign Minister Delcassé to the words the Spanish representative used to define the United States: A "vanquisher determined to go to the bottom of its advantages."⁴³ Such a new power was squarely a threat that Europe had to brace itself for:

This country here will happily abandon itself to the spirit of conquest; but however big its ambitions might be, however stunning its successes against the poor Spain, it still does not have at all the apparatus or the forces that will allow it to sustain this character. It has set foot on a terrain where interests other than those of English ambitions can be found to be involved, and perhaps it is allowed to *hope that continental Europe will know to unite itself to put in place a far-sighted and conservative policy.*⁴⁴

Aside from the tone of disdain in calling the United States "ce pays-ci" (this country here) and its new global role a "personnage" (a character in the literary sense), what makes that French diplomatic dispatch striking is the shrill note of danger. The United States might not know what it is getting involved in, but Europe should hurry to use this lack of preparedness to its advantage while it still can. At a time when talk of a European Union would have seemed absurd, a French diplomat was already urging the continent to unite and ward off danger from across the Atlantic. The German Ambassador in Vienna put it even more strongly, arguing for a "joint protection of the colonial possessions of the European Powers against overseas aggression."⁴⁵ Even at this very early stage of U.S. global assertion, the American conqueror was apparently so fearsome that Europeans worried they might not be able to contain it individually. Another German diplomat called it "an urgent duty for the continental states to seek a basis on which, with or without or even against England, they may be able to withstand the aggressive commercial policy of the

New World."⁴⁶ But Von Bülow cautioned on the war's eve that a united Europe could backfire and provoke the United States: "It might occur" to Americans "to interfere in *European* affairs at some future date" ("not improbably," the German Emperor added in the margin) "and this could not be permitted."⁴⁷

And yet it was the Americans who had laid the "first germ of the future union" of the Great Powers when they had abandoned their traditional policy of noninterference and adopted the menacing worldview worthy of "Monroe's pupil."⁴⁸ Of course, it was not the original Monroe doctrine that bothered Europeans, but the updated, imperial "the world for the Americans" version. Cambon, referring to the theory that a British diplomat had suggested the original 1820s formulation of "America for the Americans," commented: "I do not know that England has not had sometimes the occasion to regret that pretty invention."⁴⁹ He also told Hanotaux that even British Ambassador to the United States Julian Pauncefote was "troubled about the future if the events will bring the *action* of the United States to Europe's side."⁵⁰ Less than a month later, in July 1898, Cambon said that Europe might be attacked just like Spain "by the ambitions the United States will manifest," and that therefore "all continental Europe is interested in not letting these newcomers come close to her neighborhood."⁵¹ "These newcomers" were showing all signs of having both the power and the "ambition" to become the Old World's global competitor and to get too close for comfort.

To make matters worse, European policymakers feared that no amount of diplomacy would sway Washington, because America had the utmost disregard for everything Europeans said. What before the war could have been a sign that America existed on a different level, unburdened by the cares of the Old World, now was taken as proof that America was becoming so powerful that it could easily afford not to worry about what the rest of the world thought. Americans were thought to know little about Europe to begin with. As a reader of *The Times* complained in a letter to the newspaper, "There is probably no representative body in the world which is *so ignorant* of the political conditions and the internal difficulties of other Powers as the Parliament of the United States."⁵² Even if they had known the rules, they would not have obeyed them for, as Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Visconti Venosta wrote to the Italian ambassador in Washington, "in the United States the criteria employed elsewhere often do not matter."⁵³ Americans were peculiarly "defiant and jealous of their rights" and Europeans resented the "arrogant tone with which now in Washington they talk about everything concerning Europe."⁵⁴ "Americans are so *indifferent* to the considerations that dominate the relations of the different states in Europe" that all European efforts to influence the Spanish-American War were bound to fail.⁵⁵

Faced with the American aloofness to world opinion, the "views of European nations are deprived of all moral influence."⁵⁶ Turning the concept that Europe would, and should, have no influence on the United States into an advantage was a staple of the British strategy of friendly neutrality; Salisbury had said about Cuba in 1896: "We do not consider that we have anything to say in the matter[,] whatever may be the course the United States may decide to pursue."⁵⁷ Just a few days before the start of hostilities, the French Minister found in London the same hesitation "on expressing whatever judgment of the United States' attitude."⁵⁸ In mid-April 1898, Chamberlain argued twice against European moves, suggesting any new demarche to Washington would be "bitterly resented":

The American position may be right or wrong, but it is a very clear one—and to ask them in the name of the Concert of Europe (*absit omen!*) to alter it will probably be regarded by them as offensive. Hitherto public opinion in the States has gratefully recognised that we have been more sympathetic than the other Great Powers—now I fear we shall be held to have thrown in our lot with them.⁵⁹

Chamberlain did not like the prospect that the U.S. government and Americans in general should find European messages promoting peace "offensive" and, worse, that they should see Great Britain as siding with the other European Powers. His reasons were that Americans liked no interference in their affairs, global as they might be; that Great Britain could ill afford to incur American displeasure; and that in any foreseeable disagreement between the United States and Europe, the British would do better to "throw in their lot" with their kinsmen across the Atlantic than with the European Concert—all signs of the strength of U.S. might. As Hanotaux warned Cambon, Great Britain was clearly "making eyes" at the United States.⁶⁰

British diplomats, however, were not alone in assuming that European intervention in Washington's affairs would be not only useless but also dangerously counterproductive because Americans would not tolerate it. The French Ambassador in Washington said long before the war that "all meddling of European Powers in the affairs of America was considered by the United States as threatening and abusive."⁶¹ As early as January/February 1898, Hanotaux expressed to his representatives his "hesitation" at associating France with "a project of such delicate realization" as a demarche, which would certainly entail "our getting in a skirmish with the United States"; in March, he argued that the Great Powers' unanimity was necessary.⁶² Before the war, von Bülow warned the German ambassador in Madrid that, "The Americans are not likely to be impressed by the attitude of the European Powers," and suggested to the Emperor that

Germany "must avoid all appearance of unnecessary partisanship, especially against America."⁶³

In the words of the French ambassador in Berlin, the German government was acting with "extreme prudence"⁶⁴; the Italian government did the same. Echoing the French belief in safety in numbers, Venosta instructed Italian Ambassador Fava in Washington that he should join the European demarche "only in the case it is done by all the representatives of the Great Powers, and that this step appears clearly made for an exclusively humanitarian purpose. It is important that your attitude and language be such as to exclude, on this last point, absolutely every doubt."⁶⁵ The Italian Minister was taking great care that Italy should not even appear to have any political or practical opposition to American moves. Just after the peace was negotiated, the French Foreign Minister was self-congratulatory for having kept America in the dark about the deeply felt European mistrust: He stated that McKinley's thanks were the "striking proof that, not for an instant, was there at the White House disdain for the elevated impulse" that inspired French conduct.⁶⁶

Given their fear that Americans would at best ignore and at worst resent and squash all suggestions against their wishes, it was eminently predictable that all feeble European attempts to keep the peace would turn out to be "utterly useless."⁶⁷ Once war was under way, Europeans shared the belief, expressed by Fava to the new Italian Foreign Minister, that "any friendly mediation for peace by the Powers... would be destined to failure" unless it was based on something the United States had previously agreed to.⁶⁸ The more sweepingly America succeeded on the military field, the more Europeans saw any mediation attempt, friendly as it might be, as just "another failure," and one that their countries "would do better to avoid." Obviously, the more powerful America became, the less inclined Europeans were to cross it. As the war was drawing to an end, German Undersecretary of State Oswald von Richthofen purred that America would understand that Germany only harbored "moderate aspirations."⁶⁹ During the peace negotiations, Canevaro instructed Fava to do his best to eliminate "even just the appearance of disagreement between the Rome and Washington Governments that were and always will be warm friends."⁷⁰

The proud professions of European unity to prevent the United States from becoming too invasive stopped at the water's edge—in dealing explicitly with America, Europeans were willing to go the distance in ingratiating the new power, drawing the line only where they feared they were putting their dignity at risk. The Italian ambassador in Vienna, discussing a trade dispute with Colombia, said Italy should "entrust the matter in the U.S. President's hands, *if it can be done honorably*"—such was the power and the global role of America perceived to be that European diplomats and policymakers feared that, to accommodate the

boundless United States, they might be forced to compromise their honor.⁷¹ In July 1898, when professing the “high value” of friendly U.S.-German relations, the German foreign minister had insisted on the important point of image: “But we may neither in the Americans’ minds nor in anyone else’s let the impression be created that America was intimidating us.”⁷² In early 1899, von Bülow delineated the policy of how to handle Germany’s new “neighbors” in the Pacific:

We have very great interest, therefore, in maintaining good relations with that sensitive nation which is so difficult to deal with. . . . A conflict with the great North American republic, whose self-confidence has been greatly increased by the successes against Spain, would be very unwelcome to us just now. . . . It is therefore of the greatest importance to us that His Majesty’s fleet should with careful tact, but *naturally preserving its dignity to the full*, aim at avoiding any conflict with the American navy and authorities.⁷³

In other words, Germany should take great pains to avoid displeasing America (that exceptionally “self-confident” and “sensitive” nation), although it should not go so far as to risk the loss of German dignity. Europeans assumed that America’s new global role might grow to be so powerful and overwhelming as to actually threaten not only other powers’ interests, but their very dignity. As afraid of the United States as they were, Europeans shared the feeling expressed by the *Kölnische Zeitung*: “Perfectly ready to behave like friends vis-à-vis America, we consider nonetheless that the maintenance of peace should not be achieved at the price of *humiliation*.”⁷⁴

Talk of humiliation at the hands of what had been until then a second-rate, regional power hints at just how keenly European diplomats were aware of what the French ambassador in Lisbon called “the gravity comported by the apparition of the United States” in the middle of the complicated web of diplomacy in Asia and, nobody doubted, also in Europe.⁷⁵ Cambon’s words capture exactly the mood of Europe’s policymakers at the time of the Spanish-American War: “The sentiments that prevail among this nation here, really, make one foresee *that the future reserves to Europe some surprises on the Atlantic side*.”⁷⁶ The first surprise was that America, the “newcomer” power, was turning itself into an Old-World imperial giant that still refused to abide by the diplomatic traditions Europe was used to, and, worst of all, that was strong enough not to care that it was frightening friend and foe alike. And it was not only a particular U.S. administration that European policymakers feared, but the whole country: The “sentiments” of “these people here” were a threat to Europe. Europe’s diplomats, in a very modern recognition of the power of the masses, paid attention to Washington but also kept close tabs on American public opinion. They were already very conscious that public

opinion was a force in their own countries' politics, especially because the latent popular anti-Americanism threatened to dampen the official efforts not to alienate the United States. The British ambassador in Berlin, for example, said that Germany's insistence on maintaining its presence in Samoa was to "give satisfaction to public opinion."⁷⁷

But it was American public opinion that European diplomats talked about in fearful terms—they apparently were more afraid of the strong will of the American masses than of the U.S. government, which they doubted would be able to contain popular furor. After all, the McKinley administration had been a lot more recalcitrant to attack Spain than the jingoistic crowds clamoring for an end to Spanish brutality and for revenge for the U.S.S. Maine. The French ambassador in Madrid had wondered how much longer McKinley would hold out against war despite "fearing to alienate public opinion."⁷⁸ Cambon said that, especially in an election year, Congress would be driven by public opinion, which found "the idea of annexation" "seductive."⁷⁹ The first victory of the war, at Manila Bay, had finally "inebriated" both the government and the people of the United States.⁸⁰ The Italian ambassador in Vienna who had suggested leaving international trade matters in McKinley's hands argued that doing otherwise would "stir up against Italy and Italians not only the U.S. government, but, *which is worse*, American public opinion."⁸¹

What made American public opinion even more dangerous in the eyes of the Great Powers' diplomats was that they found it virulently anti-European, especially if Europe dared contradict America's stance. In some more hesitating discussion of the European demarche, Cambon wrote that it would "provoke the susceptibility of all the people of the Union" and would therefore unite American politicians, precipitating war.⁸² Europeans were convinced that, just like Europeans should unite to fight the American peril, Americans were united against Europe, and in that effort public opinion had the valuable help of the "humbug" of the American press.⁸³

As Cambon sarcastically put it, with another "divine" reference: "The God of armies and the Associated Press favor the United States, and one must yet again admire the politics and the art that have put into play so much false news since the beginning of the war."⁸⁴ The American press, full of statements belittling Europe and of outright falsity, was in itself a transatlantic threat. It was the "aggressive press" that had "put American public opinion in a hostile mood against [Germans]," von Bülow stated in his memorandum warning German diplomats to handle Americans with "careful tact" in Asia.⁸⁵ Cambon also complained that the American press was "very hostile" to the French. With disdain for the press and the American public, he added that, in a country "accustomed to the 'puffing-up' of the newspapers," he would not have attached much importance to press language if public opinion had not been "more

susceptible than it ordinarily is." He then told Hanotaux that several American ladies were circulating a petition for women to no longer buy their wardrobes in Paris—though, he added scornfully, the ladies who signed it probably were not buying in Paris's fashionable district to begin with.⁸⁶ Ineffective as that boycott might have been, Cambon still called the anti-European stance of the American press "really dangerous in a country where [public] opinion is the law."⁸⁷

That policymakers and diplomats should find the power of America's press and public opinion dangerous for Europe encapsulates the change the Spanish-American War was bringing into the way America was perceived abroad at the dawn of the twentieth century. There had been a time when the uniquely unbridled nature of U.S. democracy had been the envy of Europe and the root of the special power America was thought to have. But a mass-governed country with a sudden imperial itch was a frightening *déjà vu*. For the people and the governments of Europe, admiration for U.S. exceptionality was being replaced by exceptional fear of a nation seen to be betraying itself in its quest for power.

The transforming event in that regrettable change in American identity was the Spanish-American War, and the reason why Europeans thought it such a "break in the history of the world" was that they could not fit it into their idea of what America should be—namely, exceptional. The reference work about the United States for educated nineteenth-century Europeans was Alexis de Tocqueville's 1835–1840 two-volume treaty on "Democracy in America." De Tocqueville had said that in America he had seen more than a nation, but "the image of democracy itself," the country where "the people are a master," bound together by a "public spirit" that equated citizens' interests with the country's interests and therefore held them in the highest regard possible. The French observer had written of Americans' love for wealth and conveniences, of their patriotism and religiousness, of their independence and their free press. He had also argued that the lack of dangerous neighbors kept the United States uninvolved in world affairs, and he devoted a chapter to explaining how that translated into no desire for "military glory," which, in turn, was the surest guarantee of the endurance of the American model of a democratic republic.

As America forcefully stepped onto the world stage by declaring war against Spain and taking over a smattering of colonies in the Caribbean and the Pacific, Europeans of all political persuasions shared de Tocqueville's point about democracy and arms. A United States with territorial possessions, with imperial interests and responsibilities, despite all U.S. assurances to the contrary and despite the implicit and diffused justification of colonialism, could no longer be the same nation. Its very essence would change, and the consequences of this transformation would extend into all matters, domestic and international. The United States had been exceptional, but now it wanted to give that up to become an

Old-World empire. So power was coming to define America, the kind of naked power wielded according to "the law of the strongest" and fueled by American peculiarities of boundless resources, energy, youthfulness, and disregard for the rules of behavior imposed on the smaller, less free, and more reciprocally entangled European powers. Precisely because of what America had been thought to be, the concern with which Europe looked at the assertion of the United States as a new world power far exceeded the preoccupations that would normally accompany the rise of a new political factor in international affairs. What had been exceptionally worth admiring in peace became in war exceptionally fearsome.

Europeans saw the new global position of the United States both as the demise of a model worthy of imitation as "the hope of the future" and as the emergence of a uniquely dangerous and threatening power. Where European newspapers were full of regret for the loss of the great Republic, diplomats and policymakers in France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy discussed urgently the formidable danger. Cuba was considered to be only "the first step." "Willing or not," with the war, Americans had veered their nation's destiny toward uncharted waters. Uncharted, at least, for "Washington's heirs," for a nation whose founders had wanted to make different from the rest of world powers. Europeans harbored no doubt that America the imperialist would become more "akin to the rest of world." The pressing policy and popular concern then became how to prevent a more European America—an America bent on using its exceptional power in Old-World ways—from overwhelming old Europe. Whether Americans were acting interventionist strictly out of humanitarian purposes was considered beside the point even by the British, who were the only ones to buy the argument. Nobody believed that Americans' new expansionist ambitions would really be satisfied by granting Cuba independence and acquiring a few island colonies. The United States was considered too grand for that. Unless Europeans did something, America would soon make the "voice of the cannon" heard on European shores.

Faced with this sudden explosion of expansive energy across the Atlantic, Europeans and especially their policymakers started to see Europe's decline as inevitable. Already Americans had shown a cheerful disregard for international customs and European opinions, making it even more difficult for Europeans to find the right way to handle the New-World power. The American peril loomed so large that many policymakers called for Europe to unite and form a common front against the transatlantic "aggressor." But such resolve crumbled in front of the necessity to give not even the appearance of being against America. The Great Powers might try to stop America forcefully, but their diplomats repeatedly insisted that the utmost care should be taken so that Americans would not be aware of European antipathies. As long as European states' "dignity" could be preserved, they should not risk antagonizing America.

Among Europeans, American power and ambitions loomed largest on the British, who relentlessly tried to tie together the future of the Anglo-Saxon nations and empires. With repeated statements of friendship, kinship, and common interests (a novelty on British lips that continental diplomats commented upon), the British press and foreign policymaking officials sought to ingratiate the United States because they were afraid of the decline of the British Empire in the face of newly powerful enemies like Germany and also of the “unstoppable” rising power of the United States. Instead of affirming the primacy of Great Britain or joining talk about creating a European Concert, London preferred to throw in its lot with the New World. A crucial aspect of Europe’s disappointed and fearful reaction is that it was not driven only, or even predominantly, by the U.S. government or its new foreign policy direction, but by the American people as a whole. If America was the democracy par excellence, then U.S. public opinion, led by the free press, had an unparalleled role in shaping American life and politics. De Tocqueville had written of the “irresistible power of the majority,” and Europeans in the 1890s still saw it at work: The new “sentiments” of “these people here,” not government-to-government exchanges, were responsible for suddenly threatening transatlantic relations.

Europeans saw the America they had dreamed about disappear, replaced by a new United States they feared beyond logic. They felt that the United States was deviating from the historically unique course on which its founders had set it and believed that the very identity of America would change forever. Only the power of the American dream—and the disappointment to see it reneged by those who symbolized it—can make sense of the sincere disbelief and regret with which European accounts of the Spanish-American War are tinged. America the exceptional society was jumping down from its pedestal as a model democracy to play at the Old-World-styled imperialist, and nobody across the Atlantic cheered. When not fretting about what this would mean realistically to their countries’ chances in the world arena, Europeans hung their heads low and wondered what was happening to America the “great Republic” with its “immense industry,” its “persevering energy” and “love for the impossible,” its “get there first” approach and its “youthful vigor.”

The 1898 war also changed the sense of who should imitate whom across the Atlantic. Before the war, Europeans found America was worthy of imitation; the lack of secrecy in governmental decision-making, the sincerity underlying political decisions, the regard for human liberty, the freedom from imperial “cares” had placed the United States in a more “enviable” position than any of the European Powers. Then, by launching an unprecedented (for it) course of global conquests, America seemed to be eager to imitate Europeans in their style of international politics. Still, the vestiges of the American dream prevented American power from

being seen truly like all others. The United States was far too materially and, some argued, psychologically powerful to be just another Great Power. But this time, Europeans, “exiled” from the “magnificent land of victory,” did not recur to emulation. Rather, they felt they should attempt to catch up with the United States by trying to become, secretly, a counter-acting power.

Before the United States had really become established as a Great Power in the world, the belief that it incarnated a special dream and therefore was exceptional had already shaped how Europe was repositioning itself. Entirely deaf to U.S. professions that the war was only about giving freedom to native populations oppressed by the Spanish, not about expanding American power, Europeans thought American identity would be irredeemably changed by the first U.S. assertion on the world stage. Being American had meant being unique—but the way of imperialism was anything but the least traveled. Becoming an Old-World Great Power meant becoming a new America, no longer the model America but a threatening America. Unlike before the war, as *Frankfurter Zeitung* editors put it, “being American” could no longer mean “safety” from entanglements in international affairs that would alter the nation’s essence. The regret and the fear Europeans felt about the throwing away of American exceptionality in favor of power show just how entirely unconvincing they found the U.S. profession of exporting democracy. An America determined to make its weight felt abroad through its armies was an infinitely mightier competitor for Europe, and an infinitely less appealing model.

CHAPTER 6

“Undefeatable Concept America”

Belief in the American dream—that America’s unique history and resources made it a nation unlike any other—was left for dead at the end of the nineteenth century and hobbled through the twentieth century. But it was resurrected in its full strength the moment the second terrorist-hijacked plane smashed into a New York office tower on September 11, 2001, carried live on TV networks worldwide. One hundred years after Europeans had thought they were witnessing the demise of exceptional America because of the Spanish-American War, they found they still felt that old admiration for the United States as the homeland of freedom and democracy, as the incarnation of a universal dream. America was crystallized in the burning towers in Manhattan where the headmasters of capitalism had worked next to the fast-food server who barely spoke English and had illegally immigrated into the country following the same dream “from which nobody can be excluded,” as an Italian reporter put it. It was not only correspondents fighting back their tears who felt “We are all Americans,” but the nearly unanimous majority of Europeans thousands of miles away who shared America’s vision.

“Concept America” was, at that moment, undefeatable because nobody but a handful of extremists wanted it defeated, because the United States represented values in which people worldwide invested their hopes. Before the attacks, Europeans had resented unmatched U.S. power and the White House’s particularly in-your-face shows of it—a *Süddeutsche Zeitung* editorial had provocingly asked, “Can a world politics be done without the USA?”¹ On 9/11, they were willing to grant the United States a special global role. Then came the “war on terror,” and Europe saw a repeat of 1898: Forget about the leadership of exceptional America, the lone superpower did not want to be bothered with partners as it went about seeking violent revenge and reshaping some of the world’s geopolitics while at it.

Europeans felt that 9/11 changed history—first because somebody had struck out of the blue at the core of the world’s good superpower, then because that superpower seemed to show itself no longer worthy of its name. Perhaps because the gut reaction to 9/11 had been so deeply felt, the disappointment in the aftermath has been searing. Europeans see little

trace of the ideals of the American dream in U.S. moves in the war in Iraq, so they have started wondering again whether those ideals can still be guiding U.S. power and endowing it with a unique role in the world. They are increasingly thinking that America has dropped the torch. If so, perhaps world politics not only can but *should* be done without the United States. That is a thought Europe had not entertained since before 1898.

Not only to doubt that America is indispensable but also to encourage systematic opposition to it signals a stunning change, considering that the United States has long been seen as an overwhelming but needed global presence by Europeans, beginning with the journalists whose job it is to “tell the story of America.” U.S. news is “as important as the United States is to the world, extremely—we are depending on its policies for our own political existence,” Germany’s top-selling newspaper’s foreign editor, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*’s Stefan Kornelius, said in 2004.² That newspaper’s Washington correspondent, Wolfgang Koydl, said, “There is not a single major issue in the planet that doesn’t involve the United States.” *Le Monde* deputy foreign editor Alain Frachon put it best: “When you live in the United States, you don’t need the rest of the world. In Paris, America is the daily life. I can’t ignore the doughnuts and American politics in the Middle East. I find [America] everywhere. I need my dose.”

An overdose effect, however, sets in when such unmatched U.S. power seems more about domination than leadership, when Washington is perceived to be “abusing its superiority,” as *Le Monde*’s international affairs editor Daniel Vernet put it. The French especially find U.S. “hyperpower” “unnerving” because they fear being “totally marginalized,” according to *Le Figaro* foreign editor Pierre Rousselin. One of Europe’s veteran Washington correspondents, *Corriere della Sera*’s Ennio Caretto, summed it up by saying it is difficult for Europeans to have a relationship with America not based on “subjection.” Since at least 1898, Europeans have mixed admiration for U.S. strengths with resentment for U.S. supremacy. When America came under attack on September 11, awe and a sense of need for all America represents took the floor. When Washington and indeed a majority of Americans seem to be pushing their advantage and look across the Atlantic with a “Europeans who?” attitude, as the George W. Bush administration did before and, unexpectedly, after the attacks, Europeans turn to resentment and even willingness to take on the U.S. leadership they no longer consider legitimate.

Because Europe considers America more a concept than a country, it judges it on different, more ambivalent standards than other countries. So “ugly American” stereotypes are remarkably few, though there are a handful—celluloid Americans who are fat, unnatural, violent, childlike. Even though Europe’s correspondents define their work as “eroding stereotypes, day after day,” as *Le Figaro*’s Washington correspondent Philippe Gélie put it, some caricatures still make their way onto newspaper pages.

For example, *Corriere* and *The Times* have recently reported on the Mayor of Philadelphia putting the city “on a diet” through fitness programs, which were badly needed because “the city’s greatest contribution to what might loosely be described as American cuisine” is “the legendary and lethal ‘Philly cheese steak.’”³

America the land of machines also gets its share of sneers: “Welcome to America. Britain existed before the railways. The United States, as now constituted, did not and could not. If you stand in a small mid-western town of an evening—any evening, almost any town—when there is nothing to be heard on Main Street except the stray cats and the town drunk (a constitutional requirement), suddenly the silence will be severed by the most extraordinary set of noises [from trains].”⁴ On the serious side, violence especially jars sensibilities in Europe, where the death penalty is considered a barbaric American relic. Of the 2002 execution of a British citizen in Georgia, a reporter for *The Guardian* wrote that there was little hope of a pardon because, “Southern governors with presidential ambitions do not habitually err on the side of stopping executions,” and that Georgians were “bewildered” by European efforts to spare the murderer’s life.⁵

Europeans have also long derided Americans for being uncomplicated beyond belief, or at least the belief of people burdened with impenetrable bureaucracies and unforgivable social systems. A *Corriere* correspondent marveled at “a nation without notarized papers,” while a French reporter was stunned by U.S. shows of naïve faith in the goodness of the human race, such as a Nevada prison guard who ran a mechanic’s shop manned by inmates and who was “shocked that we are shocked that there are people who trust vehicles worth more than \$1 million to former gangsters.”⁶

Because Europeans feel that any superiority they might claim is intellectual, swipes at supposed American lack of sophistication are easy to spot. In the case of President Bush, Europeans tend to be especially mordant, as in a story about his order to turn off cellular phones during meetings: “The President’s ability to complete a grammatical sentence is so uncertain that the sound of a phone is enough to derail his train of thought.”⁷ As a *la Repubblica* correspondent self-mockingly wrote, Americans have some right to show “the immediate disdain of those who can’t take any more enlightened European intellectuals.”⁸

Beyond harpooning the United States for immoderately liking food, toys, electric chairs, and slang, however, Europeans blend awe for grandiosity and fear of being condemned to remain one step behind when faced with the overwhelming image of an America with its pockets bulging with dollars and guns. To possess the world’s fattest wallet and bulkiest arsenal are the two most glaring kinds of supremacy at America’s disposal in the twenty-first century. So Europeans react to them with the ambivalence linked to their understanding of dream America: They both

rely on taken-for-granted superiority and leadership, for the United States after all has bankrolled and guarded the capitalist West, and they belligerently or fearfully condemn them as attempts at domination.

Because they recognize that the United States' economy leads the world, Europeans swing from haughty indignation for money obsessions to bellicose competition and submissive dependence. *The Times* foreign editor answered "Dream on" to a 2002 European Union appeal to stand equal to the United States.⁹ Some acknowledged dependence: "The whole world economy is hanging on the hope that [U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan] Greenspan repeats other miracles of the past," *la Repubblica's* business correspondent wrote, adding, "If the United States hits bottom, it will take everybody with it."¹⁰ Because America "had spear-headed global growth," some Europeans worried that a U.S. economic downturn after the 9/11 attacks would "sweep along all the other countries in the spiral of its crisis." Only the United States could save the day, "Because we can't make it on our own," *la Repubblica's* correspondent concluded.¹¹

Others, however, did not want to keep taking it lying down and threatened "a full-blown trade war" where the European Union would "combat" U.S. tariffs and try to "inflict maximum political damage."¹² Yet U.S. economic power seems to transcend the purely material. Europe's vision of it as an American way of life mixes not a little envious condemnation with the feeling that dream America should somehow be above both material problems and materialism. Somehow, Uncle Sam seemed to be buying his way out of the world's problems. Trouble is inconceivable in this paradise of the material girls and boys: "To the rest of the world" an electrical power crisis in wealthy California only meant "a sudden tumble on the treadmill," and Californians alone were to blame anyway because they could not be induced "to conserve power—or indeed anything."¹³ Apparently fearing that his readers mistook rich America for a fantasy and annihilated lives for crumpled dollars, a correspondent for *The Times* took it upon himself to explain that the Twin Towers were "not just a symbol of American corporate power and capitalism's global sway but the workplace for thousands of New Yorkers."¹⁴ When terrorism turned the world's financial capital into a war zone, Europeans did not know quite how to handle the Wall Street folk—were they the capitalistic monster raising its ugly warmongering head, or humble workers bravely standing their ground on the frontlines of tragedy? Waking up the dormant belief in the American dream, and in keeping with the genuinely elegiac mood of the moment, Europeans chose the latter. The return of shell-shocked traders to work became epic in European newspapers: "Like a cavalry regiment trying to be brave before charging, the troops of Wall Street go back to work," seeing it "as their soldierly duty to go back to the job."¹⁵

"The bankers and brokers, coffee boys and secretaries of the financial district marched in on foot like an army intent on facing down its foes," *The Times* correspondents wrote.¹⁶ It was not easy to reconcile the made-for-TV images of Americans as unquestioning money-making war machines with the winning pragmatic resilience they were showing after the attacks, but even Italy's leading leftist newspaper, *la Repubblica*, managed to do it in this September 18, 2001, front-page article about the reopening of the New York Stock Exchange:

The dividends of 50 years of Cold War, of boot camps with yelling sergeants portrayed in dozens of movies, are cashed in by a people that immediately hugs again the flag and answers "yessir" when a catastrophe comes. . . . Waiting for a true war that Bush keeps promising and at this point will have to unleash against bin Laden, America has won the first battle of Private Ryan, who does not want to conquer, but rather to make money.¹⁷

"Yessir" America is an image as stubbornly entrenched in Europeans' minds as that of the rich Uncle Sam. But it poses a problem: How can the undisputed fact that America is "the biggest military power," considered at best a dubious honor, be reconciled with the American dream's promise of the peaceful republic?¹⁸ Up to the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Europeans consistently solved the dilemma with a compromise. They put average Americans on the good side of soldierly bravery, and stuck the U.S. government with the condemnation for being trigger-happy: "The American soldiers who are leaving do not have the face of defiant cowboys, which belongs to the lords of war who remain next to the fireplace and order: 'Bring me the enemy, dead or alive.'"¹⁹ Europeans admitted that it took the extreme outrage of the attacks to bring the "superpower, which was dragged haltingly in all the wars of the 20th century," to want war.²⁰ Europe's dream America disposed of a stock infinitely more powerful than weapons: "The strength of the United States does not lie only in its missiles and its nuclear arsenal. It lies in the extraordinary moral fiber of its people."²¹

On September 11, Europe rediscovered how forcefully it believed in that extraordinary strength. Setting aside all ambivalent criticisms—for, as *The Guardian* argued, "It is perfectly possible to love the ideals of America's founding fathers and to abhor George W.'s policies"—Europeans pledged allegiance to the ideals of the American dream and to the leadership stemming from it.²² The United States in Europe's imagination was indeed a dream, as mythical as the romanticized simple life in this Far West town that an Italian reporter eulogized in a September 2001 report from Texas:

And this is Eldorado, 1,951 inhabitants, West Texas, United States of America: The bank and the post office, three gas stations, fourteen churches and

dozens of immense ranches; a football team called Eagles; a newspaper founded one hundred years ago that sells a thousand copies, has two employees and is called *Eldorado Success*; a coffee shop and a decrepit motel with rooms for \$28 a night with a stars and stripes banner that proclaims at the entrance: USA: life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness.²³

It might truly be an El Dorado, "America as it is not and perhaps as it has never been, but as it would like to be," and as Europeans desperately have wanted it to be too.²⁴

They were fully awake in the American dream, and on 9/11 they proclaimed it loud and clear. Newspapers ran over with outright admiration for model America, the country that seemed only more undefeatable in its momentary defeat. In their hour of sorrow, Americans showed the world the very face the world wanted to see, that of a power that comes not from invincibility but from the serene bravery stemming from righteousness. Correspondents reported in awe of the Americans' calm and composure in the face of tragedy, their "incredible heroism in a flood of human solidarity that moved the world," their "astonishing" "restraint" in the face of devastation in "the island that symbolized American success," and their "indomitable spirit."²⁵ The day after the attacks, *Le Monde* unreservedly handed it to Americans, not only because "American-style organization spirit has replaced chaos," but because "all the recognition signs of American virtue were mobilized, great and small."²⁶

Europeans have believed in American virtue and, until 9/11, they had trusted that it made America literally invincible, untouchable by, and apart from, all other countries. The terrorist attacks seemed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that indeed, as a concept, Europe's America cannot be defeated. Virtually all Europeans watched America rise again after that astonishing blow with the same faith of this German correspondent: "The multi-ethnic state has learned to bear tensions and will not be forced to its knees. America is weakened but not weak, hurt but not broken . . . because the United States is not made for defeat. The whole 'concept America' with its noble attributes and resilience and the fighting hearts of its inhabitants is the antithesis to terror and the recipe to defeat it."²⁷ The United States was not seen as a country outraged, but as the very philosophy that stood against hatred and could but prevail in the end.

When it was impossible to number the victims of the World Trade Center massacre, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani had said that the death toll would be more than anybody could bear—on the contrary, it would be "borne by this nation that has always disappointed those who confuse its symbols with its substance, its men with its constitution," *la Repubblica's* chief correspondent proclaimed.²⁸ If the descendants of the pioneers knew how to find their ancestors' "spirit, the most important battle against barbarism will not be lost," the Italian newspaper's principal

stockholder wrote in an editorial.²⁹ America continued to be imbued with the pioneer spirit because it was still the beacon to the world's down-trodden masses. To be a hope made it unique and uniquely strong, since Americans "by choice" would not let others destroy what they had come from so far to reach: "Immigrants, Chicanos who came illegally from Mexico to follow the 'sueño norteamericano,' the North American dream. Filipinas who clean the offices at night, Pakistanis, Iraqis and Afghans who drive cabs, mason workers from Puerto Rico and computer experts from St. Petersburg or Bangalore, faced with terrorism that *destroys their hopes*, feel united."³⁰

"America of the melting pot" would not "disown itself."³¹ Europeans thought Americans have a special reason to love the country that is theirs not only (if at all) because they were born there but because they or their recent ancestors have chosen it as their home: Love for "concept America." That is what binds together one of the world's most diverse populations, especially in times of crisis: "Patriotism for now deletes every difference of race, ethnicity, religion and class.... The unifying factor in the U.S. racial melting pot, the spine of the Superpower."³² U.S. patriotism, symbolized by the omnipresent flag, took center stage on 9/11 when America was found to be "under shock, but more patriotic than ever."³³ The whole bleeding nation raced to the Stars and Stripes: "Everybody, but truly everybody, waves with pride the American flag," "not only a flag to salute...[but] a flag to cuddle."³⁴ Jaded Europeans, who wave flags only at soccer matches and have long marveled at the genuine and proudly public attachment Americans have for their country, now regarded it as proof that America was a concept, more than a country, capable of fostering such fond loyalty in the hearts of those who make it theirs. This "spirit of flagwaving" that "sweeps the nation," was a sign of "the touching faith" "ordinary Americans" have "in their institutions," but this time Europeans did not find it ridiculously naïve that in the United States "nobody is ashamed to kiss, wave, honor [the flag], whispering 'God bless America.'"³⁵

The chief U.S. correspondent for Italy's top leftist newspaper admitted it in a front-page article on September 17, 2001: "And nobody smiles any longer, with the *condescension that often helps Europeans to feel better than Americans and to win our serfdom complex*, about the race to the flags, because this is the race of frightened children toward mom's apron, it is, behind the cries for vengeance, behind the polls that with an unprecedented 88% invite Bush to a military attack, a crying that has united everybody."³⁶ In the face of tragedy, patriotism worked, and Europeans no longer felt like laughing it off as a Disney fantasy. Not even *Le Monde*, which is often considered to be in a tight race with *The Guardian* as Europe's elite newspaper most critical of America, felt inclined to patronize Americans: "We see that in the movies. The pioneer spirit. The ability

to act quietly, effectively when tragedy strikes the community. To help the neighbor, to rescue the stranger. In Hollywood's movies, that makes one smile. Not there [in Manhattan]."³⁷ Europeans were touched: A U.S. flag stretching for eight floors on a building next to Ground Zero was "teasing the monster" of debris on the ground.³⁸ Newspaper correspondents in the United States wrote home of a "blooming" of U.S. flags everywhere, from the "impressive" thousands of small ones in the hands of New Yorkers applauding as firefighters' trucks went past to the "star-spangled bandage" that covered America's wound "in one great sea of flags." While some critically found that the country was "drowning" in that ocean, others thought that the flag was "a rallying point for a nation whose people have been drawn from around the world and do not possess the tribal cohesion of other countries."³⁹

Especially when its privileged way of life was threatened, the nation born of choice was seen to hang to the daring hope it placed in living a dream:

When it seems that everything crashes around a people that *thought it had everything*, when America feels alone in front of a sadness that it cannot understand, above the fortress under siege, as the national anthem goes, still waves "The Old Glory," the Star-Spangled Banner. Without rhetoric, because rhetoric is fiction and in the spring of flags that is covering the United States *nobody is faking*, without distinction of ideology or race, the men and women *who have chosen to be American* hold their hands out to *the symbol of their choice*. . . . [The flag] in these hours tells of the simple human need to feel like a family. A need especially acute in a people of 280 million who do not even all speak the same language.⁴⁰

That kind of love for country is not only a sign that America is a beacon to immigrants, but also an inherent democratic virtue—serfs presumably do not get teary-eyed when the national anthem plays. You can only love a country you feel part of, like the small group of firefighters from Pennsylvania riding out to New York as "a small band of patriots going to do their bit to help America in their country's hour of need."⁴¹ For once, Europeans did not try to hide that they felt the same surge of emotion, the same need to be part of this dream that, like the flag, was tattered but still stood. They felt that they too were represented by the U.S. flag, which was really the banner of the American dream. In the wake of 9/11, they defended that flag as if it had been theirs—arguing that in fact it was, because the American dream waves for everybody:

[The terrorists] have not made it, they have not *succeeded in hauling down America*. They have raped it, yes, they have hurt it, yes, but in this Sunday full of sun in New York and over the rubble at "ground zero" an entire nation takes out from the drawers and the closets, from memory and from pride, that *target at which the terrorists used to aim and still do*: a star spangled

rectangle....The Americans, they worship [the flag]. They love to see it, to touch it, to tamper with it. They put it everywhere, and they do everything with it. They put it on coffins and on bikinis, *with the same affection*.... Those stars, those stripes and those three syllables—USA—are the only kind of communism encouraged in the United States: and, contrary to the others, *it works*. Old Glory, in fact, is the US. It is a waving social contract, a *dream from which nobody can be excluded*.... You can argue about a president, a foreign policy, a war, a health system: not the space, which is the repository of dreams. You can protest, argue, discuss. But to be together sometimes is a comfort, and the Americans got this.⁴²

Europeans wanted to feel part of this pulsating American dream. Despite much talk about the continents drifting apart, they had no qualms in saying that belief in the universality of the ideals America stood for was what made us all American. After decades of U.S. bashing, that was a dangerously provocative profession to make, as the strange disappearance of a phrase from Italy's leading leftist newspaper shows. In one of the national editions, a story from *la Repubblica's* Washington correspondent described a United States that "lives the sad discovery, for every American, to be intensely hated by millions of people ready to die to witness their annoyance not for what America does, as Bush repeated, *but for what America is and we with her*."⁴³ The "we with her" has disappeared from the online archived version of the story, though it was far from unique. The page-one, September 12 "Siamo tutti americani" editorial in Italy's top-circulation *Corriere* went on to explain: "We will not be able to delete from our memory the line 'America under attack' that CNN has chosen as the title for the most frightening tragedy of our time. We will limit ourselves to correcting it. It is *our entire civilization* that is under attack." *Le Monde's* publisher, in his September 13 page-one "Nous sommes tous Américains," said that terrorists wanted to "erase *our* world from the map."⁴⁴

Right and left, literally, Europeans felt that whoever had attacked America had attacked them personally, not just in human solidarity but because they were all united by the dream America represented. As unfashionable as it was to sing the praises of the West and even less of the capitalist monster across the Atlantic just days before, on 9/11 Europe rushed to salute the U.S. flag, uncovering the trust in America it had peevishly concealed. *La Repubblica's* publisher wrote, "All the West is a target, together with the symbols of its most advanced American modernity," while one of *FAZ's* publishers stated that "the whole western world" was hit, and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* editors wondered whether terrorists might "throw a plane with an atomic bomb on New York (or Paris or Berlin)" after America's response. A *Le Figaro* editorialist said that the American "trial could have been, concretely, ours" and was "symbolically, ours"; and the newspaper's foreign editor repeated, "this concerns us all."⁴⁵ An editorial in *The Times* called the attacks "never an American

catastrophe but always the world's. It is the world's literally as well as metaphorically. The silent dead of many lands will speak to that truth; their countrymen must hear them."⁴⁶

A correspondent for *The Guardian* described "a United Nations of people searching for their friends and relatives" in Manhattan; the newspaper's editors proposed that the Queen of England should bestow that country's highest civilian honor, the George Cross, on the New York fire department and ambulance service in recognition that "our responsibilities to each other transcend national boundaries."⁴⁷ "The secular carefree society of fun, entertainment and culture," the Western "paradise of impartiality," no longer existed after the strike from "religious and political fundamentalism," *Süddeutsche Zeitung* editors wrote, including all Westerners in the "simpler" society Europeans like to tease as typically American.⁴⁸ The time had run out on proudly pointing to how different Europeans were because now Europe would not hold back in seeking revenge for the outrage.⁴⁹ It was an outrage, after all, against the universal values America embodied: "With the World Trade Center's Twin Towers, trust, humanity, dignity, cooperation among men, greatness have all crumbled," an Italian correspondent concluded.⁵⁰

We were all American not only because Europe's America was the land of common values under attack, but also because of its mythical status as an imaginary landscape as familiar, or more, as anything at home. The German editorial entitled "Americans like us" put it this way: "If we should think of the cherished American books and songs and movie stars disappearing from our life, there would be a hole as big as the crater in the middle of New York.... We know Manhattan better than someone who lives in Munich knows Frankfurt."⁵¹ America indeed was Europe's everyday celluloid fantasy as well as inspiring dream. In both incarnations, as an illusion and as a promise, America was a country that could not truly be hated, that could not be hit—a September 11 in America of all places was beyond imagination, simply "impossible to comprehend."⁵²

Even Hollywood, that endless repertoire of U.S. images to the European psyche, had not produced anything that could approach the horror of the attacks or the reality of America AD 2001: "Here are the flashing bluish lights on the wet pavement, in the image seen again and again in many American thriller movies: but this time everything is different, it is not a movie, the only soundtrack is silence and the crackling of the rain and the rustling of those who are digging; and the American policemen here have not won, they have not destroyed a gang of drug dealers, but dozens of them have died."⁵³ Glued to the endlessly repetitive scenes of unprecedented destruction broadcast on the Internet and television, Europeans shared the marvel of this stunned correspondent: "This is New York? This is the States?... the cradle of the hegemonic power. War scenes in

Manhattan, where Jackie O bought her pearls at Winston's and Audrey Hepburn had breakfast at Tiffany's."⁵⁴

Europeans had really believed that the mythical power of Washington and Hollywood somehow put America above the world's turmoil. Americans might be, both in popular imagination and statistically, "the most optimistic in the world," the only people on earth a majority of whom believes that success is not "determined by forces outside our control."⁵⁵ But there is one kind of optimism in which cynical Europeans beat everybody else: Trust in the success of the American dream. After having long hidden it under a crust of condescension, derision, and criticism, shocked Europeans suddenly revealed the depth of their naïve attachment to a dream America that was larger than life. A veteran Italian correspondent said that if, the last time he had looked at the Twin Towers, a genie had told him, "It is the last time you see the Towers," he would not have thought they could be destroyed but rather, "I am then about to die."⁵⁶ A correspondent for *The Guardian* admitted that "To land in America from Britain used to feel like Dorothy moving from Kansas to Oz. You went from black and white to Technicolor and the transition horrified and fascinated in equal measure. Before you had left the airport it would be clear that people somehow walked faster and talked louder. Somehow, regardless of their size or yours, they seemed to take up more space—a sight and sound that was simultaneously impressive and imposing."⁵⁷

Being larger than life, both as a myth and as a concept, Europe's America was wholly invincible. To Europeans, the United States was never merely a "somewhere. It was always, in some sense, an elsewhere," a unique space that gave those who choose it "a feeling of sanctuary."⁵⁸ "It is hard for outsiders to grasp just how calm and structured day-to-day life is for most Americans," *The Guardian's* Washington correspondent wrote, adding that the direst consequence of the attacks would be the shattering of "the United States' faith in itself" and the end not only of "a certain amount of smug self-satisfaction" but also of "the wonderfully secure routine of the lives of the people."⁵⁹

In the hours after 9/11, invincible concept America became again the stronghold of the universal values of democracy and freedom to an astonished world. Having been for a long time "a retreat from the Old World," America was rediscovered as "an example to it."⁶⁰ While European societies were "disillusioned," the United States, "remarkably," had managed to remain "the 'young nation,' idealistic and politically self-confident."⁶¹ Because "determination and hope" were "innate in the American psyche," despite the attacks, "the sacredness of tolerance and the sense of right" were bound to remain the dominant "values of the American democracy."⁶² The force of "the legendary American spirit" was unabated because the grand democracy of the United States was not frayed in its essence: "We thought, wrongly, that in the era of globalization, of the

melting pot, of the mixture or confusion of languages, religions, ethnicities that form, enriching it, American society, [U.S.] fiber would have been worn down in a chaotic decomposition of separate identities. We discover that it is not like this: The *American Way of Life* is made of those immaterial goods on which a democracy feeds: tolerance, solidarity, a sense of rules and values of a truly civilized living together, but also the consciousness of the strength of civilization."⁶³

Europeans again enshrined democracy as a peculiarly American institution—de Tocqueville would have been satisfied had he paid a second visit after 170 years. "A free and democratic system" as well as "the strength of a homogenizing mass culture" were what had made of "democracy leader" America a terror target: "It is time for the world to concentrate on the message of Americanism: the defense of freedom and democracy," a German editor exhorted.⁶⁴ The leader of democracy was also the treasure chest of freedom: The attacks were especially "revolting" because they "tried to hit the fundamental freedoms America has been *preserving* for two centuries."⁶⁵ No other nation was freer: "Freedom at all costs" was "the imperative" of American society, which "in the absence of bonds found its reason for being. . . . The extraordinary America. . . is a miracle of a society that is multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-religious."⁶⁶ It could only be "perverse" that the "promising silhouette" of the Statue of Liberty could have been seen by terrorists as a "threatening set."⁶⁷ Generations of immigrants had sought what that statue guaranteed them: "the constitutional right to the pursuit of happiness," which for most meant not "fame and wealth" but "quiet, peace, normalcy."⁶⁸

The America that Europeans—even the staunchly critical ones like *Le Monde's* publisher—believed in was the fatherland "of the principles without which we would not be what we are," "a hope, if not an ideal" "that seems impossible to catch up to."⁶⁹ To some journalists, America was virtue itself, and the attacks against it became biblical. "The 11th of September of the year 2001 will be the day in world history in which Western civilization got a clue of what the vision of the final battle between good and evil before judgment day, of what . . . Armageddon would mean," one of *FAZ's* publishers wrote.⁷⁰ In the same vein, a *Corriere* correspondent said of a sign reading "God Bless America" at the Comfort Inn where two hijackers spent their last night: "It was not here when Satan stayed here for a night. Otherwise he would have slept even worse."⁷¹ The most conservative evangelical U.S. orator could hardly have proclaimed America's innate goodness more passionately than these citizens of heartless, secular Europe.

Because the United States represented the exceptional dream, the cherished myth, and the world reserve of the undefeatable concepts of democracy and freedom, the prospect that it would be "unlikely ever to be the same again in the wake of the onslaught" was terrifying.⁷²

ZEITUNG FÜR DEUTSCHLAND

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"America itself" was "at stake" in the aftermath of the attacks, and with it the dream and the power it represented.⁷³ Europeans took it for granted that a "direct" attack against the very essence of America, against "the country's sense of itself," against the "American dream itself," would shake up the whole globe.⁷⁴ "The day that changed the modern world," journalists wrote, would have "effects on society" that remained "beyond computation" and that the world would "attempt to come to terms with"—"There will be no going back to life as it was before."⁷⁵ September 11 was a "moment that shapes our future," "those 15 minutes that have changed the world," a world that was "turned upside down," "upset and paralyzed," "in the grasp of terror" in the face of "a new epoch."⁷⁶

America the dream, America the familiar face in the daily life of all Europeans, America the model of universal values has, by default, a special global role. The attacks, thrusting all its exceptionality to front stage, only made that role more prominent: "Never before was America's political, economic, cultural leadership in the Western world so undisputed as in the moment when it appeared so defenseless, weak and despondent," a German journalist said in 2001.⁷⁷ Openly for a change, the Old World was willing to concede that America had stepped up to the global plate and filled a necessary role for which it continued to pay dearly. They admitted that "the 'American dream' cannot be reduced to the bloody mistakes in the Vietnam War, the export of hormone-fed beef or European cinema's serfdom confronted with Hollywood. The sole superpower after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the United States has paid a price in blood for the responsibilities that it alone has taken on."⁷⁸ Far from sharing the malignant accusation that America got what it deserved, Europe looked at the carnage in Manhattan and saw a leader atoning for global sins: New York was the "city metaphor for the world that today pays for the hatred of the world."⁷⁹

Both terrified and galvanized by the attacks, Europeans were willing to let the United States continue—or, rather, resume after the parenthesis of the first nine months of Bush administration—taking on global responsibilities. Because America "could so easily become an unequivocally great force for good" and "its influence could spread the liberal message in a world already growing gradually more democratic," Europeans thought the United States should remain a global leader, or it might "set back the cause of liberalism everywhere."⁸⁰ Losing the United States, "the global guarantor of democracy," would be a "catastrophe" for the rest of the world.⁸¹ "This time, nobody doubts that [Americans] will be up to their responsibility," *Le Figaro's* Rousselin wrote in September 2001.⁸² Maybe even Bush, disliked as he had been, would manage to "lead the West in the first war of the XXI century," wrote *la Repubblica's* Washington correspondent, entrusting the American president with leadership of the

whole Western world.⁸³ After the attacks, not only Americans, but "the rest of the world badly needed to have confidence in [Bush's] leadership," *The Guardian* editors agreed.⁸⁴

Europe's confidence in the administration's international politics had already been badly shaken. Because their very belief in dream America had given the country a special, indispensable global role, Europeans had despised as untenable the haughty isolationism Bush espoused before 9/11. They hoped that the United States, shocked by sudden vulnerability on such a gigantic scale as the attacks, would embrace leadership once it got over the trauma of not being physically inviolable. For "a place where the greatest terror is poison ivy at summer camp," it would not be easy to accept "the sudden vulnerability of the global hegemonic superpower."⁸⁵ Not merely "the silent and reassuring certainty of every citizen in the States," invulnerability had been also "the myth that has sustained and kept up for more than two hundred years American international politics, the myth of its rock-hard safety."⁸⁶ No wonder that Americans seemed eager to have the illusion of invulnerability back in any form, even expensive gas masks: "Four hundred dollars, and at the end of a Sunday afternoon an American family brings home the antidote to the invisible threat, and finds again the delusion of being invulnerable."⁸⁷

Still, they would sooner or later cope with "the brutal death of a delusion":

Since the end of the Cold War, Americans lived prosperous, happy and without enemies capable of hitting at the heart of the "only superpower." In ten years the United States, challenged but never equaled, had managed to impose itself as the political, economic and cultural model of "globalization," in appearance isolated from the tensions of the rest of the planet. In the ruins of Manhattan and the Pentagon, it is that invulnerability that finds itself in crumbles today.⁸⁸

From the ruins of invulnerability, Americans would rise to rediscover their leading role in the world, one that had been marred by what Europeans felt was an unbecoming isolationism. For too long, Americans had lived their superpower status in the illusion that "everywhere else in the world is very, very far away when you are in Sarasota or Iowa City or Sacramento."⁸⁹ The attacks should have been a cruel wake-up call: "If the Americans thought that the bipolar construction had been replaced by a unipolar world in which they could with impunity impose their will and their law, they were mistaken.... Neither its geographical location or its power put the United States safely above the world's torments.... Terrorism, in a way, puts it back in its place."⁹⁰

Europeans had chafed at the "hands-off" disengagement policies of the first months of the Bush administration, which they thought was "little inclined to look beyond America," and willing to rely on the missile

shield project in the capacity of “curtain between the United States and the world’s problems.”⁹¹ Even Great Britain felt that the new administration’s approach in 2001 was “Right out of it: The Bushies let the world go hang.”⁹² Surely, Europeans thought, the “insular dream” of isolationism “to protect the United States from the international scene” would not hold in the face of the tragic reality of the war against terrorism: Americans would second Europe’s motto, “Isolationism is never an option for America.”⁹³

The need to combat terrorism globally would make Washington look again at the “world map,” change its policy of “lone rider” or “abstention” and show a little less “impudence” to the rest of the world, although “mistrust” for international organizations like the United Nations seemed likely to endure as did the tendency to keep “folded arms” where American interests were not directly at stake.⁹⁴ After all, the attacks “tore an unending hole in the space shield project under which George W. Bush’s new isolationism should have been protected.”⁹⁵ None too soon, the Bush administration would be “forced to change the way that it thinks about the world,” which amounted to a “positive development of lasting benefit.”⁹⁶ Having to respond to the attacks would “stir” the “giant that seeks to go about its business undisturbed”: “The era of drift and the absence of purpose abroad is over,” a writer for *The Times* predicted.⁹⁷

If the United States rediscovered itself as the global leader its innate goodness and overwhelming power destined it to be, perhaps it would also finally realize that other powers had a purpose too. If nothing else, the attacks should have made the case that America should care about what the rest of the world thought of it, instead of persisting in being “extraordinarily negligent” “about its reputation.”⁹⁸ Europeans thought that the United States, “obliged and forced,” had “rediscovered the world” in 2001.⁹⁹ For too long, the world had been “a strange and mystical place little experienced by most Americans, including their president.”¹⁰⁰ While Washington’s unmatched power had made it possible for it to think, “What do we have to do with this world” and to ignore the “unusual terrain” outside U.S. borders, perhaps vulnerability would carry a desire to learn what went on across the Atlantic and the Pacific.¹⁰¹

Before the attacks, the Bush White House had been satisfied to tackle foreign affairs with the same intellectual depth of Pavlov’s dog, according to Germany’s *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.¹⁰² Bush—“so feeble, so light, so extraneous in his disdain for the rest of the world,” “George, the boy who thought he could ignore the world”—was considered the epitome of ignorance begetting isolationism, but America at large was not spared.¹⁰³ Europeans thought that Americans described Latin Americans, their “neighbors to the South,” with the words “misery, drugs and immigration”; that they imagined Ireland “as a combination of the cartoonish and the lethal: leprechauns and the IRA, both distantly removed from

the everyday experience of Americans."¹⁰⁴ Before visiting Great Britain during the epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease, Americans had to be reassured that "you can still get a Big Mac," *The Times* reported.¹⁰⁵

The step from ignorance to indifference is a very short one. Some Europeans thought that, just like the Roman Empire, America only weighed up to what point the world could be left alone to its disorders before the situation became "intolerable to its advancement."¹⁰⁶ That accounted for Washington's general "deviance" from "planet-wide mobilization" against issues like global warming. The "hyper-power" had not seemed inclined to "let its politics be dictated by the international community," but rather it was capable of risking "burning bridges" by focusing on domestic politics.¹⁰⁷ A *Süddeutsche Zeitung* editorial on the U.S. unwillingness to curb carbon emissions argued that climate change would affect the United States too, not only "the rest of the world that does not matter": "The world owes U.S. President George W. Bush the insight that natural laws are not valid when they run counter to U.S. laws."¹⁰⁸ If only the United States matters to Washington, what becomes of its enlightened global leadership? How can disdain for everything non-American be reconciled with the universality of the American dream and the capacity for good of U.S. power?

Since the surprise attacks on 9/11 had made it "painfully clear that most Americans simply don't get it," Europeans hoped they would be the perfect chance for a change, even for Bush himself.¹⁰⁹ After all, as *The Guardian* pointed out, America's "prosperity depends on the rest of the world," so it was high time for Washington to "peer outward and recognise the problems that blight the globe."¹¹⁰ Europeans thought a United States blissfully or dangerously ignorant of everybody's affairs was the opposite of the model superpower the world, especially the post-9/11 world, needed. Precisely because they counted on U.S. power to finally prove its potential for beneficial leadership, and they had professed their heartfelt trust in the days after the attacks, they have felt dismally betrayed by Washington's unrepentant approach: Not only strictly militaristic, which is at odds with the American dream, but marred by the kind of defiant and unrepentant unilateralism Europeans had lamented before the attacks and that they find unsuitable for global leadership.

Critics and friends alike had taken less than two months from the inauguration of "bully Bush" in January 2001 after an intensely disputed election to notice the new administration's "noticeable hardening" on foreign policy, and to predict that its "hard-hitting, confrontational decisions" and "tough-guy stance" would make it "a good deal less emollient than the Clinton White House."¹¹¹ Europeans have made it their duty to censure Bush, dumping on him all they find un-American—all the threats to the American dream, beginning with embracing military solutions. Sarcasm directed at the commander in chief has abounded in newspapers

all over Europe. On the urgent issue of U.S. involvement in the Middle East, a *Le Monde* editor caustically concluded that Bush “is not obsessed with the Nobel for peace.”¹¹² Italians ridiculed Washington for expelling 50 Russian diplomats accused of espionage: “Ransacking the old attic of the Cold War, the little American king [Bush] has found Reagan’s costume and has put it on to play the game of the spies and seem older.”¹¹³ Bush apparently wanted to find enemies everywhere so that he could flex his military muscle. Calling Beijing a strategic rival created the perfect occasion for “a new provocation”: “It seems that the old [Cold War] coordinates weren’t changed, only moved. . . . Big America needs big rivals, and if necessary it makes them big.”¹¹⁴

Before the “war on terror,” Europeans thought the ghosts of the Cold War and callous swashbuckling rarely crossed over the Potomac from the White House. At worst, they plagued the U.S. military, which is how this Italian correspondent reacted to news of a Navy bomber that accidentally dropped a bomb killing six soldiers in Kuwait in March 2001: “Self-confident and a bit presumptuous, like all the top guns of the U.S. Navy, the pilot of the FA-18 Hornet took off at dusk from the carrier Harry S. Truman. . . . ‘How boring’ the pilot must have told himself. But after a few minutes his mission was transformed into yet another defeat for the Pentagon.”¹¹⁵ As Washington readied to take on terrorists and the stakes of U.S. involvement became incomparably higher, Europeans held their breath—would the Bush administration rise to the occasion and align America with its expected role, providing enlightened leadership, or would it drag the nation in a “kneejerk military response”? For three days at least, they marveled at Bush’s surprising restraint: He had managed “to resist the temptation of shooting from the hip.”¹¹⁶

But hopes were quickly shattered. Even while Americans were eagerly “involved in saving New York and in the new national mission,” Washington already insisted on calling it war.¹¹⁷ From the very start, many Europeans thought that was the wrong call—did the United States not understand that its true power did not come from military might? *The Guardian*’s very first story on the attack on the Pentagon had pointed out the limits of military power: “Low-tech assault humbles symbol of military might: Attack raises doubts about need for ‘star wars’ project” (which refers to Bush’s missile shield project).¹¹⁸ Hoping 9/11 would teach the White House that weapons were not the all-in-one solution, Europeans condemned Washington for forcing the nation’s hand onto the machine guns: “September 11 has shown the power of terrorism and the impotence of the army, the intelligence services and the police in preventing it from striking. Mr. Bush has chosen to reassure his compatriots by betting, once again, on the efficacy of military power.”¹¹⁹

Six months later, with one terror war (in Afghanistan) pushed out of the way and a second one (in Iraq) moving to the front burner, scandals

plagued the fight against terrorism: An article in *la Repubblica* on the Guantanamo prisoner camp where terror suspects were detained called it the "abyss" that the Army "exhibits with pride."¹²⁰ Worse, journalists found out about the Pentagon's review of the feasibility of nuclear attacks. That beat Europe's direst expectations: "The bellicose fantasy and diplomatic devil-may-care attitude . . . is a surprise that sends chills down one's spine." Headlines said, "George W. Bush renders nuclear weapons banal" and he had "Itchy fingers on the trigger," and some joked that perhaps "the Dubya of his middle initial" stood for the word "war," which seemed "rarely off the president's lips."¹²¹ Toying with nuclear weapons was not a good idea for a wounded, angry superpower already up to its waist in the Middle East explosive chaos. The Bush administration had "drawn from September 11 only military conclusions," and that went "beyond what should be admissible on the part of a country that considers itself responsible and already has at its disposal a crushing and unequalled military power."¹²²

But there was an even scarier surprise: What really caught Europeans off-guard was that the country seemed to go along with Bush's go-get-them swagger. In September 2001, Americans, wrapped "in the folds of the star-spangled flag," could be expected to also fall "into rank behind [their] president," seeing in him "at the same time all the presidents of the United States," endowed with a patriotism that had "the very simplicity and depth" "in tune with most Americans."¹²³ After all, Europeans had considered the 2000 debacle that begot an "ill-elected President" as a sign that something was wrong with the machinery of America's democracy, but not with its soul.¹²⁴ It was the Americans' problem if they were deluded by the scheming of someone for whom Europeans could at best offer the ultimate backhanded compliment—"And, on a simple level, there was never any evidence that he was the moron he was made out to be."¹²⁵ At worst, Europeans actually considered Bush dangerous for the United States.

Americans might have "the most sophisticated hospitals in the world," they might enthusiastically endorse health measures that seemed "excessive and sometimes ridiculous" to Europeans, like smoking bans, but they had to endure "the anti-health America of George W. Bush."¹²⁶ And Europeans thought Bush was public environmental enemy number one. Covering the 2001 energy crisis on the West Coast, some correspondents blasted his cheap solutions—"The president's argument on [the energy] crisis is simple (this president's arguments usually are)"—and nefarious intent: Bush seemed to use the blackouts as the "crowbar with which to force open a whole patrimony of environmental laws" and might "manage to take away too" the last certainties Californians had, such as clean air.¹²⁷ And Europeans certainly did not mince words in reacting to Bush's about-face on his electoral promise to reduce carbon

emissions: "Even by US standards," they argued, Bush's decision was "breathtakingly irresponsible," displaying even more "ignorance and arrogance" than average Americans, and showed he was not "a man of his word."¹²⁸

Now, traumatized and angry after the attacks, the American nation, with the "innate nature of a frontier village under siege," had "rallied around its uncertain sheriff threatened by the bandits. Something, the man of Air Force One will have to do, and do it quickly."¹²⁹ What Bush did was to offer the kind of simple, violent solution of "Bin Laden 'dead or alive,' like in the good old times of the West," which "harked back to a by-gone Texas age when a lawman's strong hunch would have been enough to dispatch a posse on the fugitive's trail."¹³⁰ While it hardly seemed enough to launch a global war, Americans went for it, to Europe's dismay: "America is a hammer looking for a nail to hit," and "nobody—not yet—protests the rumbling of war drums." Perhaps they never would: A German journalist reporting from the heartland suggested that people there "will enthusiastically sing along their president's war song."¹³¹ Commenting on the six-month anniversary of the attacks in March 2002, *la Repubblica's* Washington correspondent condemned Americans for having found in military action "the only palliative possible to the pain that from that 'black hole' erupts and intoxicates America" and for nurturing a memory "that asks for more dead, so as not to forget its dead."¹³²

Instead of cutting Bush short "on the leash before he causes big damage with his blabber," Europeans thought that Americans were accepting the "puerile thinking" of "this most inexperienced leader," "a Texan boy spoiled and unprepared."¹³³ While one could not ask Americans to turn the other cheek, it seemed legitimate to hope that America would "look reality in the face, and not only through a rifle sight."¹³⁴ Instead, true to what Europeans thought was a "long-standing American enthusiasm for reducing complex ideas to easily digestible soundbites," the nation embraced Bush's war solutions, woefully inadequate to handle complex international affairs: "America of the year 2000 is the ultimate society of the TV ad, impatient and grown up in a culture of immediate gratification by advertising lies, and the tragedy that one can read in the words read by Bush into the microphones at Camp David is that there are no rapid solutions, perhaps not even radical solutions, against the puppets of destruction that an entire country evokes as if there were a miraculous anti-terrorism spot remover."¹³⁵

Europeans accused Americans of buying the administration's convenient "bogeymen" of bin Laden and Saddam Hussein: "Such personifications of evil make a complex world easier to explain to American voters, and they provide moral underpinning for actions subsequently taken in pursuit of US interests."¹³⁶ In response to the U.S. administration's first official pitch for extending the "war on terror" to Iraq, editors at

The Guardian asked why any country should support "yet another American war."¹³⁷ To call the invasion of Iraq an "American war" is revelatory of a major change in Europe's vision of the United States. First of all, it was not "Bush's war"—Europeans were letting go of their habit to dump all U.S. actions they dislike on the president's head and they were wondering whether the whole nation did not look suspiciously like its leader. Without the Bush scapegoat, America's eagerness to go to war—symbolized by the invasion of Iraq—became a crucial blow to Europe's twenty-first-century American dream. America, no longer the peaceful republic since 1898, used to be the world's benign peacekeeping power. Now it seemed simply the biggest military power worldwide, one that has no qualms in throwing its weight about.

Secondly, this struggle against the terrorists who threatened universal values, wholeheartedly supported by Europeans, stopped being "Europe's war" or even a global war. Not only did the superpower seem to renege its own identity by turning a conflict about values into a contest of military supremacy, but it was doing so all by itself. The "war on terror" became squarely America's war—which deals an even bigger blow to Europe's acceptance of global U.S. leadership. In part, Europeans had been ready to acknowledge that a superpower could be forgiven for forgetting others matter: "America's exceptional military and political position in the world leads automatically to unilateralism in an intellectual way," German editors argued.¹³⁸

Still, even before the attacks, Europeans had highlighted how different "the European principle" of looking for partners and opening dialogue was from Bush's approach:

The president's electoral promise to show "more humbleness" in international relationships so far has manifested itself only in a sort of nonintervention between Israelis and Palestinians. But without consulting the Allies, or doing it pro forma, Bush has bombarded Iraq, slammed the door in the face of North Korea, started the space shield, and started a gradual retreat from the Balkans. Is it a step toward unilateralism...?¹³⁹

Power combined with ignorance created a dangerous scenario where, "The Bushies see the world as an inherently anarchic place, where advancement of self-interest should be no occasion for squeamishness."¹⁴⁰ "If this is what the 'humble' foreign policy Mr Bush promised looks like, one hesitates to imagine what shape an assertive one would take," a correspondent for *The Times* wrote in March 2001.¹⁴¹

The response to the terrorist attacks was the last occasion when Europe expected that assertiveness to come into the spotlight. Europeans were sure that 9/11 would make Bush "bow the head of his provincial arrogance" and understand "that even a Texan's America needs the world":

"A culture of impunity in which US governments act abroad with little fear of direct consequences at home was smashed as utterly as Manhattan's doomed towers," *The Guardian* editors asserted.¹⁴² But only days after 9/11, Washington slapped down Europe's extended hand and ridiculed offers to help. In drawing up plans for the "war on terror," Europeans thought, the Bush administration had "swatted aside" "international concerns" like obnoxious flies.¹⁴³ Even the British marveled at America's attitude, its willingness and readiness "to take on the world alone," leaving Great Britain, the "pivot" in U.S.-European relations for more than a century, "on a bridge that was about to snap off at both ends."¹⁴⁴ Just when the United States needed allies to fight terror and would have profited from showing some "transatlantic courtesy" "far from being disinterested," "the figure of the cowboy who shocks the audience with his gunshots" was a "devastating stereotype."¹⁴⁵

Even those who argued that "solitary might is right" added that the United States could be "more comfortable" with an ally, provided it was not according to the "new formula" whereby "America is for the dirty job of cleaning up and Europe arrives later with the great plans for peace (and with contempt for the cleaning teams)."¹⁴⁶ Under normal circumstances, American power was so overwhelming that Europeans' sole "dilemma" had been whether "to follow in line or try to modify the Superpower's course."¹⁴⁷ Now Europe wanted to be America's helpmate in the world and tried to show to the superpower that it really was a "Hilflose Weltmacht," a helpless world power, if it did not allow Europe to contribute something to its mission.¹⁴⁸ The European press tried to establish Europe's worth, often with a touch of smugness, as in the *Le Monde* story saying that anti-terrorist "investigations seem anyway to have made more progress in Europe than in the United States, where the mobilization of thousands of agents has not allowed them to put their hands on a single 'sleeping' militant or a single organization cell."¹⁴⁹ Europe, rich in experience with devastation, could be educational and help "America to face the world that now exists" because, "The sleeping giant aroused, rubbing its eyes with incredulity, doesn't necessarily have the clearest perspective."¹⁵⁰ Europeans could make the United States "understand" what NATO's role could be in reacting to the terror attacks or help Washington recognize that Arab countries, whose support was crucial, would not react well to being given a choice between "terrorism and total submission to the US imperium."¹⁵¹ Within NATO, they were willing and able to provide "psychological," if not military help, so that "America should not feel abandoned" and both sides of the transatlantic alliance could fully realize that they can only grow "if they are there for each other."¹⁵²

With a humbleness that betrays unstinting belief in the magnitude of U.S. power, Europe admitted that its offer to help the United States was

a first for the continent, which was used to depending on the United States: "The Europeans found themselves yesterday in the *strange and unusual* situation of assuring the United States of their support and their help."¹⁵³ *Le Figaro's* Rousselin called it a "paradox to see NATO function in reverse: "The old American umbrella, that protected us from a Soviet attack, will it be the life-saving plank for a 'hyper-power' tempted by isolationism and suddenly so fragile?"¹⁵⁴ Remembering the assurance that the United States would come to help one or more NATO members if the need arose, Europeans were the first to wonder: "Who would have thought that at one point the opposite would happen?"¹⁵⁵ But it was only logical that help should be mutual: Europe owed the United States solidarity because "we owe them our freedom," *Le Monde's* Colombani argued in his "We are all Americans" editorial.¹⁵⁶

One of Italy's most prominent journalists wrote a tribute to historical and providential U.S. help:

In 1915 [Americans] came to give a hand to my father, after 1940 they came to rescue me. . . . Bush, for hours on end, has commanded from the Sky, usually God's jurisdiction, the strongest Country in the world, that which has welcomed all the pilgrims and the victims of European cruelty, the laboratory of experiments in science and even in culture of this threatened planet. Also for this I participate in the Americans' pain and fear: May this be received as a small sign of gratitude on the part of an Italian who knows how much he owes the Stars and Stripes.¹⁵⁷

Britons were invited to "first remember history"; Germans referred to America as the "protection power," and argued that, if Europe did not provide "active solidarity," Americans would wonder about the value of the alliance, (especially given "the victims that in many wars in the last century they have sacrificed for Europe") and leave "European conflicts" to Europeans.¹⁵⁸

Those offers of help, however, were not to be mistaken for professions of submission: "America must not be left alone, but it also should not think that it has the exclusive right" to solve problems without listening to its allies, and it should also lose "the unpleasant habit of confounding dialogue with rallying toward American positions."¹⁵⁹ Europe pictured itself in the role of supporting but also containing American power by trying to "deflect and mitigate the wilder lunges of this wounded super-power" after the terror attacks and by not letting the United States, "blinded by its own strength," "succumb to a Manichaeism whose consequences would be terrible."¹⁶⁰ Given that "the transatlantic partnership is not a one-way road," Europeans were "in the best position not to let the USA go toward inconsiderate fast-shooting."¹⁶¹ Europeans really hoped that big America would grab its little E.U. brother's help and listen to his advice as it prepared to take on a brutal world, that it would finally

understand that, "Only the Euro-Atlantic area provides the American world power a solid basis for its policy and strategy in international crises."¹⁶²

Presented with heartfelt professions of devotion to the American dream and deferent proposals for help, Washington replied that Europe should not bother, *really*. Instead of finally understanding that alliances were not some "Kleenex, to be thrown away or reshaped at will depending on the particular interests of the Americans alone in the world," the United States did not "hesitate to penalize" its European allies and to "alienate the rest of the world" with "indefensible" practices.¹⁶³ Snubbed, Europeans retorted that an America that has nothing to learn cannot have much to teach—dealing the potentially fatal blow to belief in the American dream and U.S. global leadership. An editorial on the execution of a British national in Georgia spelled out why America was falling off the pedestal:

As at least one member of the [Georgia pardons board] made clear, the United States believes it is a grown-up country these days. The evidence for this is intermittent, but the Americans are understandably touchy about being lectured on these points by the likes of us. . . . It would be sensible not to send any more diplomats to lecture the Americans on human rights and justice. It doesn't work. It would also be appropriate if the Americans ceased lecturing the rest of the world on the subject.¹⁶⁴

To stop believing that America has a high ground beyond the one afforded it by its military and its corporations is a devastating change in Europe's attitude toward the United States. Even while resenting U.S. supremacy, Europeans have believed in the American dream and in the fact that it made the United States into the lone superpower, the sole, needed global decision-maker. In transatlantic affairs, they showed it before 9/11 when they, along with even *The Guardian*, dubbed "epochal" "an American turn away from Europe, or at least from the level of US engagement and attention which have existed for the lifetime of most Europeans."¹⁶⁵ On 9/11, they proved their need for responsible U.S. leadership, feeling life had been interrupted globally when American normalcy stopped: People everywhere watched the reopening of the New York Stock Exchange because, "The whole world wants to be told again that life starts anew."¹⁶⁶ Even after the attacks, Europeans tried their best "to avoid disassociating themselves from the United States."¹⁶⁷ International institutions needed America: The U.N. Human Rights Commission lacked "credibility" if it did not include the United States, German editors argued in 2002.¹⁶⁸ And local issues felt the repercussions of America's actions too—an Italian correspondent wrote that, if the United States went to war against Iraq, it would endanger Italy by building up "the exodus of desperate people toward the Italian coasts."¹⁶⁹

But since Europeans have started doubting the United States' respect for what they see as the American dream and therefore its fitness for leadership, their dilemma in approaching U.S. power has gone beyond the twin criticisms for isolationism and unilateralism, the formula that, "The United States does not intervene and we stigmatize its absence; it is present and we accuse it of being the planet's policeman."¹⁷⁰ After all, America has used 9/11 to prescribe for itself a role of moral leadership, beginning with the Afghanistan operation called at first "Infinite Justice": "America more than ever considers her role in the world as in her own village, of which she is the policewoman. . . . Trying to impose her justice, America wants to be not only the policewoman, but also the herald of universal morality."¹⁷¹ Questioning that moral primacy, Europeans are increasingly listening to the voices that, incensed with Washington's approach to global problems like the environment, had begun to clamor for an end to European dependency on the United States: "If Europeans finally let go of the idea that America is indispensable . . . the future might not look as bleak."¹⁷² While "for a long while," "nothing could be done without the world power America," the International Criminal Court's existence showed "things could be done without America's approval," something Germany's leading newspaper felt should be taken as a model in other aspects of international affairs.¹⁷³

Granted, to let go of America would not be easy because of the global penetration of U.S. values: "Americans have colonized our everyday vocabulary, why be surprised if every year we read American, watch American, listen American? America is here now, and we have to keep it."¹⁷⁴ But even if Europeans accept that "We live in an American world . . . economically, militarily, politically and culturally, America shapes all our lives as no other nation does," they are increasingly finding it "ludicrous to pretend that the other nations of the world only exist to endorse American decisions."¹⁷⁵ "The American Gulliver," bestriding "the world like a colossus," might be like the hero of a German fairy tale who killed "seven" with one shot, making the whole community fear him—because nobody knew he had only killed seven flies.¹⁷⁶ Deprived of its leadership role, America's global supremacy has become the "looming, daunting prospect of superpower unleashed, of Prometheus unbound": America "is no longer for the Europeans a predictable partner."¹⁷⁷

America becomes, simply, the "empire": The terror attacks struck "in the very heart of the dominant empire, in the cities that symbolized the system that rules over the world," and in post-9/11 America there reigns "an undeniably imperial feeling to things."¹⁷⁸ As long as they had believed that it was the "empire" of the American dream, the model everybody wanted to be a part of, Europeans did not challenge the essence of U.S. leadership or its unparalleled power. On 9/11, they thought America—even Bush's America—would rise to its unique role

in the world. They publicly professed their devotion to the ideals the United States represented. And then they saw that nobody in Washington or in America cared, that the United States felt it would be better off handling everything alone in its own way. It is too easy to dismiss Europe's growing discontent with the argument that "at the most basic level America is loathed simply because she's on top. The world leader is always trashed simply for being the leader."¹⁷⁹ Rather, it is trashed for not being the kind of leader Europeans believe it could be.

Certainly, much more than U.S. actions, America's essence is at the heart of the matter: "America's offence consists of things it cannot do much to alter: its wealth, its modernity, its centrality in the global capitalist order, its brash westernness, . . . the scarier truth might be that America is hated just for itself. And there is little it can do about that."¹⁸⁰ Actually, contrary to that editorial in *The Guardian*, in the case of Europe, there is something that can be done. Six months after the terrorist attacks, a writer for *The Times* referred to what had happened then as "the disruption to the meaning of America on September 11."¹⁸¹ The disruption in what Europe thinks America is, however, did not happen on 9/11—on the contrary, the American dream was never more predominantly displayed in Europe as a badge of honor than on that day. Europeans started to wonder about it only in the aftermath, when the Bush administration began its push for what has become "another American war," and the country backed it. The United States, not listening to allies and not taking on the kind of leadership Europeans expected, has started to slip from the moral high ground on which the American dream had elevated it. The descent is only made faster by the lingering resentment for supremacy and by the faith Europeans have felt in the ideals the country represented. Only trust in America's ability to stand by its dream can restore the uniqueness of its role in Europe's eyes. As editors at *The Times* phrased it, "America's superpower status depends as much on the confidence the world has in its judgment as its unrivalled military power."¹⁸²

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the link between Europe's belief in the American dream and U.S. power has undergone two rapid transformations. Buried under nagging doubts about America's special role in the world as the benign democratic superpower that Europe has harbored since at least the Spanish-American War, the belief in the essential goodness of the values America stood for was thrown into sharp relief by 9/11. Europeans stopped laughing at American naiveté and sang the praises of its resilience. They ceased making fun of Americans as money-making machines and looked up to Wall Street to tell them life could continue with business as usual. They no longer sneered at Washington's go-hang foreign policy and thanked it for having taken on the global responsibilities of the twentieth century.

Viscerally horrified by the carnage perpetrated by terrorists, Europeans felt all American. They gave their hearts to “concept America” and asked for U.S. leadership. They rallied around the Stars and Stripes, proclaimed it the banner of democracy and freedom for all good people worldwide, and pledged to follow it into battle against those intent on destroying those ideals and their hopes. Then they saw the United States jerk that flag out of their hands, firmly plant it into U.S. soil and tell Europe to get lost. Can the nation born of immigrants’ choice leave its friends the only option of acquiescing silently to whatever Washington wants? Can the day that “changed the world” tune out the Technicolor dream and show it is really only an ordinary superpower?

The emotional roller-coaster of 9/11 and then the “war on terror” has forced Europeans to question their image of America, its identity and its role. Perhaps America’s bravery is really warmongering, work ethic is greed, patriotism is jingoism, strength is domination, and, if so, Europe’s awe is only inexcusable subjection. The real trouble is that those doubts are a frightening sign that the “war on terror” is not only changing Europeans’ perception of Americans, but hitting hard Europe’s American dream itself and the special global role Europeans have granted the United States based on that dream. More than an epochal change in the way Europe regards America, it threatens to be a gigantic missed opportunity for America to be an exceptional superpower.

Because they believed it exceptional, Europeans have long believed that the United States is undefeatable and indispensable. Now they are beginning to think it might be self-defeating and disposable. In light of the history of Europe’s dream, overseas criticisms cannot be written off as a mere grudge against U.S. geopolitical supremacy or even as the disappointment that necessarily follows exceptional expectations. Rather, the “war on terror” might signal the end of those expectations, especially that of enlightened U.S. global leadership. Contrary to what many “freedom fries”-eating Americans might think, the possibility that Europeans might stop believing in the American dream is a drastic change. Until November 2004, they nurtured the tenuous hope that Bush was the catalyst for all that they see as wrong with the United States.

This White House has exacerbated the Europeans’ feeling of being like shunned wooers—excluded from the historical haven of immigrants, from the dream they thought nobody could be excluded from. Because they are no longer sure that this is *their* America, they wonder whether it is wise to give it a special role and responsibilities in the world. Because they feel America has pushed them aside even in its hour of need, Europeans are beginning to ask whether the U.S. leadership they enjoyed is now turning into an Enron-style management.

As the “war on terror” developed, fearful resentment began to substitute admiration because Europeans think America has abandoned its

exceptional ways, just as they had feared in 1898. "Model" America no longer seems to be guiding U.S. power. If the United States chooses to rely on its sheer, unmatched power, there remains little to dream about. Some hope still lingers as Europeans hold onto the *Le Monde* publisher's advice: "We must support the United States, with the strong hope that it will change."¹⁸³ But change does not seem forthcoming, and Europeans are entertaining the idea that an unchanging America is a changed America. If it is no longer the American dream realized, then it might no longer be indispensable. For the first time since the United States has mattered in world politics, Europeans are seriously considering if they cannot do without Uncle Sam. So are their policymakers.

Dignity and Equality

In the years since 9/11, as Europeans struggle with reconciling their belief in the American dream—in a truly democratic, new kind of power—with the way the United States is using its unparalleled might, E.U. policy-makers are beginning to insist on ways to challenge that power. That raises the possibility of an epochal change in the very essence of transatlantic relations, which have been marked by Europe's alternatively resentful and grateful acceptance of the United States' privileged global role. As other authors have argued, despite no lack of disagreements and crises, the collaboration between the United States and Europe has been extraordinarily unchanging across the twentieth century. Not since the Spanish-American War have European policymakers seriously discussed an approach to international affairs that does not account for the United States, or made it a matter of official policy to hinder Washington on its essential aims.¹ Up to the immediate aftermath of the terror attacks, Europe felt in no position to challenge U.S. predominance, ideal and real. Rather, Europe's policymakers saw the terrorist menace as the perfect opportunity to prove their worth as a partner for a safer world, albeit under U.S. leadership.

On September 12, 2001, European Commission President Romano Prodi ended the European Union's official declaration of solidarity with the United States by saying: "In the darkest hours of European history America stood by us. Today we stand by America."² For most of the twentieth century, the Atlantic Powers stood by each other, defending broadly the same principles of democracy and freedom. When terror seemed to target those values, Europeans wholeheartedly sympathized with the United States, also because they freely admitted their reliance on U.S. power "in the darkest hours." On 9/11, America's darkest hour, Europe proclaimed it would support its overseas partner—finally, the United States would recognize Europe's value because it would benefit from its support. Except that it did not.

To Europe's popular empathy and official solidarity, Washington replied with what was perceived to be a dignity-busting "Don't call us, we'll call you." There the marked shift began toward Europe's disenchantment with U.S. leadership and overt attempt to counterbalance it. If a unilateralist, militarist Washington no longer provided the guiding

light of "American" values to the world, perhaps Europe could. The growing Union certainly would not play along as second fiddle to U.S. whims, especially when Europeans in general could not see the link between the U.S. plans for the "war on terror" and the ideals of freedom and democracy America represented.

Just as the occupation of the Philippines in 1898 to liberate them from Spain smacked more of imperialism than of "expanding democracy," so did the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Europeans disagree more than ever with the U.S. concept of armed intervention to "create" democracy abroad: In November 2003, public opinion polls showed 68 percent of E.U. citizens found military intervention in Iraq unjustified.³ By June 2007, public opinion polls showed that about 40 percent of respondents in Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany said they "favor the *US-led* efforts to fight terrorism."⁴ Of course they do not mean that they are cheering for terrorists, since that would be not only inhuman but self-destructive. Rather, they mean they resent the way American power is wielded to the point that they resent the United States per se, regardless any good intentions.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, two trends characterize transatlantic relations: The United States, busy with crises elsewhere and perceiving that "Europe is fixed," is turning its attention away from Europe, or at least from the "old Europe" represented by countries like France and Germany.⁵ In February 2006, for example, Washington announced it would shift diplomats to India and China while reducing the numbers in Europe. At the same time, Europe is trying to reestablish itself as the superpower it once was by working to create and make operational both an E.U. Common Foreign and Security Policy and a European Security and Defense Policy that would make Europe a voice in international affairs beyond humanitarian support, peacekeeping missions, and trade disputes. Increasingly, these initiatives are seen as efforts to counterbalance the United States, by some even in strategic power.

Despite those trends and a wide range of disagreements, especially when Europe perceives the United States as torpedoing international efforts solely to pursue its interests (e.g. the Kyoto protocol, the International Criminal Court, or diplomatic negotiations over nuclear power in Iran), most observers agree that the best outcome for both would be if Europe and the United States remained each other's "preferred partner," in the words of NATO's Secretary General George Robertson.⁶ One of the lasting bonds across the Atlantic is the common interest in pushing a capitalist economy, with Europe and America representing "each other's most important and profitable market": "Is transatlantic divorce inevitable? The short answer is no, and for a simple reason: neither side can afford it," concluded Daniel Hamilton, who held several senior positions in the U.S. Department of State through 2001.⁷ With Russia and China still

facing great hurdles in social and human rights at home, Europe and America also need one another as the best potential partner to “cope” with “the promises and dangers of globalization.”⁸ The United States and the European Union are so inextricably linked that, “More Europe equals more America,” said in 2004 State Department Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Charles Ries, referring to that year’s enlargement that added ten members to the Union.⁹ “There is no [U.S.] initiative where we don’t start with Europe,” he added.

Everybody agrees that the terrorist attacks on September 11 touched off a flurry of great solidarity and increased cooperation in judicial and policing affairs; collaboration between the FBI and Europol, which had been in the works since 1995, became a reality two months after the attacks, Ries said. But the “war on terrorism,” especially after Iraq came into the picture, made U.S.-E.U. relations a “dialogue of the deaf.”¹⁰ Even after the elections in Iraq in January 2005 and President Bush’s trip to mollify E.U. leaders a month later, a powerful hearing aid still seems necessary. With a play on dates, several analysts argue that Europe and America are looking at the twenty-first century through two different lenses: For the Europeans, the watershed moment was 11/9—November 9, 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell and Europeans reaped the maximum reward of postwar “Pax Americana.” For the Americans, it is 9/11, which, however, many Europeans consider the beginning of an “Imperium Americanum” to which they no longer feel obligated to pay their respects.¹¹

To make things even more complex, as the European Union solidifies, individual European countries face the dilemma of continuing to pursue a “special” bilateral relationship with the United States—historically based, in the simplest terms, on security in Germany, shared values in France, the U.S. role in Italian domestic politics, and kinship in Great Britain—or of focusing on having a common voice as Europe.¹² The more they disagree with U.S. policies or feel ignored by Washington, the stronger they look to Europe for formulating common initiatives. Germany and France officially united in opposition to U.S. plans to go to war in Iraq. The Blair government in Great Britain and the Berlusconi government in Italy allied with the United States, against their own publics and with many qualms, because of the implications of such alliance for their role in the European Union, which is of growing importance.¹³ Depending on what the issue is, the U.S. government deals with either individual nations, especially with the smaller, more strongly pro-Washington new members, or the European Union.

On both sides of the Atlantic, diplomats agree that the best possible future for the transatlantic partnership at the dawn of the twenty-first century is that of a relationship that outgrows “adolescence,” as Ries put it. Both partners need to learn to listen to each other and compromise. The “senior partner,” i.e. the United States, should stop expecting the

“junior partner,” i.e. the European Union, to do as told while Brussels should not make of opposition to everything Washington does its *modus vivendi*. The consensus is that Americans need “patience” and Europeans need “ability,” in Hamilton’s words, to make that partnership work—highlighting the self-evident truth that Washington must stop going-it-alone and Europe must walk the walk, not just talk the talk. Europeans and Americans outside of Washington and Brussels should also reconcile, because of what the Council of the European Union has called the “importance of greater involvement of the civil society.”¹⁴

But the discourse revealed by policy documents and opinion surveys suggests that all this might no longer be enough. U.S. leadership, some say even its global role, might be already in danger. When Bush wrote of the “war on terrorism” in 2002, “The United States welcomes the responsibility to lead in this great mission,” Europeans still felt that they wanted to have a voice in that mission.¹⁵ Now many seem ready to take on a mission of their own, leaving Washington to handle its own affairs separately. There is talk of being America’s counterweight, not its partner. The nub of the disenchantment is an old one: “Democracy can’t be extended with *arms*, but we can extend it when we put ourselves in a condition of parity,” as Prodi said in 2004.¹⁶ Perhaps having learned something from centuries of imperial history, Europe simply will not be convinced that democratic peace can be made with “preemptive” war. Increasingly, it is working on another, “European” approach.

What Prodi added on the above occasion crystallizes where America stands vis-à-vis a changing Europe: The U.S.-European relationship, he said, “requires cooperation and a sense of common interest founded on *dignity and absolute equality*.”¹⁷ Read that again: The president of the executive body of a Union representing at that moment 15 of the most industrialized countries in the world and 380 million people said the United States needs to grant them *dignity*. It will take more than reluctant invitations to the Crawford, Texas, presidential ranch to restore slighted Europe’s faith in the United States as the good superpower.

Already before the terror attacks, E.U. policymakers felt that the United States was indifferent to what Europe said and did, either because it isolated itself from the world’s problems, tackled them alone, or ignored that a world existed outside U.S. borders altogether. In “Transatlantic Relations and the Bush Administration,” the report of the summer 2001 Paris Transatlantic Conference transmitted to E.U. Secretary-General Javier Solana, a former Italian defense official noted a “reduced commitment to international engagement unless there is a clear threat to the United States or American interests.” When those interests were at stake, the superpower could easily afford to act on them unilaterally.

In the same report, the North America official at the Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry argued that there was “a clear risk of what could be

called withdrawal from multilateralism if such a multilateral approach does not fully satisfy the interests of the United States." Note the word "risk": Europe did not want to be deprived of U.S. power. As the report's editor concluded, "The attraction of unilateral action" was due to America's being "equally uncertain of its role as either leader or partner"—the essence of Europe's doubts too—and to America's being "jealous of ceding leadership to others."¹⁸

Europeans thought that America was jealous of its position because it did not trust Europe, and that because it simply did not know it. The Council, for example, resolved to "promote better understanding of the EU's interests" "with all branches of the United States Government," which apparently did not comprehend well enough.¹⁹ The editor of the 2001 report on transatlantic affairs said the American Congress "was not well informed" on the European Security and Defense Policy.²⁰ To ignorant, aloof America, European policymakers pointed out both common values and common interests. Part of this talk came from the deeply ingrained European belief in the ideals America represents, and an equally important part stemmed from conciliatory rhetoric, as had been the case with Great Britain's statesmen in 1898.

In April 2001, the European Commission proposed identifying "a number of common challenges/strategic themes" that could reinforce the transatlantic relationship after the blow of Bush's first unilateral moves.²¹ A month later, the Council's Transatlantic Relations Working Party suggested that documents should note the "strong and enduring ties between the EU and the US, which are based on *our shared values*."²² The Spanish official quoted above joined both interests and values as the basis of the "special" transatlantic bond: "Relations between Europe and the United States are based on the very solid ground of shared interests and common values."²³

E.U. policymakers also recognized the need for friendly American power as a global leader, though they insisted that Washington should at least listen to its friends. Rather meekly, and in line with Prodi's comment on dignity, one speaker at the Paris conference said that, since Americans "need the cooperation of European countries," that "entails having to listen to them to take into account their approaches and considerations."²⁴ Even more humbly, an assistant secretary at the French Foreign Affairs Ministry pointed out that Europe had the self-effacing habit of always relying on U.S. intervention, even in its own backyard: "Until now every time a shot has been fired in some obscure village in the Balkans or anywhere else, everyone has rushed to Washington to ask the Americans to intervene."²⁵ The Presidency of the Council worried that the Bush administration's having "made it clear" that it wanted to hold only one E.U.-U.S. summit per year would not "signal a setback in EU-US relations."²⁶

While highlighting “the unique and ever-increasing importance of the relationship between the European Union and the United States,” E.U. officials hastened to specify that the two power blocks simply had to work together because of “our shared responsibility in facing the growing number of global economic and political challenges.”²⁷ The European Union harped on “shared responsibility” to tell Washington that Europe was a valuable partner, one that could offer a “joint model” and shoulder part of America’s responsibility as defender of the values of democracy and freedom. E.U. reports insisted on the mutual need for partnership, calling leaders’ “fundamental priority” “promoting EU-US cooperation” and “resolving differences,” while defending the idea that “no discussion with the US on any priority issue should pre-empt the outcome of any internal EU discussion.”²⁸

That the Council of the European Union should state that member states would preferably agree among each other before making any special deals with the United States suggests just how deeply America was felt to be “a European power,” as Hamilton said. Before the “war on terror,” Europe feared two problems arising from America’s lone superpower status: That it would relegate Europe to a fully subordinate role and that European states would make eyes at Washington even at the risk of alienating each other and weakening the Union. Perhaps with the exception of trade disputes, the thought that U.S. power could become less overwhelming did not seem to the cross E.U. officials’ mind.

To update the transatlantic agenda for the twenty-first century, the Council’s Presidency set a humble goal that spoke of being America’s friends, not its opposition: “The aim in part would be to *rebalance* dialogue with US away from trade conflicts to longer-term strategic goals.”²⁹ The squabbles over genetically modified foods and the likes were detrimental to Europe, which should instead work hard to reengage Washington to the levels where it had been during the Cold War, when defense against the Soviet Union provided a “long-term strategic goal.” The biggest obstacle was that the superpower, sure of its supremacy, might squash every effort at “rebalancing.” Successful, united European policies, in common security for example, might “change the balance of power in the relationship, and Europeans questioned whether the United States really wanted that.”³⁰

The terror attacks seemed to provide exactly the kind of circumstances and incentives to convince Washington to promote Europe from serf to partner—which has long been the hope underlying Europe’s Atlanticism. Terror had put down the giant, which, newly vulnerable and awakened from its aloofness, would finally realize that it needed Europe, at least as second-in-command in its new ideological global mission. Fighting fundamentalist terrorists could be even better than the Cold War and the struggle against Communism, because, this time, Europe was united

politically in public sentiment against terrorism and it could help the United States in a battle where military might was not the prerequisite. Europeans felt they could eat their cake and have it too: It was the perfect chance to jump-start Europe as the complementary Western superpower and to do so comfortably as America's ideal ally.

On September 11 and 12, 2001, both NATO and the leaders of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom made public remarks of unflinching solidarity and support with the United States—"we are with you," in NATO's words.³¹ Italian and British Prime Ministers Silvio Berlusconi and Tony Blair (with his Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw), in their comments to the press, spoke of the United States as the brother power standing shoulder to shoulder with them. Berlusconi, defining September 11 as "the darkest day of *our* history" and recognizing the United States as having been "at the basis of our redemption and our reconstruction in the last 50 years," said Italy was "in the front line" in America's war against terrorism.³² Straw, after mentioning the "exceptionalism" of an event "beyond the imagination of any of us," said that Great Britain, "a very close ally of the United States," stood "ready to give whatever help we can."³³

French President Jacques Chirac's and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's words, published verbatim in the press, also wholly identified with America and put their countries squarely at America's side. Chirac wrote that, "What happened in the United States concerns us all," and France would therefore "do what needs to be done."³⁴ Schröder similarly said that the attacks "were not only against the United States but against us all" and offered "every support [Americans] wish for."³⁵ Germans, he continued, would "never forget the extraordinary support received from the American government and the American people to rebuild after the war and to unite" the country. "Germany will do its part," he concluded.

The highly emotional tone of their remarks should not hide their strong political commitment. These government leaders said America—both abstractly as its government and broadly as the people—was the benevolent, friendly power that had stood by Europe's side and that now needed Europe to do the same. It did not occur to them that America might prefer the recent paths of isolationism and unilateralism. Surely the hyperpower would—finally—realize it needed its "friends" much as they had needed America during their own crises. European officials pledged their allegiance to the Stars and Stripes in a tone just as charged as that of Europe's press, even if it meant war.

From the blow of the attacks, dream America at first bounced back stronger than ever. The report on transatlantic relations, which became public at the end of September 2001, called the "uniquely powerful America" "a hugely powerful force for good in the world."³⁶ An attack on the United States amounted to an attack on "the sacrosanct values of

life and democracy," the E.U. Parliament president said.³⁷ Despite the almost superhuman scale of the outrage, one Parliament member from France professed himself "convinced of the American people's ability to come through this ordeal."³⁸ Paradoxically, given the relationship between European radicals and the Bush administration, the Parliament's radical delegation representative said Americans had been attacked instead of Europeans not because they stood for evil things but rather because they dared to stand for something, because "our American friends" had not demonstrated "the lack of courage of our policy, . . . its ambiguities and its hypocrisies."³⁹

America still represented the country of choice, the "multi-cultural microcosm of the whole world," so that when "somebody touches" the city guarded by the Statue of Liberty, "they touch us all deeply, because it is part of our common, human, democratic bond and inheritance," in the words of an E.U. parliamentarian.⁴⁰ In a Council statement, the attacks were defined as "an assault on *our* open, democratic, tolerant and multi-cultural societies" and "a real challenge for Europe."⁴¹ Council President Guy Verhofstadt told the European Parliament at its September 12 extraordinary sitting that, "We feel that we are all Americans" because the target was "democracy itself"—the undying dream of exceptional U.S. democracy.⁴² More dramatically, a Parliament member from Germany told the assembly that 9/11 was "an attack on the entire civilised world, an attack against every one of us, including those in this Chamber."⁴³ Politicians talked about the all-inclusive American dream: U.S. "citizens" are united by values rather than by passports. The editor of the report on transatlantic relations said terrorism was an attempt "to destroy the West." "We are in this together," he added, because "Osama bin Laden makes no distinction."⁴⁴ For a brief moment that Europe fervently hoped would have lasting consequences, terrorism seemed to have leveled power disparities.

The "Western community" of Europeans and Americans was based on "the democratic values shared by the EU and the US," and only by them, E.U. officials smugly implied. The only difference was "a cultural security gap" on missile and military defense in general that threatened "a philosophical divergence of the partners as societies develop different value systems and different codes of conduct."⁴⁵ The provokingly low-tech terror attacks would in all likelihood smooth that problem, too. Not only had they demonstrated that even the mightiest military superpower was vulnerable, but they had also balanced the power equation. "We have all become Americans because the Americans, like we Europeans, have become vulnerable and subject to the tragedy of history," the director of the Western European Union Institute for Security Studies said in September 2001.⁴⁶ Her view of the United States as somehow spared the "tragedy of history" shows just how exceptional E.U. officials reputed

the country to be, and how momentous they thought 9/11 would prove for the superpower.

Like European journalists, E.U. officials repeatedly commented that nothing would be the same after the attacks. Europe was caught up in the turmoil: Its common foreign and security policy would have to be implemented in a "changed security-policy situation."⁴⁷ Over and over, they insisted that support was a two-way bridge across the Atlantic, a bridge that linked the two continents that provided an example of virtue to a sorry world. On September 12, Prodi said: "We commit ourselves to cooperate with President Bush and the U.S. government to *give our populations a democratic and safe world*."⁴⁸ The fact that Prodi specifically mentioned the much-disliked U.S. president indicates how quickly the tone had changed and how far Europe was extending itself in reconciliation. With a large dose of ethnocentrism, the transatlantic conference report's editor said the United States and Europe were "the only two real anchors in this world to which peace and stability can be firmly attached."⁴⁹

The extremist Islamic threat provided the ideal context to push Europe as the perfect ally on the merits not of military and strategic power—where the scale still weighed too heavily on the U.S. side—but of civilization. The two Western powers would fight under the same banner of the American dream to defend it at home and promote it across the world. A joint declaration by the leaders of the European Union in September 2001 described the United States as "a country with which the European Union is striving to build a better world."⁵⁰ The European Union had some unique contributions to bring to the table of the leaders "in a new world order." It portrayed itself as "a power able both to play a stabilising role worldwide and to point the way ahead for many countries and people"—"a power wanting to change the course of world affairs in such a way as to benefit not just the rich countries but also the poorest."⁵¹

That clarification sounds like a jab at America the materialist and business-minded giant that could do with a little European restraint. Again E.U. leaders were asking Washington to consider Europe as an ally that America now needed: "Our only choice is to stand united; for united we stand, but divided we shall fall."⁵² The many official declarations of "wholehearted support" and "staunchest support for the military operations," and of the "necessity" to "manifest total solidarity" harp on that need: "The people of Europe are standing shoulder to shoulder with the United States," European Parliament President Nicole Fontaine said in September 2001.⁵³

New as it might be for Washington to bother looking across the Atlantic with more than condescension, this time E.U. leaders thought the United States could not help noticing Europe's extended hand. "We want the United States to be *aware* that Europe is by its side," the Belgian Foreign Minister told Parliament, hinting at the novelty of such "unqualified"

European support (to quote a leftist Parliament member).⁵⁴ The European Council also urged the E.U. Presidency "to convey and *explain*" the outcome of its extraordinary meeting in September 2001 to "the highest authorities of the United States," who apparently were not used to understanding why Brussels' goings-on mattered.⁵⁵ Expecting that America would call in its hour of need, the European Union professed itself "committed to playing its part," with member states modestly proclaiming themselves "ready to act each according to their means."⁵⁶

It was "Europe's responsibility to prove to the United States the value of allies," the report on transatlantic relations concluded.⁵⁷ With such a united show of solidarity and commitment, this time Europe would make the lone superpower realize that it was in its best interest to take advantage of its allies instead of continuing blindly to go it alone. Europe's special value to America was two-fold. First of all, it could balance a United States that was feared to be too ready to unleash its military power.⁵⁸ The European Council suggested that the fight against terrorism would be "all the more effective if it is based on an in-depth political dialogue" and the Parliament noted that "in some respects" "American and European approaches" to terrorism were "incompatible." More explicitly, the conference report said Europe could contribute "more policy," while Americans, or better "the US super-military," were concentrating "rhetoric and action on military operations."⁵⁹

The second contribution, strictly related to diplomacy vs. weapons, was within the context of a possible clash of civilizations. The Union could be of particular help because of the "importance of its relations with its Arab and Muslim partners," compared with the souring American image in the Islamic world, so that overall increased "cooperation and consultation" would strengthen the "partnership" between Europe and the United States.⁶⁰ The recognition of partnership was exactly what Europe aspired to in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. Brussels pinned its still-deferent hopes for the twenty-first-century transatlantic relationship on Washington's realization that, "The European Union is . . . potentially ideally suited to becoming the *preferred partner* of the United States."⁶¹

Europe's offers of help within this partnership were said to be nothing but the logical continuation of a reciprocity that had marked E.U.-U.S. relations for the last 50 years at least. Clearly hopeful that Washington would not deviate from this policy, E.U. leaders remembered all the times America had been on Europe's side in crises: The United States was "that great democracy which did so much to help Europe protect its freedom," in Fontaine's words.⁶² Provoking a loud applause in the European Parliament, a German member linked past help with the importance of future alliance:

The United States is a world power to which we owe a debt of gratitude for fighting against Nazism in the Second World War and thus guaranteeing a peaceful future for Europe and it is a world power which has firmly resisted totalitarian communism, which ultimately led to the collapse of the wall dividing Berlin, Germany and Europe. On behalf of my group [Christian Democrats and European Democrats] I would like to say that it is in *our interest* for America to retain its *ability to act* and to be *strong*.⁶³

Most E.U. officials would have agreed with his last statement—U.S. leadership might have been at times overwhelming, but it was also often necessary. Europe wanted to be America's pal, not its nemesis. Still, it wanted to preserve some dignity, to be recognized as having a voice in international affairs where for so long only the United States seemed to matter. The United States, "jealous" as it was of ceding its leading role to any other power block, should at least learn to act "under United Nations aegis." It should also accept that Europe now was ready and willing to "play a greater part in the efforts of the international community to prevent and stabilise regional conflicts," instead of leaving the world to be America's battlefield.⁶⁴

Europe certainly was fed up with an American leadership that seemed to consider its role as simply consisting "of the United States informing its allies about what it wants and how it expects them to act."⁶⁵ But Europeans still did not seek to mount a challenge to America; rather, they found that the "task of Europe" in trying to "balance American power" was to acquire "sufficient power...and influence to ensure that [Europe's] voice is heard in Washington."⁶⁶ If Washington accepted that voice, if it acknowledged that Europe had something to contribute to global politics and specifically to help the U.S. struggle against terrorism, then Europe was willing to partner up with America and even to still grant it the leadership position that both its real power and ideal exceptionality had earned for it.

The response to 9/11 had the potential to reconcile the paradoxes of Europe's position vis-à-vis America. It could save the desire for a truly ideal American leadership and eliminate the humiliating realpolitik of a superpower that needed vassals more than allies and whom it would already be an accomplishment to get to hear others' concerns. The September 2001 report's recommendation for the future of transatlantic relations was the restoration of this "truism": "America needs Europe as much as Europe needs America." As if to highlight that Europe's aspirations were exceedingly moderate, the editor went on to explain that that meant Brussels expected from Washington "partnership as well as leadership." Europe wanted to be told it was in the same boat as the United States, not even necessarily that they were all equal.

Such meekness, however, only seems to have hastened the deep disillusionment between the two powers. While the challenge posed by

terrorism made the transatlantic “search for cohesion” “more urgent” in the face of “American need,” E.U. leaders did not wholly forget that the United States had shown a “penchant for assessing burden-sharing in a very narrow way,” and thus “considerable European doubts remained that it was any longer possible for Europe to influence US policy.” America was a nation “that needs to control more than confer,” the transatlantic relations report’s editor argued, citing the infamous “Don’t ring us, we’ll ring you” summary of America’s reply to Europe’s solidarity and support.⁶⁷ As early as October 2001, the European Parliament was raising the stakes for E.U.-U.S. partnership, recommending the Union become “a long-term strategic player on the world stage, *with the USA where possible but without it if it is unwilling*.”⁶⁸

Europe was tired of straining at the U.S. leash and eager to demonstrate its “aspiration” and “for the first time” “mediate in a crisis and be taken seriously in that role,” especially crises where America seemed to have stepped down from a leading role (as in the Middle East peace process).⁶⁹ For too long, America had been the only “serious” player in international affairs. Even when dealing with a specific country like Iran, the European Parliament resolutions in 2001 began discussion of the E.U. position by acknowledging where the United States stood, indicating that Europe felt it always had to look to America first even when not dealing with it directly.⁷⁰ The basic E.U. foreign policy document, the 2003 “European Security Strategy,” constantly referred to the importance of the transatlantic relationship, which was barely mentioned in the U.S. “National Security Strategy” 2002 document.⁷¹ As one European Parliament member said simply, the United States was “the strongest nation of all.”⁷²

The perceived refusal of the United States to take Europe seriously even in its “darkest hour,” however, undermined that strength by spurring E.U. officials to position themselves as a counterweight. By 2002, Europe became openly insistent on Washington’s need to accept it as a “joint model” and to abandon the unilateralism that prevailed in security, foreign policy, and trade issues. The European Parliament’s April 2002 resolutions on the transatlantic relationship show how deeply the post-9/11 snub had scarred Europe: Given the “evolution of the EU as a *more active potential partner* of the US” and the “decisive” role of the “Transatlantic Partnership” not only in “providing security, stability and the spread of democracy” in the region but also “the rule of law *around the world*,” Parliament found itself “*deploring* the US administration’s shift towards *unilateralism*.”⁷³

Those words amount to a manifesto of Europe’s hopes for the transatlantic relationship as well as to a first explicit warning—Europe wanted and could be America’s best ally in its ideal mission, but it would not turn the other cheek to the United States’ stubborn disdain. First of all, America needed to at least acknowledge its allies and partners: E.U. states

"were open to seeking ways of meeting the US requests, but always on a reciprocal basis," a February 2002 Council report noted.⁷⁴ Europe had shown no qualms in recognizing its need for America, since "the Europe-America link has ensured peace in our continent" and "economic bonds between the EU and the US are still stronger than any other part of the world."⁷⁵

That made it even harder for policymakers to forgive the United States' unwillingness to recognize it needed Europe as well and, consequently, to put it on a par with itself. A Parliament member insisted that the partnership "has to be a relationship based on equality and mutual respect," but the United States had not "reciprocated" the European Union's "unstinting support and solidarity" in its foreign policy, and had instead shown "contempt" for Europe's "role in international affairs," taking the relationship as "simply one of convenience."⁷⁶ The whole Parliament lamented U.S. "lack of interest in close consultation and co-operation with the European partners" as particularly damaging when "enhanced co-operation" could "contribute decisively to the solution of the main crises."⁷⁷

Still, E.U. officials had not let go entirely of the common "fundamental values" and interests, and a history of America's defending those interests in Europe: "This prosperous and peaceful Europe that we know exists partly because of the generosity and solidarity of many Americans when, not so long ago, Europe was no more than a battlefield and, after that, a continent in ruin," in the words of the Spanish E.U. president in March 2002.⁷⁸ Based on those values, Europe and America, acting "together in harmony" and having made "a joint commitment to lead a hitherto unheard of cooperative effort on a global scale," could be models that "make a decisive contribution to generating a positive dynamic for world change," be it democracy, free trade, or environmental protection.⁷⁹ The "pursuit of the common global interests" was "the central defining political purpose of the Transatlantic Partnership," in the April 2002 statement of "joint exceptionality" by the European Parliament.⁸⁰ The "world will need both the United States and Europe," European Commissioner for Trade Pascal Lamy said.⁸¹

That, however, did not mean a Europe that played yes-man to the United States. "Diverging views," on the contrary, increased "the strategic importance of the transatlantic relationship," because the new post-9/11 threats could not "be countered by the USA alone." "The apparent alienation between the strategic partners" was to be "deplore[d]," said a European Parliament resolution in September 2002.⁸² Even though Europe wanted a "modernisation instead of marginalisation of the partnership" and meekly strove to be "a coherent, reliable and equal partner to the US,"⁸³ Washington seemed evermore inclined to dismiss partnership entirely and act as unilaterally as its unequalled power allowed it to do.

In the years after 9/11, condemnations of U.S. unilateralism have become ubiquitous.⁸⁴ Against the background of Europe's insistence on common values, mutual needs and the potential for a shared global role, those criticisms are the prelude to a spiral of souring feeling toward U.S. power.

In fact, E.U. officials are beginning to air the idea that this America might no longer be worthy of its exceptional global position. America seems regrettably left "alone to express itself on the international scene," according to the European Parliament, and it disregards the kind of "multilateral decision-making process" that would be "in accordance with its role as major global player."⁸⁵ E.U. leaders tend to be particularly acerbic when they blast the United States for complete disregard of its allies in economic matters. Debating U.S. steel tariffs in the European Parliament in March 2002, Lamy dubbed unilateralism America's "chronic illness," "reinvented" for "clearly political" purposes by the Bush administration intent on "forcing the outside world to bear the burden" of domestic economic problems.

"Unlike the United States," Lamy said, Europeans tend to "abide strictly by the international commitments" they sign on to: It was peculiarly American to "consider the world market to be the Wild West, where anyone can act as they see fit."⁸⁶ A British member of Parliament was more bellicose, adding that, given "the rule of the law of George Bush's economic jungle," Europeans would "need to brandish big sticks which are felt on the domestic US political scene."⁸⁷ Yet, two Parliament members argued that the Union was too cowardly to use "big sticks," "call Mr Bush's bluff," and really assume a global role: "We do not have the courage to admit that there are differences between us and the USA," one of them said in March 2002.⁸⁸

Slowly but surely, calls for taking on the United States and questioning its leadership increasingly crept into E.U. debates in 2002. A Parliament member urged the Commission to "take on" Bush, because his self-described "global leadership" was in the form of military power, while in "citizenship and respect for others" he was a "global dunce" that mounted a "deliberate attack" on European workers' "livelihood."⁸⁹ Both the Wild-West economic style and the gun-toting foreign policy America was seen as embracing came under attack. E.U. leaders increasingly are offering the European Union not as a joint model but as an alternative to America. Europe could be a "civilian power," better equipped to handle world affairs because the problems of "today's world cannot be solved by military means only or mainly."⁹⁰ The European Parliament resolved that the Union's role would be "conflict prevention" and "thus to some extent counterbalancing the US 'axis of evil' doctrine."⁹¹

While not ready to discard what America stood for entirely, E.U. leaders have begun to publicly repudiate the United States they see as bent on having its way, disregarding every effort for a real and ideal partnership

that the European Union made. No longer content with sharing the U.S. mission, Europe wants to try out its own approach to twenty-first-century issues, basing that approach on an often black-and-white opposition to what the United States does. Europe's official position vis-à-vis America is morphing from "wholehearted support" to "counterbalancing." In doing so, it is following the people's will, or at least its feeling.

Since 9/11, European public opinion toward the United States has quickly gone remarkably sour. The gap between how America sees itself and the dimming view from abroad has never been larger, as the authors of a study of world opinion put it.⁹² According to the Pew Global Attitudes Project, a series of surveys started in late 2001 and based on more than 38,000 interviews in 44 nations, the percent of people in France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy with a favorable view of the United States dropped by as much as 17 percent from 2000 to 2002, although it remained in the 60 to 70 percent range.⁹³ Measured again in March 2003, at the start of the war in Iraq, it had dropped below the majority—only a quarter of the Germans interviewed (down from 78 percent in 2000), roughly a third of the French and the Italians (down from 62 and 76 percent, respectively) and fewer than half of the British (down from 83 percent) said they held a favorable view of the United States.⁹⁴ More than four years later, in June 2007, the negativity held steady—66 percent of the Germans and 60 percent of the French, as well as 42 percent of the British and 38 percent of the Italians had a very or somewhat unfavorable view of the United States.⁹⁵ On the surface, Europeans harbor profound dislike for Bush: Nearly three-quarters of the French and Germans interviewed in 2003, as well as substantial majorities of Italians and British interviewed who held a negative view of the United States, said that "the problem with the U.S." was "mostly Bush"—though that was before the 2004 reelection, which is the subject of Chapter 9.⁹⁶

But already before the September 11 attacks, public opinion polls show that Europeans were critical of the United States because they found it unilateralist and disdainful of Europe in its quest for unparalleled power. Around three quarters of the French, Germans, Italians, and British interviewed in August 2001 said that the Bush administration made decisions "based only on U.S. interests," and nearly the same percentages of interviewees found that Bush "understands Europe" "less than other presidents."⁹⁷ To criticize the United States for not acting for the larger good instead of pursuing its own interests alone is to acknowledge that America should be a unique superpower. Those negative perceptions of U.S. actions stemmed from the deeply ingrained belief that the United States could and should be exceptional—that is why they cannot be dismissed simply as "anti-American"; on the contrary, they are, paradoxically, statements of faith in the tenets of the American dream, in the uniqueness of U.S. power.

That faith, coupled with the uncomfortable feeling that the overwhelmingly necessary U.S. power had contemptuously eclipsed Europe, made ordinary Europeans rant about Washington's unilateralism. If they had not thought America had the power and therefore the responsibility to be the catalyst for global good, why would large majorities (from the upper 80s to the mid 60s percentile range) have disapproved of the U.S. dismissing the Kyoto pact and developing the missile defense program, issues rarely off the international pages of Europe's press in early 2001?⁹⁸ For that same reason, it is not a contradiction that substantial majorities approved of keeping U.S. troops in the Balkans—America making its presence felt in the world, even if armed and alone, was not criticized *per se*.⁹⁹ Disapproval of the United States' withdrawal from international agreements and approval of the United States' involvement tell the same story: Europe believed America was necessary for the solution of a variety of global problems. Again, the strongly negative public opinion of what the United States did betrays a strongly positive sentiment for what the United States was thought to be.

In fact, most Europeans interviewed in August 2001 said that there was no rift between America and Europe: When asked to put aside their opinion of the Bush administration, most of the interviewees said they believed "the basic interests of Europe and the U.S." had "remained about the same," or even, in the German case, had "grown closer."¹⁰⁰ The minorities who believed that there was an increasing gap between the two continents said they attributed it to less mutual need for protection after the Cold War, to overpowering U.S. multinationals, to the strengthening of the European Union and, more significantly, to "social and cultural values" that were "increasingly different."¹⁰¹ The seeds of doubt those minorities had cast light on what Europeans felt America should be: The necessary protective power, one that by and large shared European values and was not interested in shameless economic domination. Those who thought that identity was changing also thought the United States and Europe were growing apart.

The attacks of September 11 stopped that trend in its tracks and for a brief moment silenced those doubts. After all, as most Western European opinion leaders said, the attacks "opened up a new chapter in world history."¹⁰² In this new era, all were Americans, except for the practical detail that Europeans were willing to grant "real" Americans global leadership in dealing with the newly urgent threat of terrorism. Majorities of Europeans felt that transatlantic kinship so keenly that they said it was likely that terrorist actions in their own country would soon follow the tragedies in New York City and Washington.¹⁰³ Terrorists were after the West, so there was no precious time to waste in squabbling across the pond.

Two months after 9/11, majorities over 80 percent in France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy said that they followed coverage of the terrorist

attacks and their aftermath “very carefully” or “carefully,” a sign of how close to home they perceived the attacks to have hit.¹⁰⁴ More than three quarters of Western European opinion leaders, ranging from politicians to journalists, said in late 2001 that people in their countries would be “sad to see America suffer,” because Europe loved those Stars and Stripes after all.¹⁰⁵ Among the almost half of them who said their country would “become a target of Al Qaeda,” more than a third said that “allying closely with the US” would be “the best way of preventing such attacks.”¹⁰⁶ Not only all value divergences were forgiven in the face of such common threat against what Europe and America both stood for, but even U.S. power was reaffirmed despite the sudden vulnerability revealed by the attacks, because Europeans still thought it wisest to stay on America’s side.

While a majority of opinion leaders also said most people in their countries considered it “good for U.S. to feel vulnerable” and two thirds of them accused the United States of unilateralism even at that early stage of the war against terrorism,¹⁰⁷ broader popular opinion was willing to let the United States take a leadership position in the war. Large majorities called it appropriate to put their national intelligence services and their military bases “at the *disposal* of the anti-terrorist coalition *led by the US*.”¹⁰⁸ The way the questions were phrased left no room for doubt as to whether the coalition would reflect a partnership or strong U.S. leadership: In the wake of the attacks, Europeans were happy with following the superpower’s lead. (Incidentally, it might be surprising to note that the British came in behind continental Europe in expressing their support to be at America’s disposal, even when their government was Washington’s staunchest supporter.)

It might interest the disparagers of “old Europe” to also note that France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy (plus the Netherlands) were the only countries in Western Europe in November 2001 where a popular majority supported sending its own troops “to fight with the U.S. forces.”¹⁰⁹ Europeans clearly included the United States in the same community of values and interests and reaffirmed the Cold War tradition of defending and supporting both U.S. power and leadership. For a brief moment at least, sympathy for the United States encompassed both what the United States did and what it was. Average Europeans were even more pro-American than their own opinion leaders gave them credit for. A large majority of Western European opinion leaders said that the fact that the “U.S. does a lot of good” was not a reason why people liked America, while they said “resentment of U.S. power in the world” was a “major reason” for people in their countries to dislike the United States.¹¹⁰ But popular opinion polls show that, at least in America’s “darkest hour,” E.U. citizens found U.S. leadership well worth supporting, even if it meant putting themselves in the frontlines.

Europe's politicians, opinion leaders, the press, and average Joes agreed on one fundamental thing after terror struck: The American dream was alive in the United States and had to be defended. As opinion leaders said, "American democratic ideals" and the perception that "America is the land of opportunity" were "major reasons" for people's appreciation for the United States.¹¹¹ Still, they insisted that the feeling had to be translated into an enlightened U.S. leadership that embraced its friends instead of swatting them aside. Sixty-six percent of opinion leaders polled complained that the United States was not taking into account its partners' interests but only its own.¹¹² All eyes were watching how America wielded its unequalled power at the crucial moment when its global role stood unmatched and Europe had closed ranks around it offering its spiritual and material aid.

Already brushed the wrong way by Washington's spurning of E.U. help, Europeans focused their thoughts about America on one condition: Would the United States really pursue a just war against those who had outraged it and all it stood for, or would it push its advantage in a naked quest for power? As early as in a November 2001 European Union survey, majorities approaching 90 percent in France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy called it "essential" or "necessary" for the European Union to "prevent the conflict from extending to countries other than Afghanistan."¹¹³ That is the line Europeans drew. All their support went to the United States if its actions fit the image of the newly vulnerable and suffering nation burdened with leadership and a model role in the world.

But an America that disregarded its partners' interests and, more important to public opinion, that would strike countries other than those accused of having struck it did not fit that image, and European overt disenchantment with the United States boomed. By mid-2002, Europeans no longer saw America as the respected leader but as a unilateral, power-hungry giant whose only feeble interest in Europe was as a useless dependent, not an ally in thought and action. Governments who sided with America paid the price in popular support—in France and Germany, 69 percent of the public approved the role of their governments, whose opposition to the expanding U.S. "war on terror" was becoming official, while nearly a third of Italians and British said their governments, siding with America, were "too supportive" of U.S. policies.¹¹⁴ Almost exactly the same percentages of people surveyed in April 2002 as in August 2001 said Bush based "decisions mainly on US interests," and large majorities in Western Europe, including nearly three quarters of British respondents, blamed the United States for going it alone in the "war on terrorism."¹¹⁵

Majorities in France, Great Britain, and Italy, as well as 45 percent of Germans, said U.S. foreign policy did not "consider others."¹¹⁶ Vast majorities also disapproved of the way the Bush administration seemed

eager to label entire countries as part of the “axis of evil,” while even larger ones criticized Washington on the “European” topic, namely steel tariffs, that had replaced Kyoto and missile defense as the top complaint against the United States in spring 2002.¹¹⁷ General cultural values still provided some common ground for Americans and Europeans—the threat posed by Islamic terrorism, for example, with only slightly smaller percentages of Europeans than Americans fearing new attacks, and American popular culture (meaning music, movies, and television), which large majorities in Western Europe said they liked.¹¹⁸

But by the end of 2002, Europeans increasingly saw their relationship with the United States as one of dependence—they no longer appreciated the protective umbrella of the superpower and resented the aloof predominance even of what they liked. Even though they liked U.S. pop culture, for example, majorities in France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy disliked the spread of American “ideas and customs.”¹¹⁹ It is perhaps a case of too much of a good thing—movies and songs per se are fine, but their seemingly unstoppable spread smacks too much of overwhelming U.S. power and European deference. Similarly, while 63 percent of E.U. citizens support globalization, three quarters of them say the United States has “too much influence” on it, according to a 2003 poll.¹²⁰ A large majority of French and Italians, as well as a majority of Germans and half the British, especially the young and the more educated, said that “Western Europe should be more independent” from the United States.¹²¹ That should not be read as an assertion that U.S. power is less gigantic and Europe more self-assured; rather, those declarations of independence show how deeply distrustful Europe has grown of the ability of the United States to use that power in a model leadership role. In fact, Europeans tend to be extremely wary of the trap of jingoism and to err on the side of worshipping anything coming from across the Atlantic. Contrary to the United States, where six in ten people said their culture was “superior to others,” Italy was the only European country where a small majority thought the same way about its national culture, according to a 2003 poll.¹²²

The disappointment in U.S. leadership explains why abundant majorities in France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy said in April 2002 that the United States was not “doing enough to bring about peace” in the Middle East.¹²³ The question itself assigns to the United States a leading role in bringing good to the world, and sets up the disillusion of those answering it, which turns into general disapproval of U.S. actions. The best indication that Europeans were beginning to question the ability of the United States to be a model lies in the equally damning assessments in France, Great Britain, and Italy that the United States in 2002 was doing too much or too little “to solve world problems”; solid majorities in each country even condemned the United States for “increasing the rich/poor gap.”¹²⁴ Just asking how the United States is doing in “solving world

problems"—a pretty tall call for any country and an especially unexpected one for the reigning superpower—puts the country in the exceptional position of global leader.

Until very recently, the underlying fact that Europeans like what America stood for—the ideals of the American dream—has pushed them both to support the country and to condemn it when it does not meet exceptional expectations. Those very expectations have placed the United States on the pedestal of global leader. The Bush administration's particularly glaring failures to meet them in Europe's eyes have seriously rocked that pedestal. Stubbornly, the people in France, Germany, and Great Britain held on to the hope that it is all a question of actions rather than philosophies: At the end of 2002, majorities attributed differences between their country and the United States to "different policies" rather than "different values" (Italians were evenly divided).¹²⁵

But there are worrisome signs that the pedestal, shaken one too many times in the "war on terror," might be cracking under the pressure. Some Europeans have begun to question the very ideals that they supposed America stood for, not just the U.S. actions that they thought were inconsistent with the ideals. The growing doubts cut at the very core of dream America: In the second half of 2002, European publics, including the British, were rather evenly divided between those who liked and those who disliked "American ideas about *democracy*."¹²⁶ By mid-2007, only between 23 and 38 percent of respondents in Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany would say they like America's idea of democracy.¹²⁷ A year after the invasion of Iraq, majorities in France, Germany and even Great Britain said they had "less confidence that the U.S. wants to promote democracy all around the world."¹²⁸ Among the substantial majorities in France and Germany that no longer called the "war on terror" a "sincere effort" to reduce terrorism, nearly half said the real American goal was "to dominate the world."¹²⁹

In the space of a few years, Europe's America seems to have gone from the great model republic to the benign superpower that should be interested in the world's good to the cunning demagogue out to get everybody. The latest criticisms go well beyond the disappointment in the United States' ability and willingness to perform in the role it is given by its unparalleled power and with the responsibility it is granted by its acknowledged leadership. They question the very universal values the United States has been thought to represent—democracy and freedom. And in doing so, they open the floor to discussion about another model power to pick up America's slack, namely Europe. Majorities in France, Germany, and Great Britain said in 2004 that the European Union should become as powerful as the United States, "Even if it means that Europe would have to pay the costs of taking greater responsibility for international problems."¹³⁰

That is the kind of counterweight that should concern Washington—not so much Brussels’ trade rulings or supposed popular anti-Americanism, but the growing disbelief that the United States really wants or can be all that it is expected to be. The consequences of the mistrust in the equation between the American dream and U.S. power are very real. About half the respondents in countries where substantial majorities favored putting their intelligence services, their military bases, *and* their troops at U.S. disposal to fight terrorism in November 2001 said they opposed the U.S.-led anti-terrorism effort in June 2007. Europeans are following their growing disbelief in the American dream out the door of a faltering transatlantic relationship.

The U.S. government hears about what the world thinks of the United States daily, in the form of feedback to public diplomacy initiatives to change the U.S. image abroad. Eager to contain increasing anti-Americanism, the Media Reaction Office in the State Department’s Office of Research in Washington pores over the world’s press to prepare arguments countering hostile foreign ones. More than a thousand people at U.S. diplomatic posts across the world are engaged in that “open-source intelligence collection,” and they collect, translate, and transmit daily editorials about U.S. policies to the Media Reaction staff, who analyze and gather them in reports sent to the White House, Congress, and others. From “Issue Focus” briefings on a particular topic to general overviews, these reports nail virtually all grudges Europe has against America, but they do not highlight the danger Europe’s changing attitude poses to U.S. power.

Some reports have captured Europe’s discontent with perceived U.S. disengagement from the rest of the world and its slighting of allies: In 2003, a Special Report said that critics in the European press “faulted the U.S. for ‘unnecessarily’ damaging relations with allies and potential partners, ‘squandering’ international goodwill following the 9/11 attacks and for leaving the world ‘more divided’ as a result.”¹³¹ Emphasizing the change from the solidarity that marked the immediate aftermath of 9/11 and the increasingly critical direction Europe’s press has taken, the report said that press support for the United States worldwide had dropped from 54 percent to 17 percent and that most commentators were “decrying U.S. ‘unilateral’ tendencies”; Europe, however, had “‘no choice’ but to cooperate with the superpower.”

But Europe seems to be searching precisely for that alternative choice. Waved aside by the lone superpower, it is beginning to question whether America deserves more than the festering resentment some of its actions generate. In policy documents as in public opinion polls, the tone has been in equal doses critical in early 2001, sympathetic and admiring in the immediate wake of September 11 and vitriolic in the years since. The plummeting approval for America when it was perceived to act for its

own interests and not for the larger global good still fit Europe's nearly subconscious willingness to defer to the United States the exceptional role of the savior of Europe, the herald of freedom and democracy. That idealistic image of the United States underlay both the touching affirmations of Europe's solidarity and the scathing criticisms for the faults Europeans found in the use of U.S. power.

Dislike for what America is doing, however, has been solidified by Washington's overt disdain, the continuing problems of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and Europe's growing sense of self-worth. It is now slowly turning into challenges to what America is supposed to be, especially after the 2004 reelection dealt another blow to Europe's perception, as will be discussed in Chapter 9. Faith in the United States as the incarnation of the American dream is wavering, so Europeans are beginning to question the very ideals they have long believed to be peculiarly real across the ocean. Within the same context, E.U. leaders are beginning to wonder whether the joint-model of Western virtue is really feasible, whether Europe should continue to be satisfied with being Washington's little helper. In March 2005, Italy's *Corriere della Sera* ran an editorial entitled, "In 2123 the E.U. tortoise will catch up with the U.S. hare."¹³² The writer meant the reference to Aesop's fable as a sobering reminder that Europe's revenge on the Stars and Stripes will take a lot longer than some E.U. enthusiasts are predicting. But what is relevant is that there should be any talk of competition at all—today's Europeans feel the race is on and, if the Greek storyteller was right, they also feel they have a chance to end up on the highest podium.

Up to the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks, Europeans, overtly or implicitly, embraced the belief in the United States as a model whose actions they judged by different standards and whose global leadership—real in its unmatched power and ideal in its ideological allure—they could not and should not abandon. Then came 9/11, the first page in the history of a changed world. Because America's power had made it seem invulnerable and America's exceptionality relied on its image of beacon capable and often willing of "being a force for good in the world," Europeans found it "impossible to comprehend" how hatred could cripple the "strongest nation of all." They watched the smoke billowing from the devastation in Manhattan and Washington and Pennsylvania, wondering what kind of American phoenix would rise from the ashes.

Europe's America at the dawn of the twenty-first-century was, at the most obvious level, the land of plenty. Europeans disliked its "materialism reflex," which often translated into dominance, and found it too inclined to stretch its military muscle for comfort. Still, Europeans went to great lengths to separate the American people from the consistently and vastly disparaged Bush administration, which they found equally ignorant of the problems of grammar and of international affairs. When

terror struck, Europeans found themselves wholly under the spell of the Star-Spangled Banner. They overflowed with sympathy for the “undefeatable” “concept America,” that ineffable blend of common values and interests that made the West one. “What America is, and we with her,” in an Italian journalist’s words, glued the United States to its exceptional pedestal and pointed to its uniquely universal constitution—the choice of brave immigrants. An attack under the eyes of the Statue of Liberty was an attack on everybody, including individual European Parliament members. The statements of shared values and the special transatlantic relationship, which had been an official conciliatory, appealing gesture to the United States giant not to forgo its European friends, who still hoped to be “the preferred partner,” spread to the very heart of Europe’s attitude toward America.

The European press depicted a larger-than-life United States, the magic kingdom of Oz compared to Europe’s Kansas, both a “retreat” from, and an “example” to, the Old World. Model America was granted a special, indispensable global role, one that made isolationism impossible, vulnerability shocking, and unilateralism frightening in equal measures. Europeans thought the attacks would return the superpower to its ideal leadership, put it back straight again after being bent on the unstoppable march of a dominator ready to “swat aside” everything in its way. They placed Europe in a secondary, yet important position, born of a debt of gratitude and of the necessity to keep the hyperpower from being too “inconsiderate” in pushing its advantage. Even offering what they considered was needed help to the United States was “strange and unusual” for Europe, where people found it difficult to “let go of the idea that America is indispensable.” Not even E.U. policymakers questioned the potential for American leadership; as Prodi put it, Europe would be happy being treated with “dignity,” a remarkably acquiescent statement.

What they did question was the increasingly obvious, and unexpected, stance on Washington’s part to take on the world alone. After 9/11, E.U. foreign policy discussions have been dominated by “deploring” for U.S. unilateralism. Some of those accusations fit the image of the lone superpower that does not bother to disguise its unreachably superior might, but they are not incoherent with the exceptional expectations born of enduring faith in the exceptionality of America. What superpower would not act solely in its interest if not one believed to have both a special power to do harm and a special responsibility to do good globally? But Europeans have also started to take unilateralism personally. After all the hopes that America, now also “subject to the tragedy of history,” would let Europe take on “shared responsibilities” and the two powers would finally be “the only two real anchors” in the “pursuit of the common global interests,” U.S. go-it-alone stubbornness was nothing short of an explicit slight.

Because their hopes had been modest—Europeans said they wanted “a partnership *as well as* leadership” because it was in everybody’s interest that “America retains its ability to act and be strong”—their disappointment cut deep. Europe’s role is shaping up as increasingly confrontational, not just on the practical but also on the ideal level. All revolves around Europe’s belief in a dream America. Support for sending European men and women to fight alongside Americans against those who had attacked civilization, symbolized by New York City (“a city metaphor for the world”), makes sense if one believes in “concept America,” and so does support for having the European Union stop the United States from extending the “war on terrorism” to a non-implicated country, in an apparent effort “to dominate the world.” This latest incarnation of U.S. power, however, is running so brazenly counter to what Europe thinks should be the efforts of “the great democracy” to promote global democratic change that Concept America is quickly becoming a question mark.

Just as in 1898, the good news is that Europe has not entirely let go of the expectation that the America of the early 2000s can still be a force for good, although it is showing remarkably little signs of being willing to act in ways Europeans recognize as consistent with *their* America. The bad news is that Europeans have begun to act on their doubt about whether the United States is still the repository of dreams, and to argue that its own swatting them aside in the pursuit of naked power has irreparably damaged it. Even just allowing that America might be an ordinary kind of super-hare is putting spring in the tortoise’s steps. And such disenchantment has never been more dangerous than in the face of today’s global threats.

The Exceptional Power

In streets, in newspapers, in parliamentary halls, Europeans of all political hues shared the same impression of the Spanish-American War and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, with their aftermath of the “war on terror”: They were breaks in the history of the world. The reason they were considered so epochal is one of the same reasons for which they in fact were—they unexpectedly caused Europeans to wonder whether they had been right in their understanding of what the United States was all about. From the end of the nineteenth century to the dawn of the twenty-first century, the United States has meant in essence one thing to Europe—the American dream. It is impossible to understand the history and the future of transatlantic relations and of U.S. power without realizing that, to Europe, the United States is intrinsically different from all other countries—it is an undefeatable concept, a nation born of choice, a hope projected and built upon by the founders and by generations of immigrants ever since. As such, it has an indispensable global role. If the dream goes, so does the acceptance of U.S. leadership.

In 1898, America attacked—and Europeans thought America’s exceptionality as the land of democracy and freedom was on the verge of changing forever because the United States embraced Old-World imperialism and made of sheer power, not democratic uniqueness, its strength. In 2001, America was attacked—and Europe surprised itself in rediscovering that the exceptional features of the American dream were still at the root of American identity and of its power. Then Europeans thought they saw them all disappear again as Washington’s recourse to force plunged into the chaos of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

At both times, Europeans looked at what America did (or what was done against it) through the lens of what they thought America was and should be, namely a power exceptionally capable of benefiting or harming the world. American power and uniqueness are inextricably linked in European eyes, but there has always been an explosive tension between being unique and using power. In the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville argued that America was the perfect embodiment of democracy and that its lack of interest in “military glory” was the best guarantee of its remaining a great democratic republic. In Europe’s discourse, democracy and expansion do not mesh, and that dictum holds true in the 1890s as in the 2000s,

despite U.S. rhetoric about the providential mission to export the benefits of democracy by force.

So Europeans thought that grabbing Spain's colonies and extending the "war on terrorism" at will were fundamental changes in what America should have been all about. To them, there is an irreconcilable difference between America as they know it and expect it to behave—the free, democratic concept and leader—and the United States bent on "extending democracy in arms," as E.U. Commission President Romano Prodi put it in 2004. That difference first came in the global spotlight early in 1899, when, in the newly conquered Philippines, U.S. soldiers found themselves fighting insurgents who rebelled against American "liberation" just as they had against Spanish occupation. Editors at *The Manchester Guardian* highlighted what was wrong with that picture: "For the first time in history the United States will have to shoot down men of an alien race who honestly believe that they are fighting for freedom and the interests of their country."¹

The editors' appalled criticism of U.S. actions stemmed from their belief that the United States was the American dream of freedom and equality made real. America's power had the potential to be not only greater than others but also different, because it was founded on America's democratic uniqueness; it just could not be used in the same manner countless Great Powers had used theirs throughout history. Whether America remained true to its ideals mattered to Europeans in a very personal way: Journalists in 1898 and in 2001 called the United States the "hope for the future," a hope that touched all who believed in it.² Virtually all Europeans whose voices were heard in this book were just as ready to admire exceptional America as to blast its unexceptional ways, not only because of disappointment but also because the prospect of a powerful United States behaving in the Old-World imperialist style, bent on dominating rather than leading, scared them. Ultimately, some said, it should worry Americans too, because a frightened partner can easily become a menace, especially to a global power sustained by the dream it inspires.

In the 1890s as in the early 2000s, European journalists in the United States, whose self-described mission was "to tell America's stories," were on the frontlines in the transatlantic struggle to define America. The ambivalent images they have conveyed boil down to that of a unique power, approached with a skittish mixture of awe and resentment. Of course, Europeans discussing the United States—which happens virtually daily—do not only focus on American might or democracy. Yet their perception that that is what America stands for underlies the four arenas where Americans are considered to have enduring supremacy: Love for money, patriotism, youthful energy, and military fervor. With eerily similar images, stories about Wall Street, the Star-Spangled Banner, pop music, and the Pentagon fill the pages of European newspapers at the beginning

of the twenty-first century just as their counterparts did at the end of the nineteenth century.

With a touch of smugness, Europeans have long thought wealth and business crucial to the American mind and materialism an American credo. More pragmatically, they tend to get bellicose and threaten brutal trade competition when commercial dependence from Uncle Sam seems a little too burdensome. Before the Spanish-American War had been declared, French editors already worried about its possible repercussions on European stock markets, while Italian correspondents in early 2001 argued that “the world economy” was hanging on U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan’s words, hoping a possible American recession would not drag to the bottom all of Europe.³ But, true to Europe’s exceptional expectations for America’s special role, the United States is not simply a rich nation—it is a country that should be doing more for the world because it has such “immense resources.” *Kölnische Zeitung* editors argued in 1898 that Americans should reach into their deep pockets to facilitate international trade, while 70 percent of their compatriots surveyed in 2002 chastised the United States for supposedly increasing the gap between rich and poor globally.⁴

Just as it is uniquely rich, Europe’s America is also uniquely patriotic: European correspondents have been struck by the sight of people swelling with a rather naïve faith in, and enthusiasm for, their country. The most obvious hint of Americans’ peculiar attachment to land and country is the unabashed “flag-waving”: European reporters in the United States during the Spanish-American War wonderingly remarked that “the American flag was everywhere.”⁵ A century later, the flag continues to symbolize the universality of a dream capable of holding together the haven of the world’s immigrants: “Old Glory, in fact, is the U.S. It is a waving social contract, a dream from which nobody can be excluded.”⁶ Compared to jaded Europeans burdened by a tragic history, Americans manage to retain all the fresh enthusiasm that stems from their “invincible optimism,” as *The Manchester Guardian* editors called it in 1898.⁷ Americans in 1898 had a “certainty in the goodness of the future,” which continued to make them seem, more than a century later, “the most optimistic people in the world.”⁸

Optimism translated into the rushing feeling that distinguished the United States, full of the youthful energy of a *New World*: “And energy is in the air; and love for the impossible, the manic passion for what has never been dared before after an hour penetrate your nerves and make your eyes shine and your hands shake and you run. . . .”⁹ That freshness had not worn off by the 2000s, making the United States a fantastically vivid land of dreams that stood out against a black-and-white Europe. The contrast between the New and the Old World is stark: In 1899, “Old Europe” was “torn and divided by deep disagreements between State

and State" while "young America" was "well united, wealthy, relatively unanimous in ideas."¹⁰ The passing of a century has not helped bridge that age divide: European societies in the twenty-first century are "disillusioned," but America, "remarkably," remains a "young nation."¹¹

The problem is when some of that youthful vigor drives not only business and patriotism, but a less benign trait of Europe's America: A penchant for militarism. The martial images in the following two texts are virtually identical, even though they were written more than one hundred years apart: Americans had "*Itchy* fingers on the trigger," wrote *The Guardian's* military correspondent in 2002, and editors at the same newspaper argued that "many of the best and most inoffensive of Americans feel their hands fairly *itching* to be at Spain's throat" as the U.S. Congress debated the Spanish-American War.¹² Something happened, however, to American willingness to fight between the war of 1898 and the "war on terror": In 1898, such itching for military power was seen as a novelty for "the formerly peaceful Uncle Sam," who should have known better than to follow the Old-World ways; today, Europe thinks itself the defender of peaceful solutions in an attempt to counter-balance American gun ho war attitude.¹³

Regardless the era, something good could be salvaged from that peculiar habit of "falling into ranks"—it shows Americans' bravery in the face of national emergencies. Nobody doubted that Americans would fight the war against Spain with a "dogged tenacity of purpose," the same that twenty-first-century Europeans saw reflected in the "army of workers" who returned to Wall Street for the reopening of the New York Stock Exchange after the terror attacks looking like soldiers reporting for duty. In Europe's eyes, there has been a reversal in American warmongering between the 1890s and the early 2000s: In the first case, the masses were guilty of being blood-thirsty and the government, represented by the prudent President William McKinley, was "almost prisoner of the breathless mob" and "the furious clamoring of triumphant warmongers."¹⁴ In 2001, the opposite was true. The brave but peace-loving American people were not like their "shooting-from-the-hip" president.

That silver-lining, however, is paradoxically thin: Thirsting for war might not have been a praiseworthy drive, but at least Americans once had a determining influence on their government, as one could expect in the near-perfect U.S. democratic system. Today's Americans seem to leave Europeans a lose-lose choice: Either they are again prey to a surge of rifle-brandishing, or they have let themselves be dragged into it by a president a majority of them had not voted for—hardly a symptom of health for the fabled democracy, which is a fundamental trait of the American dream. For long, America has been "the democracy as democratic as a human society can be," even though it risked losing its nature as Washington moved into colonial politics with the 1898 war.¹⁵ In 2001, America still

had the power to serve as “the global guarantor of democracy,” but its leaders were pushing the people to turn again to imperial ways—or to isolationism.¹⁶

Europeans think that isolationism is simply “not an option” for the exceptionally powerful United States. Since America’s entry on the world stage, its power and consequent global responsibilities and “cares” have been unquestionable across the Atlantic, even while U.S. uses of power become increasingly questioned. “Willingly or not,” by meddling with the Great Powers’ colonial affairs, America became a “European power,” and it remains very much so at the beginning of the twenty-first century.¹⁷ At the time of the Spanish-American War, Europeans met the new American global role with incredulous regret for what they thought was the United States’ bidding farewell to the idyllic era when it had been blissfully unconcerned about the responsibilities of Great Powers. America was no longer in a position “more enviable” than all others, to paraphrase *Le Temps* and *The Manchester Guardian* editors, but it was becoming a fearsome competitor and even a threat to Europe.¹⁸ A century later, American world power is considered as so beyond discussion that Europeans fear their own irrelevance more than they do widespread U.S. domination.

Europeans have been so awed by American power that they sometimes talked about it in religious language, as if it were supernatural: President McKinley was God’s “stock broker” and shared with him “the secret” of the future; airborne on 9/11, President George W. Bush “commanded from the sky, usually God’s priority, the strongest Country in the world.”¹⁹ Hyperbole aside, sheer power has been a defining part of Europe’s image of dream America since 1898. By the early 2000s, American power has come to be perceived as so overwhelming that it no longer constitutes a real threat, the one that had made *La Stampa* editors fear America’s “moral, intellectual and material” advantages would make “the voice of its cannon heard” in Europe.²⁰ In fact, that voice has been heard so much (and has been so welcomed) that in 2001 an English writer deemed “epochal” “an American turn away from Europe, or at least from the level of US engagement and attention which have existed for the lifetime of most Europeans.”²¹ Within such unchallenged view of U.S. power, even “gratitude” is turned on its head: If the United States had proven “ungrateful” to the Old World by attacking a nation of discoverers, Spain, in 1898, twenty-first-century Europeans could ill afford not to support Americans in their hour of need because they “owed the Stars and Stripes” Europe’s freedom.²²

What in 1898 had been a real worry that American “world liberation” military plans would include Europe is today entirely outside the realm of the possible, replaced by taken-for-granted defense arrangements and a grudging acceptance of economic and cultural domination: “We live in an American world,” *The Guardian* editors asserted.²³ But de facto

acceptance does not imply that Europeans are content with being treated as perfectly irrelevant by the United States, which is precisely what they perceived was happening as early as in 1898, and certainly by the twenty-first century. America seemed to be too happily nonchalant about what Europe thought: A correspondent for *The Times* found “conviction” “that European friendship and respect are a desirable thing to have” to be a novelty in the 1898 U.S. Congress.²⁴ Americans were equally unconcerned about international agreements, a “full-blooded Yankee” not being someone “to whom law and rights mean something.”²⁵ Both descriptions stand unchanged from the 1890s to the 2000s, judging from the acerbic European criticism of what has been perceived as American sabotage of various international projects like the Kyoto protocol and the International Criminal Court.

That criticism about U.S. indifference should be so bitter betrays something else about Europe’s America—Europeans have thought that the United States, both as a universal concept and as a benign power, is simply indispensable to the rest of the world. Already in 1898, an Italian correspondent felt “a bit of the *exile’s* bitterness” in leaving the United States, “the magnificent land of victory.”²⁶ Europe’s image of the United States as the embodiment of the American dream is not only victorious, but undefeatable by default: “The whole ‘concept America’ with its noble attributes and resilience and the fighting hearts of its inhabitants” “is not made for defeat,” a German correspondent argued right after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.²⁷ What has made concept America “undefeatable” is also, as the correspondent who felt “exiled” from victory suggests, its universality—the American dream belongs, at the ideal level, to everybody, and everybody can achieve it. Believing in “concept America” has been the common tie across the Atlantic.

During the Spanish-American War, the British press alone sanguinely insisted on kinship ties with “our brothers in blood” based on the virtues of Anglo-Saxon civilization, in an effort to secure the alliance of the up-and-coming power, while the Continental press argued that the United States was becoming less American and more European because of its new imperial career.²⁸ After September 11, both the British and Continental press talked about a “joint model” where America would inspire and lead, with its partner Europe, the way to a better world. Terrorists aimed at what America was, “and we [Europeans] with her,” because the United States was the homeland of “the principles without which we would not be what we are.”²⁹

Apparently, the entry of America in the imperial fray at the turn at the twentieth century had done no long-term damage to the belief in the American dream, to the perception of the United States as an ideal, a model. But that does not mean that Europeans have not been ready to scold the United States when they thought it was not living up to that

ideal in its actions. Several nineteenth-century journalists bashed the United States as a racist, classist society—an absurd, hypocritical charge from the pages of newspapers of record in countries with vastly unequal social structures and actively engaged in colonial enterprises in Africa, among other places. Yet it is an accusation that makes sense once one understands how different, how exceptional America was thought to be, and how exceptional were the expectations Europeans had for this power.

By 2001, when America was considered unique not only as a democracy but also as the biggest world power, Europeans kept having peculiar expectations for the United States: Majorities in France, Great Britain, and Italy found the United States in 2002 was either doing too much or too little “to solve world problems,” which apparently they thought was an American responsibility.³⁰ Dream America and the world power stemming from it not only drive public opinion, but also influence the relationship vis-à-vis the United States that European policymakers have pursued. They too have long entrusted to the United States a unique role in the world, which carries a unique set of responsibilities, and they too have refused the equation between tanks and happy voters.

Where the German Ambassador in Washington in 1898 lamented the “Americans’ selfishness,” E.U. policymakers have constantly deplored Washington’s unilateralism and the pursuit of American interests alone.³¹ About three quarters of opinion poll respondents in France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy said in August 2001 that the U.S. administration was making decisions “based only on U.S. interests”—which begs the simple question, If it can get away with it, why should it not?³² The answer is equally simple: Because Europe’s America is not an ordinary greedy power, so it should not use that power in unexceptional ways. The United States could certainly act without a care for the rest of the world as long as it has unmatched power, yet it should not because, as a model democracy and leader, it is expected to pursue the global common good and not just its own.

If there is one difference between what Europe’s citizens and their policymakers have thought about America, it is the fear foreign policy discussions have betrayed both at the time of the Spanish-American War and at the start of the “war on terror.” European politicians have spoken of American power—affirming itself during the 1898 war and uniquely superior after the Cold War—in alternatively belligerent and conciliatory, meek language, both implicit recognitions that a threat looms from across the Atlantic. The most immediate aspect of the “American danger” is that the American government appeared oblivious to the Old World and beyond its reach of influence, even in 1898, when the United States was taking its first steps as world power. The U.S. Congress was described as clueless: An 1898 letter to *The Times* editor argued that, “There is probably no representative body in the world which is so ignorant of the political

conditions and the internal difficulties of other Powers as the Parliament of the United States."³³ The European Union Council resolved in 2001 to "promote better understanding of the EU's interests" with the U.S. government, because the latter was "not well informed" on European policies.³⁴

Given the disregard the United States has for Europe, European policy-makers have expected their influence to be negligible on Americans. In the text of the second, aborted demarche to President McKinley on behalf of peace, the Great Powers' representatives in Washington argued "the biggest publicity" should be given to the message "to release the moral responsibility of the civilized world" from the aggression on Spain.³⁵ The demarche, apparently, was a way to wiggle out of the resentment of anti-American public opinion at home, while not interfering with Washington's will. More than a hundred years later, the editor of an E.U. report on transatlantic relations argued that "considerable doubts remained that it was any longer possible for Europe to influence US policy" and editorials in the elite European newspapers wondered out loud whether it was possible to make any effective global policy without the United States.³⁶

Because the American danger seems to be always looming when Washington chooses force over idealistic leadership, European foreign policy-makers have urged extreme caution when dealing with the United States, lest it be offended. During peace negotiations in the summer of 1898, the Italian Foreign Minister warned his Washington Ambassador that he should eliminate "even just the appearance of disagreements" between the two governments.³⁷ In similarly tiptoeing terms, even when offering support to the United States in the wake of the terror attacks, Europeans said they had the "responsibility to prove to the United States the value of allies"—or risk Americans' irritation at the interference of worthless Europe.³⁸ Of course, that was precisely what Europeans thought happened when the United States essentially shrugged off NATO's September 2001 proclamation of common self-defense.

Powerful America, touchy and "jealous" of its independence, seems quick to balk at getting entangled in alliances. The French Ambassador in Washington in 1898 remarked that "these people here" were "jealous of their rights," while, in a 2001 E.U. document, America was found "jealous of ceding leadership to others."³⁹ But the United States had no need to be reticent, for until very recently Europe did not expect to steal its thunder—by 2001, American leadership was considered so unassailable that the most Europeans wanted was "shared responsibility." When Americans were still "newcomers" in Europe's "neighborhood," a European Concert united in defense against them had been considered possible: "Perhaps it is allowed to hope that continental Europe will know to unite itself to put in place a far-sighted and conservative policy,"

the French ambassador in Washington wrote in 1898.⁴⁰ In the face of overwhelming American power at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the European Union has been reluctant to throw away its aspiration to grow stronger not as an opponent but as “a coherent, reliable and equal *partner* to the US,” even when it meant to resign itself to a junior position.⁴¹ In fact, the Council of the European Union recommended in 2001 that no member state discuss with the United States “any priority issue” in a way that would “pre-empt the outcome of any internal EU discussion.”⁴² The perception of U.S. power was so strong that it has gone from something European states should try to fend off by uniting to something that could interfere with their Union if states tried to assuage America first on a bilateral basis.

The one sphere where today’s European policymakers do not hesitate to use the same bellicose language as their counterparts in 1898 did is that of transatlantic trade. A German diplomat argued to the Emperor that it was “an urgent duty” for Europeans to find ways to “be able to withstand the aggressive commercial policy of the New World.”⁴³ In 2002, a European Parliament member said that, with steel tariffs, the Bush administration was mounting a “deliberate attack” on the “livelihood” of European workers.⁴⁴ The land of plenty is more to be feared than admired in European politicians’ eyes, especially when wealthy, materialistic America has a stranglehold on economic competition. The “Yankees, people who are little sophisticated, but rich,” were “imposing themselves more and more in the world” thanks to their “great fortunes,” in the words of the French representative in London in 1898.⁴⁵ More than a century later, many Europeans keep resenting America precisely because of those fortunes, at least as embodied by powerful American multinationals, according to polls.⁴⁶

Outside the sphere of economic competition, though, European policymakers speaking of the United States at the turn of the twenty-first century have tended to model their tone on the one adopted by British politicians in 1898—conciliatory, meek, almost humble. Then as now, the United States is seen as bent on domination, political if not military, so much so that U.S. professions of disinterest in power-grabbing are met with irony. The French ambassador, commenting on the possibility that the United States would take all Spanish possessions, including those nearest to Europe, quipped: “What would it be if they had not declared they did not want to make any conquests?”⁴⁷ Much in the same way, a correspondent for *The Times* writing about the first, much-contested moves of the newly installed, first George W. Bush administration, chided: “If this is what the ‘humble’ foreign policy Mr. Bush promised looks like, one hesitates to imagine what shape an assertive one would take.”⁴⁸

At the beginning of the “war on terror,” Europeans feared assertive militarism more from the U.S. government than from Americans in

general, who were 1898 diplomats' main concern. The French ambassador to the United States in 1898 argued that Europe might expect "surprises on the Atlantic side" because of "the sentiments that prevail among these people here," while an Italian colleague warned that seeking an independent course might turn against Italy not only the U.S. government "but, *which is worse*, American public opinion."⁴⁹ On the contrary, in 2002, substantial majorities of Europeans who held negative views of the United States said "the problem with the U.S." was "mostly Bush."⁵⁰ Again, perception of what American democracy is versus what it is supposed to be might explain the difference: The powerful masses of 1898 had become a trusting people led astray by vastly disliked leadership during the first Bush administration.

Wherever the biggest threat lies, and regardless its concern with respect or pragmatic survival instinct, not offending the almighty, power-hungry United States has been a major European preoccupation. As early as December 1898, a British intelligence officer argued that Great Britain should make special conditions to ingratiate the United States. Before and after the terror attacks, E.U. policymakers similarly praised and encouraged the transatlantic relationship. They have argued the relationship has a "unique and ever-increasing importance" and that it is crucial to any initiative for the common good, starting with Europe itself, because "the Europe-America link has ensured peace in our continent."⁵¹ In exchange for being the "preferred partner" of the all-powerful United States, Europeans simply asked to be treated with "dignity," in Prodi's words—an extraordinary humble statement that makes sense given the high regard, and lingering apprehension, with which American power has been beheld.

Remarkably, Europeans feared that overwhelming U.S. power would compromise their honor and dignity as early as during the Spanish-American War. The example of Germany is striking: The country, recently unified, had undertaken an ambitious program of sea expansion based on colonialism and fleet building extensive enough to worry the premier maritime power of the time, the British Empire. Germany had tried to share some of the American spoils in the Pacific during the war, making a show of power by sending a conspicuous naval force to Manila Bay. Still, in early 1899, German Foreign Minister Bernhard von Bülow argued that it was "of the greatest importance" that Germany should handle its new "neighbors" in the Pacific "with careful tact, but naturally preserving its dignity to the full."⁵²

At a basic level, calling for a "careful tact" barely short of what might compromise "dignity" belongs to the logical policy of making eyes at the winning power. But the difference in tone between the way Europeans spoke of common ties and, implicitly, alliance or partnership, with the United States during the 1898 war and then the "war on terror" shows

just how far U.S. power has come in Europeans' minds. At the end of the nineteenth century, such talk did not go unnoticed: European diplomats remarked how extraordinary it was for England, whose position as "the first nation in the world" was expounded by the British government, to admit it needed allies.⁵³ That admission had hardly been a whisper: Faced with the possibility of an attack by a coalition of other powers, Great Britain's Colonial Minister Joseph Chamberlain had argued that England would do best to ally itself with the United States, regardless the cost.

What had been understood as a gracious overture from a top-tier world power to a nascent one in 1898 became, a century later, a hopeful bid to the only superpower in an effort to avoid irrelevance: Faced with the double threat of global terrorism and American unilateralism, in early 2002 European policymakers ingratiatingly asked the United States to allow them to help by pointing out they could offer a "joint model" in "the pursuit of common global interests."⁵⁴ Where Chamberlain had spoken of "blood that runs thicker than water," Europe's policymakers saw in the terror attacks the opportunity to speak of "Western" values like democracy and freedom—borrowed from the American dream—and thus to remind the United States that Europe still provided its best partner and bore a "shared responsibility in facing the growing number of global economic and political challenges."⁵⁵

Europe wanted 9/11 to serve as the platform for a renewed equality in the transatlantic relationship: The United States was touched by the "tragedy of history" and had become vulnerable "like we Europeans" (Europeans had predicted American vulnerability as the necessary consequence of its new global role as early as during the Spanish-American War).⁵⁶ But it was not only a question of the sudden vulnerability of the hyperpower—America's exceptionality made the terror attacks an attack on Europeans too. First of all, quite literally, America is a "microcosm of the world" because of its history as a nation of immigrants, and thus an attack against it is an attack against everybody. Ideals also tie America and Europe. As a report on transatlantic relations concluded less than two weeks after the attacks, the United States and the European Union had the ability to lead a peace-promoting global effort if they worked together.

While Europeans had the same obvious desire to remain in almighty America's good graces in the 1898 war as in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, they perceive U.S. power to be exponentially stronger at the beginning of the twenty-first century. European Powers reacted to the emergence of the United States as a fellow world power with an exaggerated fear of military conflict, implicit in the British reminders of kinship and the Continental calls for tact, which stemmed from the popular perception of America as exceptional and undefeatable. In 2001, European Union policymakers thought American power so undisputed that they

borrowed the themes of the American dream to portray themselves as on a par with America. They saw Europe's chance to prove its mettle at the United States' side, not against it. But the "war on terror" has come to be seen as such a show of unilateral U.S. power—contradicting the ideals that Europe shared and that were at the root of its respect for the United States—that E.U. policymakers have been quick to turn to disappointment in, and even resentment for, an America that blatantly does not think it needs Europe.

So, while mighty American power remains crucial to define what America is to today's Europeans, it is increasingly stripped of its leadership connotations because the belief in the United States as the repository of the American dream has taken another hit. This one looks even more damaging than that during the Spanish-American War, because expectations for what both the United States and Europe can accomplish have grown along with might. As the European Union evolved into a "more active *potential* partner" of the United States, as the "Transatlantic Partnership" was portrayed as helping "the spread of democracy" and "the rule of law around the world," Europeans have not been shy to state that Americans' go-it-alone attitude merits nothing but "deploring."⁵⁷

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, Europeans felt they were "all Americans"—they all shared a belief in the American dream. The United States was not an ordinary country liked or disliked for what it did, but rather judged "for what America is and we with her," as an Italian correspondent put it.⁵⁸ In 1898 as in 2001, what America has meant is first of all the dream of freedom and democracy. During the Spanish-American War and the "war on terrorism," however, belief that the dream could be embodied by the United States came increasingly under suspicion. The almost illogical belief that the United States is unlike any other country has shored up Europe's vision of the United States as incredibly powerful—the unstoppable conqueror at the end of the nineteenth century and the hyperpower tackling the world alone in the twenty-first century. But that naked use of power contradicts the exceptional global roles that the American dream seemed to imply, be it that of a blessedly isolated, peaceful republic poised as a beacon on the hill or that of a superpower guaranteeing democracy and popular entertainment across the world. The way America used its exceptional power has appeared very disappointingly and even dangerously ordinary.

Yet Europeans have managed to stubbornly hold on to something of that dream, as is evident in the touchingly empathetic focus on American exceptionality in the immediate wake of the terror attacks, ranging from the stunned eyewitness accounts by correspondents to the unrestrained promises of solidarity from heads of state. Somehow, neither the Spanish-American War and gunning down Filipinos fighting for their freedom or other American actions in the following century killed

Europe's American dream. Even the plummeting numbers of Europeans with favorable views of the United States in the three years following the 9/11 attacks implicitly supported it: "Concept America" was so highly regarded that America was held to special standards and severely judged when it was perceived as not standing up to them. The criticism that the United States is not acting enough in the world's interest shows a peculiar expectation for a superpower in a cynical, realist world. Power and exceptionality are still holding hands.

But that might be changing today. Perhaps the most dangerous indication of that change are public opinion polls discussed in Chapter 7 that show Europeans as early as in 2004 were rather evenly divided between those who supported and those who opposed *U.S.-led* efforts to combat terrorism as well as between those who liked and those who disliked "American ideas about democracy."⁵⁹ Europeans have supported U.S. power and followed U.S. leadership largely because they have kept believing in the superior goodness of American democracy as the guiding light of U.S. actions, and they have resisted U.S. actions where they perceived that light to be off. Now, for the first time, being American, or at least as symbolized by the United States, is seen as negative enough to damage the dream itself. It is not that America is betraying its democratic ideals, as observers of the 1898 war had thought; now the question is who will pick up the torch of the ideals in which Europe has invested its hopes and is no longer sure the United States represents. Even fighting terrorism, undoubtedly a good cause, is no longer supported because the fight is led by the United States, whose democratic intentions rather than actions are suddenly disliked. What would de Tocqueville think?

The ongoing "war on terror" will likely decide whether Europeans are turning a page on the historical belief in the American dream, thus looking at the United States as a mere, if giant, power, rather than an exceptional one. American exceptionality as the "perfect democracy," the fundamental characteristic of U.S. identity in European eyes and the root of Europe's acceptance of U.S. global leadership, has survived unaltered even as 1890s imperialism and 2000s unilateralism seemed to betray it. But because such displays of sheer, insouciant power seem definitely too "Old World" to reflect what Europeans believe America is all about, they have insinuated not only forceful criticism but a nagging doubt—should hope for the American dream still be translated into confidence in American power? On that open question hinges not only the future of Europe's vision of the United States but also the relationship between the two Western powers.

This book's history of Europe's America suggests that the answer lies in the words of editors of *The Times* in September 2001 and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in April 1898: America's power depends on whether the world trusts its judgment, and without it, without exceptionality remaining a

part of what America means to the world, “not even being Americans will save them from the disastrous consequences of their exuberance.”⁶⁰ Only being an undefeatable concept can continue to protect America as the undefeatable superpower.

It had not happened since 1898, but the “war on terror” has managed to make Europe increasingly doubtful about the survival of *its* America, undermining both its admiration for U.S. ideals and its deference for U.S. might. Before trying to predict the survival chances of Europe’s American dream and, consequently, of U.S. power worldwide, one last, critical piece of the puzzle must be considered. Since 2001, Europeans have had a convenient scapegoat on whose head they have dumped all dislike for U.S. actions, leaving dream America relatively untarnished—the Bush administration. On November 2, 2004, a majority of American voters definitively took away the scapegoat and put the whole country squarely on the side of the administration and its interpretation of America’s global role. The problem can no longer be “mostly Bush.” How is Europe taking it?

Problem Bush and Europe's Vote

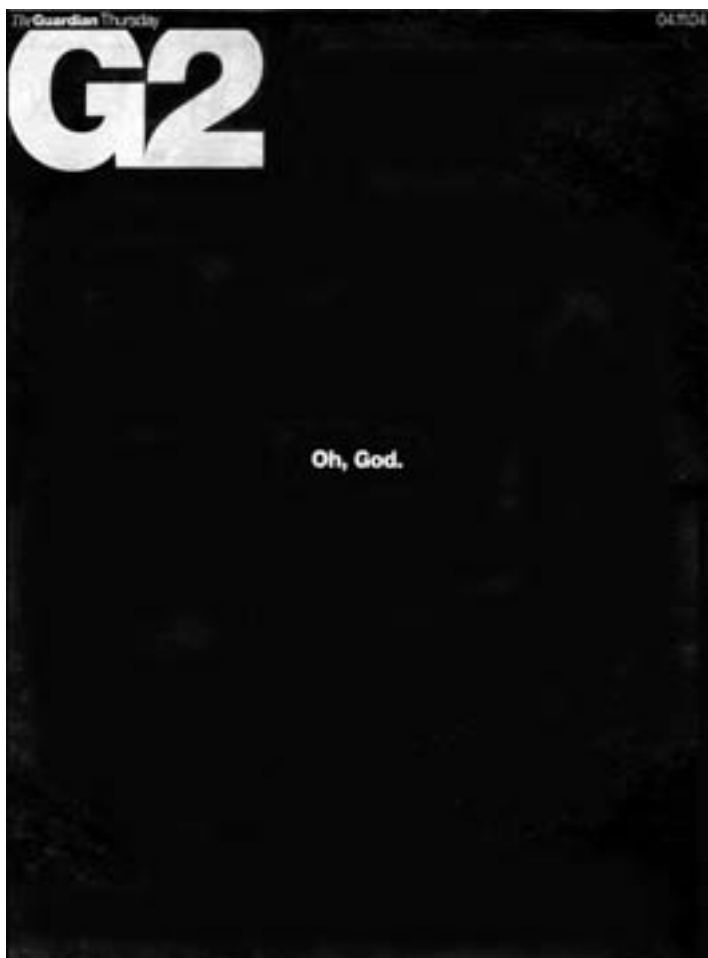
On November 2, 2004, as Americans chose their next president, Europeans fervently hoped they would vote out Bush. With the exception of Italy's Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, hardly any E.U. leader expressed support for President George W. Bush on the pages of Europe's elite media at election time. Since 2001, Bush had been the favorite excuse for Europeans to keep their faith in America while loathing many U.S. actions. Everything they disliked—materialism, social conservatism, unilateralism, militarism, transatlantic snubs, even environmental damage—they dumped on Bush. Bush was the problem with America. Surely, they thought, Americans would also see that?

Three small media episodes tell the whole story of Europe's unprecedented, highly emotional involvement in the U.S. election. In October 2004, *The Guardian* ran "Operation Clark County." The newspaper created a website where readers could receive the name and postal address of a registered independent voter in Clark County, Ohio, where the margin between Senator John Kerry and Bush was estimated at 1 percent (as it had been in the 2000 election between Bush and Al Gore). Readers were invited to write to that voter (the system ensured one letter per voter) a handwritten, signed message explaining their choice for the White House and why it mattered to British citizens. There was no reward other than the chance to win a trip with *The Guardian's* journalists to Ohio—hardly on the top-ten list of Europeans' vacation spots—but thousands of readers sent letters. Europe felt it was its vote, too, a testament to how strongly it felt Europe's fate largely depended on America's choices.

That symbolic vote it cast was for Kerry. On November 3, having to go to press as Americans were still voting, European newspapers could not report a winner, but at least one did not let developing facts get in the way of ardent hopes. Perhaps encouraged by the great turnout (usually a sign voters want change) and exit polls showing a slight lead for the challenger, Italy's communist daily, *il manifesto*, took the leap of faith and called the election for Kerry, running a huge picture of him on the front page under the headline, "Good morning America." While the elite

newspapers stopped short of the journalistic gaffe, they were not less obviously hopeful for change.

Then Bush took Ohio and the popular vote with a multimillion majority and was reelected entirely above the suspicions that had marred the 2000 vote. This time, the machinery of the great American democracy had worked and its undisputable result was a second Bush presidency. How did Europe react? By and large, like the designers of the November 4 cover for *G2*, *The Guardian's* daily magazine-style supplement. It is entirely black, except for this short, small-type sentence in white: "Oh, God."



Front page of *The Guardian's G2* section for November 4, 2004. Courtesy of The Guardian News & Media Ltd. 2004

The feverish anticipation and the abysmal dismay Europeans felt for the 2004 election is not only, or even mainly, a sign that rightly or wrongly they dislike Bush. Since studies show that people differentiate between the U.S. government and the American people, even though presidents end up on newspaper pages as the prototype of their citizens,¹ Americans could easily disregard Europe's disapproval of their choice. But this time, what Europeans dislike is the kind of America they characterize in Bush and the way that America is wielding its unmatched power everywhere. It is not *their* America—but the reelection, even more than the “war on terror” per se, seemed to say that it is, in fact, the real America. So among calls for learning to live with “Dubya” and tiny hopes he might be a different president the second time around, Europe has also started to push resolutely for a change in its relationship with a changed United States. Bush's superpower is no longer the one of Europeans' dreams, and that makes it open to be challenged in ideal and real ways. And yet, Europe's reaction to the 2006 midterm elections, which Europeans saw as a vote against Bush and Iraq after they ousted the Republican majority from Washington, provides the latest reminder of the extraordinary resilience of Europe's belief in America's capacity for good.

On November 3, 2004, European newspapers, unable to call the elections for “their” candidate, still held onto the American dream and in page after page of painstaking coverage, proclaimed the victory of exceptional U.S. democracy in “the most important election in living memory.”² Citing de Tocqueville, *The Times'* editors hailed American democracy: “There has been something moving in the sight of the two men who would, if victorious, find themselves with so much power in their hands, sprinting around a continent and pleading with the comparatively powerless in small states such as Iowa, New Hampshire and New Mexico to hand them the authority to govern. . . . Democracy in America is an expensive affair, yet it is worth the price.”³ Despite the threats of terror and the uncertainties of the election processes, “America was giving an example of commitment and public spirit, of vitality and courage, . . . which will give back to Americans and to the world faith in its leadership”—a leadership Europeans had found largely unacceptable under the Bush administration.⁴

What made U.S. democracy and leadership exceptional was, first and foremost, the American people. Roused from “decades of creeping apathy” by the necessities of “wartime,” the “notoriously complacent and detached electorate” was “galvanised.”⁵ “Anxious, emotional and deeply divided,” Americans were flooding the polls in an example of participation that shone to the world and would rescue the image of the great democracy from “being dragged out and tarnished for the second time in four years.”⁶ That was the “sincere intention” of hundreds of people monitoring the polls: “To give a hand in rebuilding the image of America as the *exemplary democracy in the world*.”⁷ As one of Italy's

foremost essayists wrote, the time when “the greatest world power has dramatically split in two opposing factions” is also “the moment in which America proves to be an extraordinary democracy.”⁸ With the U.S. press attacking Iraq as the new Vietnam, the courts restoring human rights, and Congress “bringing into the sunlight the administration’s lies,” he added, “Liberal, tolerant and civilized America divorces its president.”

Europeans were confident that the renewed democratic splendor of the U.S. citizenry could only mean one thing—Americans, too, were ready for a change. The long lines at polling stations across the continent were living proof that not all Americans were “Neanderthal Republican thugery”: “there are millions of decent, thoughtful people in the US. It often takes a while for the penny to drop with these guys, but sooner or later it always does.”⁹ Europeans could already hear it cling. They thought Bush had been soundly proven wrong: His theories that the world would embrace “the return to the law of the strongest” and “unilateral action and pre-emptive war”—even if waged “with good intentions”—had utterly “smashed against reality.”¹⁰ Even *The Times*, in a selection of quotes from the presidential campaign, chose a notorious Bush gaffe—“[Terrorists] never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we”—and commented on it with a unusually ferocious sting: “Mr Bush momentarily forgets which side of the war on terrorism he is on.”¹¹

As one *Corriere* correspondent summed it up, Kerry’s voters represented that “unsatisfied and impoverished America that did not recognize itself, even beyond the war in Iraq, in the ideological connotation of the Bush administration, in the privileged relationship with God, in the ethical rigors that are consonant with the militancy of Protestant sects.”¹² Kerry “voters” were also, simply, Europeans, “holding their breath” to see the results of an election that would choose a president “equally a little bit ours.” We might not all be Americans, a *Le Figaro* editorialist wrote, but “individual peoples obliged to reckon with the hyperpower” and to make a conciliatory gesture with America “however little” Europe might believe in the West and “its necessary solidarity.”¹³

A *Le Monde* headline was hardly an exaggeration: “Majority of world opinion wishes for George Bush’s defeat.”¹⁴ Diplomatically evenhanded on the surface, Bush’s sworn enemies Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder were similarly said to be hoping for change and a return to multilateralism, “much easier with Kerry,” though some newspapers accused them of cringing from the “new responsibilities” a reinforced transatlantic partnership would bring.¹⁵ Even Tony Blair, Bush’s uneasy ally, was said to believe that “life would be easier” with a different president.¹⁶ The election, presumably refuting once and for all the direction the administration had taken, would give E.U.-U.S. relations a new start by making the United States “rediscover something evident: Better with partners than

with clients."¹⁷ America would no longer be "untouchable," so new alliances could be forged, the "standstill" would be over, and the transatlantic powers would be free again to help each other tackle global crises. As Stefan Kornelius, the foreign editor of Germany's best-selling elite newspaper, put it, this was the chance to restore America to its rightful place—"to straighten out the crooked axis in the world's machinery."¹⁸

Virtually unanimously, Europeans on November 3 looked admiringly at a nation they thought was reasserting itself as a great democracy and a world leader after years of sheepish obedience to an ill-elected, war-mongering president. As *la Repubblica's* chief correspondent phrased it:

Among the many dead [of] this war, begun on September 11 2001 and spread into the thousands of casualties in Iraq and in Afghanistan, there has been one resurrection and that is the rediscovery that you can die of indifference and civic apathy. *The war to export democracy at least was useful for America to re-import democracy.*¹⁹

Paying lip-service to journalistic objectivity, that Washington correspondent went on to say that it did not matter who would win. However, "What matters is that [Americans] have understood the lesson of a war declared and fought without electoral mandate to do it." Surely this election would prove that America was still the dream democracy Europeans loved.

It did not. Since 1898, a *Le Monde* writer argued, it had been an American project to remake the world in the U.S. image. By late 2004, what Washington had certainly achieved was to become "the foremost political, military, economic and cultural power."²⁰ But the gulf between America's image of itself and the world's grew to its largest width yet after this election. America's favorability rating went further down in Great Britain and Germany from 2004 to 2007, while the tiny bump up in France is hardly encouraging since only about 39 percent of citizens there had a favorable opinion of the United States, according to a June 2007 Pew opinion poll.²¹ Even though almost 70 percent of Americans realize the United States is disliked abroad, and nearly half think the United States' low standing is a major problem, apparently most Americans think there is something wrong with the world's perception, not with America—83 percent like the homeland.²² The election has brought into relief those two distinct images of the United States.

Even though, unlike the Roman Empire, America "the reticent Empire" has not extended the right to vote to its global peoples, it might as well—Europeans felt like they had been at the polls themselves, cheering on their vision of America. On November 4 they had to face that they had lost: "Mr. Bush's election will give the rest of the world a collective heart attack.... Americans declined to rein him in. They legitimised him. The rest of the world has been roundly snubbed."²³ Could it really be the collective soul of America that thumbed its nose at Europeans?



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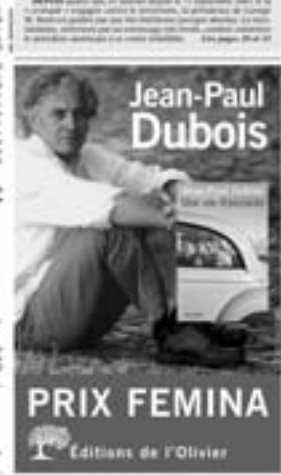
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Those who take European anti-Americanism for granted should be pleasantly surprised that majorities in France, Germany, and Great Britain continued to say a year later that the "problem with the U.S." was "mostly Bush"—even though nearly a third of people there now find "America in general" at fault.²⁴ In fact, while confidence in Bush's international leadership continues to plummet, reaching the low of 14 percent among the French in 2007, majorities of Europeans still have at least a somewhat favorable view of Americans, though the percentages have dropped in all countries studied from 2002 to 2007 (except for a slight bump up in Great Britain from 2006 to 2007).²⁵ Further, with the rationale that Bush did not represent America weakened by the reelection, Europeans grasped another scapegoat—this election was not really the triumph of U.S. democracy, but the revolution of religious zealots. Dissenting Americans were more to be pitied than censured if some, even most, of their fellow citizens had been swayed by Bush advisor Karl Rove's "devilish"²⁶ campaign to hide real concerns like war and the economy behind the smokescreen of "values" (rigorously within quotation marks in Europe's press). Still, this result spelled danger for both the United States and the world, because Bush would now "be emboldened to push forward with the War on Terror, *whatever that means*," as *The Times* correspondent caustically wrote, taking the wind entirely out of the sails of Washington's self-described global mission.²⁷ Some commentators, giving up belief in Americans, explicitly called for Europe to take on this new America.

"Europeans lost the American election," a writer in *la Repubblica* simply put it, an election they had passionately participated in because they are aware of "the superpower's weight" and their subsequent "dependency."²⁸ "If the president of the United States will drag the world in his decisions, then all citizens of the world have some entitlement to his designation," a commentator for the Italian newspaper wrote, adding that the election had created a new European identity: "Europeans are those who vote for Kerry. Those who lose the American elections."²⁹ Had they had the chance, they would have voted for Kerry "as one man."³⁰ The one meager consolation was that Ohio did not turn into the new Florida, soiling the image of "the democracy that presents itself as example to the world" and on whose moves "depends the fate of the world."³¹ Still, Europeans took it so personally that, a writer for *The Guardian* argued, they had a "unified sense . . . that the prospect of having Bush back in business made all the small, crap things in one's life worse."³²

Aside from world participation, what made this election unique was the "terrible battle between two visions of America": "America of the two coasts, with its universities and liberal newspapers, and the America of endless prairies with its ranches, rifles, churches and family values."³³ And the win had gone to Bush voters, who were ferociously disparaged in the press as "a collection of religious fanatics, armed to the teeth and

living in the hills (or disturbingly similar to the Taleban)."³⁴ The Republicans' "revolution" had been cemented by the strategy of "throwing red meat" to those voters, who now "can barely contain their excitement" about getting their due in the shape of conservative reforms.³⁵ Or, less malignantly, some Europeans thought a majority of frightened Americans still held onto a president who was "simple, endowed with few ideas and with modest cultural understanding, but firmly convinced to be right."³⁶ Either militantly or sheepishly, a majority of voters had bought the conservative argument that, "taking attention away from Iraq," made religious and moral "values" the issue: "Kerry's battleship smashed against the iceberg of values."³⁷ "It's the morals, stupid!" a *FAZ* headline proclaimed.³⁸

An Italian correspondent marveled that even in Ohio, where people had paid "in blood" for the "Iraqi slaughterhouse," votes were decided by "the tables of values."³⁹ German colleagues joked that Bush—who had the same Christian philosophy as Europeans before the Enlightenment—should have felt "comfortable" in a state whose motto is "with God, all things are possible."⁴⁰ "The superpower has moved over to the right," *Corriere's* Washington correspondent summed up.⁴¹ That steering, however, meant to some the end of the great U.S. republic that, "founded two centuries ago to break the chains of European fundamentalism, returned this way to the medieval mysticism of '*defensor dei*,' the holy king."⁴² If "fundamentalists" succeed in pushing their agenda, "it will be a new America where perhaps tolerance and reason will not find room. . . . A scary interpretation of the latest vote of the great American democracy."⁴³ U.S. voters' greatest mistake was to not have recognized that the rest of the world was right in thinking Bush was "pernicious for America."⁴⁴ The one editorialist who insisted that the "world did not end on Tuesday" had at best a backhanded positive assessment: "America is a decidedly conservative country, but not an alien one."⁴⁵

Following the tattered belief that not all was lost with Americans, Europeans reminded themselves that the first to be disappointed and at risk was "the other America: the half, or very nearly half, who think like us. . . . They, even more than we, need and deserve a better president."⁴⁶ A fellow *Guardian* editorialist added:

Four more years: four more years of that smirking arrogance, four more years of the world being run through the prisms of American oil interests and Christian fundamentalism; four more years of inaction on climate change. If things are bad internationally, they will be worse than that for millions of Americans.⁴⁷

Those blue edges around red America seemed "centers of resistance to be thrown into the ocean next."⁴⁸ At least two newspapers coined the term

"The Un-united States of America," and the conservative *FAZ* predicted a "cultural war" with conservatives pushing their agenda "ruthlessly" and liberals confined into "a ghetto of defiance": "The United States is a conservative country—more conservative than most Europeans want to believe and also more conservative than many people in America want to think possible."⁴⁹

As if it were not bad enough how Bush was transforming the United States, others wrote, there was a real danger that he would "export and impose" on the world "the great Western counter-reform," paradoxically in the same way America had taught the world the opposite—racial equality, feminism, counterculture, pacifism, and the separation between church and state.⁵⁰ The larger problem with the successful blend of religious zeal and militant fear is the way it translates into "radical" foreign policies that, Europe felt it should accept now, most Americans support because they are in line with a simplistic approach to global problems where America is the undisputed leader. Europeans fear and "barely understand" the suddenly validated course "the sole super-power, the indispensable nation" is charting, including the "illegitimate war" in Iraq.⁵¹ "It is one thing for Mr Bush to play the fear card in the Midwest, quite another to use it to justify another American blitzkrieg in the Middle East," according to *The Times*.⁵²

In fact, many Europeans expected the kind of militarized polarization Bush created with the war in Iraq to increase dangerous global tensions. A whopping 76 percent of the French, as well as 66 percent of Germans and 60 percent of the British said in 2006 that the world is "more dangerous" after Saddam Hussein's fall.⁵³ Already in late 2004, more than half of E.U. citizens thought the United States had a "negative role in promoting world peace"—and the reelection made three-quarters of Germans, French, and a large majority of British think even worse of the United States.⁵⁴ Small wonder that an editorialist for *The Guardian* quipped on November 5, 2004, that "Osama bin Laden must be as gratified as Dick Cheney that George Bush is back."⁵⁵

Still, Europe had to "put a brave face on a result that it did not want," accepting that "waiting for him to go away is no longer sensible."⁵⁶ Bush, no longer a "footnote," would be making history, and he was unlikely to return the United States "to the old way of doing business, in concert with allies and with respect for the international system the US itself had done so much to create," journalists predicted.⁵⁷ Despite the fear that E.U.-U.S. relations would further deteriorate, Europe, quite simply, had to learn to live with another four years of Bush.⁵⁸ "We don't like it one bit," *The Guardian* editors admitted, "Yet both America and the world need a handshake right now, not a clenched fist"—not so much because American leadership is admired, but because its power is overwhelming and people will live "for four

more years in a world where a deeply unpopular and unilateralist Mr Bush calls the shots."⁵⁹

So "Old Europe faces new Bush," as *Le Figaro* chided, or, as *The Times* put it more pessimistically: "Spectre of Bush haunts EU."⁶⁰ E.U. policymakers had to live with the election as well, caught between the conflicting desires to be America's pal and to steer transatlantic relations in a new direction where they could avoid being mere subordinates. Berlusconi alone said Bush's policy gave the "United States the role of promoting freedom in the world," while the rest of E.U. leaders' congratulations were like Schröder's in a *FAZ* cartoon: The sweaty leader cannot force himself to end the sentence starting with "we rejoice that. . ." on the Dear Mr. Bush letter.⁶¹ E.U. Commission President Romano Prodi, Chirac, and Schröder said they hoped that even Bush would have learned that America could not "rule the world alone," though they should not "bet on it" because the president was sincerely convinced that the United States has "unique capabilities and ambitions in the world," something Europeans are no longer willing to blindly accept.⁶²

Diplomatically hiding their disappointment, E.U. leaders grabbed the occasion to call for a "fresh start" for "the close transatlantic partnership" between two powers that were "each other's natural and indispensable partners," in the words of the Brussels European Council on November 5.⁶³ The E.U. Commission suggested "refreshing the dialogue between EU and US civil societies."⁶⁴ The German foreign ministry coordinator of German-American relations, Karsten Voigt, said Bush and his European counterparts should thresh out their common interest, while France's foreign minister, Michel Barnier, said that it was time "to rebuild, to renovate transatlantic relations."⁶⁵ Debating transatlantic relations in the European Parliament before Bush's February 2005 visit, E.U. Council President Nicolas Schmit highlighted the "interdependence" between Europe and America, based on "shared interests" and the realization that "acting together, the E.U. and the United States can constitute a formidable force at the service of our common values in the world."⁶⁶ José Barroso, who had since replaced Prodi as European Commission president, also said that "a new listening partnership is emerging" and the European Parliament's 2005 annual report on E.U. foreign policy hopefully praised "the revival of the spirit of Transatlantic cooperation."⁶⁷ Blair, who immediately encouraged E.U. leaders to emerge from their "state of denial" and accept the U.S. vote, was expected to restore Great Britain to the position of bridge between the drifting-apart continents, though some feared that "a continued Bush presidency may not only further divide Europe but also leave Britain adrift in the mid-Atlantic."⁶⁸

Some dared to hope Washington would change. *The Times* editors wrote that Bush, helped by Blair, should seize the opportunity of a second term to make "the qualities which Americans see in this politician. . . become

more obvious to others," while Europeans should stop dismissing "the American people as an aberration" and seek a new partnership to solve global problems.⁶⁹ Perhaps equally fearful of an alienated America at a time when global crises made unity especially important, *Corriere's* star U.S. correspondent wrote that, should Bush now become an "even-minded statesman," "it would be pretty great for the United States and the rest of the planet, in these breathless days."⁷⁰ Similarly, *FAZ's* Washington correspondent said Bush should become a unifier because he owed it not only to his nation but to a world that needed a "global leading power."⁷¹ A *Le Figaro* correspondent suggested that perhaps "Bush 2" would admit that "even the American hyperpower cannot do everything by itself," while the newspaper's foreign editor argued that Europe should swallow the bad news, reexamine its position and make the first move to change its relations with a changed America so that cooperation can still be possible.⁷²

The same newspaper, however, noted that Bush had expressed "no remorse" over the war and the ensuing transatlantic fallout, and overtures were likely to amount to nothing more than "wishful thinking" with "no chance of being seized upon."⁷³ Much as the world would be "safer" if America and Europe worked together, "How useful is the agreement over the goal, when the way remains in dispute?"⁷⁴ Others also predicted "no let-up in the aggressive foreign policy" and that "old" Bush would not "lift a finger" to make Europeans Washington's partners, as they wanted, but rather that he would be content that they should remain "at best useful back-up troops, at worst awkward troublemakers."⁷⁵ *The Guardian's* editors, consistently and vehemently antiwar, used the death of three U.K. soldiers in Iraq the day after the election—"a cruel reminder of the human cost to the countries that followed the United States into war"—to argue for a new British line with Washington.⁷⁶

"Faced with Bush's America," many Europeans felt their leaders had little choice but to "put their money on Europe" and exhorted them to capitalize on the reelection "as justification for creating a distinctive pillar in competition with the US."⁷⁷ Solid majorities, having a lot less confidence in Bush than in Blair or even Chirac, wanted Western Europe to be more independent from the United States.⁷⁸ The "war on terror," instead of providing a common mission, has degenerated into the hub of discontent, with much less than half of the British, French, Germans, and Italians supporting it by mid-2007.⁷⁹ There is a surprisingly militant ring to Europe's displeasure with U.S. superpower—majorities rising to 85 percent in France would like the European Union, another country, or even China to become as militarily powerful as the United States.⁸⁰ Even if U.S. leadership is "imposed by reality" for now, Europeans are less and less willing to supinely "watch for what happens on the other side of the Atlantic, in the distressing wait for knowing the names

of the new imperial ministers," as a commentator in *la Repubblica* put it.⁸¹

On the contrary, the reelection meant that Europe would find "the will and the means" to assume a unified role strong enough to command respect from America, otherwise it cannot be "taken seriously" and the alliance degenerates into a "coalition of the willing."⁸² *Le Monde's* Daniel Vernet said that Bush, who did so much to divide and marginalize Europe, might become its "best unifier": "In order not to have to choose between being insignificant or dependent, Europeans have to affirm their interests and their solutions. Because American voters seem not to have given us the present, or the supposed present, of a president well-intentioned toward us, it is time that Europeans act by themselves instead of reacting to Washington's politics."⁸³

Even the English, among whom, "Blair pooh-poohs the idea that Britain faces a choice between America and Europe," should have the courage to go with the latter: "America has made its choice. It's time for us to make ours," an editorialist wrote in *The Guardian*. After all, the Bush election drew a clear line not only between governments but also between U.S. and E.U. peoples: "Apart from the fact that they speak English and have two legs apiece, it is hard to think of anything American conservatives have in common with European liberals."⁸⁴ Bush's reelection, "consecrating the division of the West," puts Europe to the test—can it really be a global power?⁸⁵

Even while sweet-talking Washington on transatlantic ties, E.U. leaders seem more willing than ever to make Europe stand its own ground. While there certainly is a West, Prodi said in 2005, "The Atlantic is an arch with two pillars."⁸⁶ Two equal pillars should carry the same weight—E.U. documents are more insistent than ever on "effective multilateralism," more determined on Europe and America working together as partners because they "share a responsibility in addressing key threats and challenges."⁸⁷ Gone are the deferent cries for America the savior to let Europe follow its leadership in a global mission, replaced instead by a new firm insistence that Europe should be treated as an equal because it has been an equally good force in the world. E.U. officials are literally rewriting the history of transatlantic debits and credits, putting some of the latter in Europe's column: "For well over 60 years, the transatlantic partnership together with European integration has been a leading force for peace and prosperity," according to the European Council presidency conclusions in December 2004.⁸⁸

The change from paying tribute to inspirational American values and generous American power to extolling Europe's unique role in history is especially striking in Barroso's words to the press in a joint conference with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice ahead of Bush's February 2005 visit. Barroso exhorted to "look at history"—but he meant something

very different from the customary grateful recognition of the role America had played in postwar Europe:

Let's not forget, if I may say, like history that the United States itself is a creation, born out of the great tradition of English liberalism and the French Revolution. Those were the ideals of democracy, of justice, of solidarity, of freedom. Those were the ideals of the French Revolution and the ideals of the British liberalism that were at the beginning the genesis of the United States. So let's look at history.⁸⁹

What better way of inciting Europe to reclaim a global role than to suggest that the American dream had been European all along?

It seems that E.U. leaders are repositioning Europe much along the lines put forward by *Le Monde's* publisher, Jean-Marie Colombani, in an all-encompassing argument as to why the election should be "an electroshock" to Europeans. His November 2004 editorial, entitled "a world apart," could not be more drastically different from his famous 9/11 editorial, "We are all Americans."⁹⁰ Beyond "disappointment and the moment of disbelief," Europeans could no longer allow themselves "illusions, excuses or loopholes," he wrote.

Washington will continue to use the "fight against Evil" to "render perishable the role of traditional alliances," to "authorize the roughing of the international system," to "exonerate the United States from the common right of nations," and to privilege "the military over the political." Bush would continue to seek to divide Europe, to "despise" rather than "fear" it. He has had free rein because "the European ally does not know or does not want to make itself understood." Because "there can be no partnership between such *unequal entities*," Europe needs to have more military power and to stop permitting the United States to live off international credit. It also needs to stop believing that the Atlantic can constitute a common universe: "The heart of Bush's America is in every way, a world apart," Colombani wrote.

The most troublesome result of the election was precisely that. Some Europeans finally gave up believing that Bush, with his "crusades" and his "democratization at gunpoint,"⁹¹ did not represent the country and inferred that exceptional America is undergoing a radical change. "America belongs to Bush," *la Repubblica's* front-page headline proclaimed on November 4. "Whether we like it or not, America has become more conservative, more religious and more unilateralist," *Le Monde* editors conceded.⁹² The second term will "change the United States," the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* foreign editor predicted, even though he insisted that "America is more than its president" and a colleague warned that it would be "fatal" if anti-Bush sentiments became anti-Americanism.⁹³ But the majorities of Western Europeans who say they like Americans

have already kept shrinking throughout the early 2000s—can that slide be avoided if Europeans come to accept that their America no longer exists?

Europeans emerged from the disbelieving disappointment of the 2004 Bush reelection with either the fear or the firm conviction that “America has changed.”⁹⁴ Despite three years of hotly contested “war on terror,” they had approached the election gushing with admiration for the great democracy that would find itself again and provide the world with the kind of leadership America has had for more than a century. Slapped in the face by Bush’s victory, Europeans backtracked and blamed it on unrepresentative fanaticism. They feared the consequences for liberal Americans and the world order. Worst of all, they saw “traditional” America disappear—the America that used to be “open and multilateral.”⁹⁵ Given that the U.S. reality is so different from “European dreams,” some even wondered if a “better America” ever existed or if Europeans (and liberal Americans) have not “imagined a country that is not there.”⁹⁶

But despite such a deep disenchantment, Europeans have not yet completely given up on their America—they were ready and eager to see it reassert itself after the midterm elections in November 2006. European newspapers extensively covered the elections, seeing them as a referendum on Bush and the war in Iraq. The fact that Republicans lost control of both the House and the Senate meant that voters, spurred by “an overwhelming repudiation of the conflict in Iraq,” had handed a belated defeat to Bush: “Bushism has collapsed,” *Corriere’s* Washington correspondent wrote.⁹⁷ The elections were “democracy’s triumph—even more than the Democrats’ victory.”⁹⁸ Voters were returning the United States to its roots, to that division of power that “sustained the world’s greatest democracy through two centuries of wars and a decent number of horrible presidents,” *la Repubblica’s* top correspondent wrote. For six years, Bush and his administration had tried to “corrupt the nature” of American democracy, riding the wave of “chauvinism and panic that had understandably taken over the entire country, after September 11”—but now “America is getting back to its senses.”⁹⁹

Finally, Americans were behaving the way Europeans thought they should—“it was the continuing failure of the war in Iraq that has galvanised many Americans to do what much of the rest of the world had longed for them to do much earlier... For that alone the entire world owes them its deep gratitude today,” *The Guardian* wrote in an editorial entitled, “Thank you, America.”¹⁰⁰ Even before the votes were all counted, Europeans’ “desire for the ‘good’ democratic America” went so far that the wish for change was already taken for the result, according to the *FAZ*.¹⁰¹ Again, European commentators asserted

how consequential the superpower's direction is for the rest of the world: "This is the only electoral battle that we know of on which, in a strict sense, the fate of the planet hangs," Bernard-Henri Lévy wrote in *The Times*.¹⁰²

The Republican rule had "played an unprecedently negative and polarising role in the world's affairs," bringing policies that "have shocked the world" and "turning the entire world against the United States."¹⁰³ But many commentators questioned how much practical change the newly bipartisan regime in Washington would sponsor—"Washington will remain Washington," two commentators wrote in *Le Monde*, and the *FAZ*'s foreign editor wrote that Europe would not have it "any easier" with a Democratic majority.¹⁰⁴ Some wished that recognizing "the failure in Iraq" would not make the United States withdraw in insularity, while others suggested that the change in Washington was all the more reason for Europeans to take action that went beyond complaining about "the scarecrow of Bush's hubris" and "passively observing Iraq's descent into hell."¹⁰⁵ Washington, changing course in the Middle East, might finally use "Europe's help," an editorial suggested in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.¹⁰⁶ Italy's foreign minister, Massimo D'Alema, was quoted as saying: "Now for Europe this is the opening of a great opportunity but also a great responsibility, to open a new cycle."¹⁰⁷ Overall, it was still unclear if, under the Democrats, "another America is possible," according to an article in *Le Figaro* unequivocally headlined, "The world relieved by the Republicans' defeat."¹⁰⁸

The dream America that has brought the United States and Europe together for more than a century and through the horror of the September 11 attacks can also draw them apart. An Italian cartoon captured the change in one word: The teary-eyed European that read the newspaper about the "massacre in the Twin Towers," exclaiming "We are all American," in 2004 read "Bush ahead" with a disgusted scowl and scoffed, "They are all American."¹⁰⁹ Just as in 1898, Europe wonders if it was wrong to think America exceptional. More than in 1898 or at any time since, it also prepares to challenge the suddenly unrecognizable global power it no longer wholeheartedly respects. In 1898, Europeans worried that the Spanish-American War would turn the great republic into an empire of old and got ready to prevent it from getting too close for comfort. Today, some of them see that change complete and they undertake the difficult task of becoming an alternative global leader.

A French statesman wrote after the Bush reelection that America has to choose between providing "an imposed domination" and an "accepted leadership."¹¹⁰ The 2004 reelection, validating Washington's actions and Europe's worst fears, has crippled faith in the United States' representing the American dream. And that has made strenuously steeper the already



Cartoon printed in *Corriere della Sera* (Italy) in November 2004 comparing the European sentiments on 9/11 ("We are all American") to those after Bush's reelection ("They are all American").
 Courtesy of Vauro Senesi.

uphill road the United States has to travel if it is to remain a global leader. But not all is lost. Even just the indication of a will to change, like the 2006 midterm elections, seemed to Europeans to "reassert a different and better United States that can again offer hope instead of despair to the world."¹¹ Despite everything, Europeans still believe America has the unique power to offer both.

CHAPTER 10

Conclusion: The Power of the American Dream

“Take me with you!” were the first words out of the young waitress’ mouth after I told her that I was visiting from the United States and would return there in a couple of days. Then, with Rome sprawled at our feet from the historic hillside restaurant in Rocca di Papa, she went on to list all the things she had disliked on her only visit to the U.S. East Coast—fast-food, malls, the lack of a downtown that would lend itself to an evening stroll with friends. And of course, she rolled her eyes as she mentioned Bush and the war in Iraq, which by that time, September 2006, had been raging for more than three years. And yet, her first thought had been of America’s allure.

Through a discourse analysis revealing what America is to Europeans, this book has sought to show that the history of Europe’s American dream can help us forecast the future of transatlantic relations and of the global power of the United States. This much has not changed from the first time the Old World realized that the New World mattered in global affairs to the first time it is trying to make it not matter—Europe’s belief in the essential goodness and the universal validity of the American dream has been at the root of U.S. power in the world. Over and over, Europeans have pledged their allegiance to the American dream, by which they do not mean lofty philosophies but a simple life program: Regardless of where you start, you have the freedom and the power to achieve the best you can be. By recognizing that, as a concept, America is undefeatable, Europeans have granted the United States a unique kind of power. It was unique in its ability to harm Europe in 1898 when it embraced imperialistic politics. It has been unique in its ability to promote good in Europe in the twentieth century when it became the leader of the West. If only it can remain an ideal and a hope for those who aspire to share in its power, and not a show of brute force, it could be the unique super-power capable of avoiding eventual self-destruction.

From a constructivist perspective, the focus here on what America *is* to Europeans at two strikingly similar historical junctures has rested on the assumption that discourses about America underlie, and provide a

fundamental explicative tool for, the way America is covered in foreign media, the way America is perceived by foreign public opinion, and, crucially, the way U.S.-European relations are shaped. The discourses about America are central to understanding not only how the United States and its actions are regarded abroad, but how European states interact with America.

There are three possible futures for the West: an unassailable American hegemony, an eclipse of the United States of America at the hands of the United States of Europe, or a transatlantic alliance remodeled to handle the global challenges of the twenty-first century, beginning with the economic and social dark ages that provide a breeding ground for terrorism. The first alternative is historically unfeasible, for no superpower has ever reigned indefinitely on power alone. The second is still far-fetched, though there are certainly signs that the E.U. tortoise is training for competition with the U.S. hare. The third alternative is the one most analysts would prefer. It is the only one that would not waste a precious heritage of universal ideas developed in the West, especially individual freedom and a diverse democracy. This book suggests that the “war on terror” is the best chance to either start pushing that alternative or kill it. So far, it has been thoroughly and unnecessarily hurting the possibility of productive U.S.-E.U. relations. The first step to make sure that America and Europe stop this potentially fatal mud-wrestling—splattering dirt all around—is to discover the extraordinary resilience and the pragmatic importance of Europe’s treasure trove of goodwill for America.

When asked in 2004 what is the most important thing his European readers should know about the United States, *The Times* Washington correspondent Tim Reid replied, “That it is still a foreign country, despite being America.” *Despite being America*—because Europe’s America has never been just another country, but a universal concept. Both as an ideal and a fantastic hope, Europe’s America has also never been foreign. Rather, it is a universal promise—the empowerment to pursue happiness, be it a better future than your parents had or the fantasy of cowboys roaming unspoiled plains. Europeans’ gut instinct has long told them that concept America—the land of opportunity—is grand. When they said we are all Americans, it was not useless sympathy but the proud proclamation of a common dream that has antedated any defense pacts. The tragedy of the cartoon where an Italian reacts to President Bush’s 2004 reelection saying “*They* are all Americans” is precisely that America of the 2000s is becoming “a foreign country.”

It has been said that all be well if only the United States can show Europeans some respect. But that will not be enough unless Americans—the nation as a whole, not just the government—also appear to have some respect for Europe’s *America*, for the dream that has underwritten the country’s power since it stepped onto the scene of global politics.

Europeans' American dream is the one who made them cry on September 11, 2001, and send troops to Afghanistan, and it is the same one that made them cry on November 3, 2004, and refuse to send troops to Iraq. You could count on one hand the Europeans who think bin Laden had a good point. European "anti-Americanism" is really not against America at all. It is the angry affirmation of Europe's fear that the United States no longer represents the success of the American dream but its failure—that dream America is not the real America.

On a 2005 documentary on U.S.-E.U. relations, a French student told the American interviewer that Europeans "miss this America that made us dream"—that's the best answer to the program's title, "Does Europe hate us?"¹ Europeans love America because they have thought that the nation spared the tragedy of history could stand outside history. To Europe, America is a promise. Based on this dream, Europeans have judged and reacted to the U.S. government, people and actions, often chastising them for failing to meet extraordinarily high expectations. No expectation is more crucial or more embattled than this: America's extraordinary power should not be used in ordinary ways. Why should not the prosperous United States join the imperial fray at a time when even grade-B power Italy was going after colonies in Africa? Why should not the sole superpower of the twenty-first century invade any country it pleases without bothering to ask anybody's permission? Because Europeans believe that dream America has the chance to be a unique power in history, not the latest in a long series of empires ultimately betrayed by their own exuberance. So they are taking very badly the perception that the United States is wasting that chance.

In 1898 as today, Europeans simply do not buy the American idea that democracy can be created at gunpoint. Despite more than a century of U.S. professions of good intentions and providential mission to be the exporter of freedom and democracy, Europeans have not changed their mind. In mid 2007, only 3 percent of the French, 4 percent of the Germans, 9 percent of the British, and 13 percent of the Italians polled by Pew said they believed that the United States "promotes democracy wherever it can."² The rest thought it does so "mostly where it serves its interests." Because Europeans are hardly all pacifists, their historic problem with U.S. uses of military might is illuminating. While it was true of 1898, it cannot be fear of being defeated that disturbs them today, because precision bombs are certainly not aimed at Paris or Berlin. And while it might be applicable today, it was not a different philosophy about the international system that concerned them in 1898, because everybody had the imperial itch then. So there remains one essential reason why Europeans vehemently, almost viscerally opposed both the Spanish-American War and the invasion of Iraq in 2003—because it was contrary to their image of America. That is why they thought those wars were

provoked by “unthinking” or “non-intellectual” Americans who ignored their tradition and the founders’ intent.

Euro-bashers will reply that Europe grumbles because it resents American power, because it wants a weak United States. A few might, but this research has shown it is not true generally for two reasons: First, Europeans never thought America could be weak (the terrorist attacks themselves were “impossible to comprehend”); second, they do not wish it to be defeated. Larger-than-life concept America is by default uniquely powerful. In fact, the exceptionalism associated with America is the foundation of America’s unique power as perceived by Europeans throughout U.S. history, an illustration of how historical notions of national identities shape international relations beyond material interests. Before, above and beyond real U.S. might, the one measured in McDonalds and Marines, the American dream has kept Europeans in admiration and their policymakers in deference of America. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, it has made the United States into the undefeatable, indispensable nation. If a century ago it was mostly the British who went out of their way to prove that blood runs thicker than water, E.U. politicians have been scarcely less sanguine in ingratiating the United States and defining a common Western mission. As one of them put it, it is in Europe’s best interest that the United States remains strong, because its great power can be harnessed to protect and promote the American dream.

But to remain indispensable, America needs to continue to represent the ideals that convinced Europeans it had power to start with. Europeans thought it was betraying those ideals by becoming an ordinary imperial power in the 1898 war. They were sure that the United States could not become an empire and remain itself, that they were witnessing the demise of a model and the emergence of a threat. Even though their fear of decline and inter-European strife prevented them from following through, Europeans started talking about joining together to fend off the transatlantic threat. The Spanish-American War threatened to eliminate both admiration and subordination because it was deemed proof that the United States was changing. Then imperial America did something incredible—it did not push its advantage. Even after hard-fought victories in two world wars and the Cold War left a deeply prostrated Europe at its mercy, the United States acted as a true savior and put it back on its feet. It truly seemed that the superpower could be exceptional after all.

Just when the post-Cold War apolitical prosperity threatened to make its role less clear, 9/11 happened. More than ever, Europe said it needed America to prove that freedom and democracy would prevail, that the undefeatable concept would be the antidote to hatred. Fighting terrorism was the perfect chance to establish a new American leadership and a new E.U.-U.S. partnership that adapted to the twenty-first century and no

longer relied on the twin pillars of military supremacy and capitalism. Virtually nobody would oppose fighting terrorists—not the leftists who had sympathized with the Soviet Union, not the pacifists because military prowess seemed useless when facing extremists emerging from caves with box-cutters, not those humiliated by American arrogance because this time the giant was vulnerable too. The European Union—a daring concept itself of overwhelming the challenges of nationalism—relished the wonderful opportunity of proving its mettle alongside America, not against it.

Until now, mid-2007, none of this has happened. The “war on terror” has glaringly missed the opportunity of uniting America and Europe and of providing the West with a new reason for existing. Today more than ever, the United States has to be seen as worthy of the special role entrusted to it. Even while the Pentagon was still smoldering, the peoples and the governments of Europe put their faith and their fate in America’s hands. Belief that America had the moral high ground gave them confidence in U.S. leadership, the kind they saw emanating from Americans’ “extraordinary moral fiber,” not from their missiles or corporations. Instead, appalled Europe saw the United States fall into the same trap as all other superpowers—the belief that one can take on the world alone. Washington squarely rejected Brussels. And to slightly modify the old English phrase, hell hath no fury like a partner scorned.

Once again, one might ask why the United States should care that Europe angrily disapproves of its actions. The world’s hegemon does not need old Europe. While that might be true in terms of tanks and dollars, for a little while longer anyway, the United States also does not need to produce an enemy out of a friend, as it is doing. If America is after lone supremacy and domination, then Europe cannot support it and keep its self-respect. If it cannot be a partner, then Europe will be a competitor. Europe has long accepted U.S. hegemony because it had no other choice, but also because it considered it in its own best interest, not as a humiliation. Already in 1898, some European diplomats were pushed by U.S. imperialism to consider a union of European powers, but their own internal problems ultimately made the Great Powers merely defensive. Once it stops thinking U.S. rule is to its advantage, today’s European Union is better suited than any other power before to aggressively take on the United States. Already Europeans are considering whether they might not approach world politics without taking into consideration the United States, a first in more than a century. The ongoing struggle against terrorism’s threats is still the European Union’s chance to prove its worth, and it will do it without the United States if it cannot do it with it.

Brussels might still be afraid to overtly antagonize Washington, but, in the end, fear has always been worse for those who inspire than for those who feel it. That is the real danger America risks today from

Europe—not trade rulings, troops withdrawals, and flag-burning in the boulevards, but to enter the twenty-first century inspiring fear. It would be especially ironic if Europe became America's counterweight in power politics because today's global challenges would be best met by a new kind of alliance kept together by ideals. The consequences of a permanent alienation between the transatlantic powers go well beyond affecting the ability of keeping anti-Americanism at bay. Rather, they threaten the very root of the survivability of U.S. power, because they remove what has made it seem both justified and invincible. As long as we are all Americans, there is no point in bringing America down.

It would also be tragic if the United States stopped representing a myth, an exceptional dream, a leadership born of undefeatable values and thus condemned itself to the inglorious destiny of superpowers. Only being an undefeatable concept can make it an undefeatable power. Europe's discourse of America in the twenty-first century stands alone as a crucial factor in world affairs, aside from whether it coincides with what the United States really is or what groups of Europeans or Americans might benefit from any particular constructed meaning. To remain both an undefeatable concept and power, the United States needs Europe's vote of confidence. Kill that confidence and you have killed three birds with one stone—admiration, deference for leadership, and the very idea that America should not be defeated. You have also killed perhaps the greatest asset a country can have—to make people dream. For centuries, America has done just that. In the weary imagination of Europeans burdened by a long common heritage of bloody mistakes, America, seemingly born of the wilderness without a past, represents the fresh start everybody needs to believe in, the magical kingdom of Oz that makes Kansas livable.

Fortified by this hope, Europe has looked at America to be a different kind of model, a different kind of power. If at times those exorbitant expectations have translated into paradoxical accusations, they have also sustained U.S. power. What is the scathing criticism that the United States only pursues its interests if not the astonishingly naïve belief that the United State can be humankind's benefactor? It does not matter that Europeans are choosing to express themselves in the first terms—a better approximation of the truth lies just underneath those words. It is America's great fortune that deeply held beliefs, especially if subconsciously accepted as self-evident, are very difficult to change. With the bitter aftertaste of Iraq still lingering in their mouth, Europeans again brought out their dream America—they looked at the 2004 and 2006 elections expecting to see the triumph of exemplary U.S. democracy.

Their peculiar sense of entitlement in the U.S. voters' choices is a sign that Europeans feel that they own a piece of America because America is the miraculous society of the melting pot, the only kind of "communism" that works because the common property is a dream that cannot exclude

anybody. The “war on terror” and Bush’s reelection has made them feel kicked out, disenfranchised from perhaps the most universal right of all—that of having a dream. It has made them wonder whether the American dream belongs to them and whether they want it anyway. It has raised the terrible suspicion that, instead of a community of the West, America and Europe are a world apart. Perhaps the most frightening recent poll findings are that discontent about the United States is growing more rapidly among Europe’s youth and that more French, Germans, and British respondents chose Australia or Canada over the United States as the place “where to go to lead a good life” when they were asked what they would recommend to “a young person who wanted to leave this country.”³ More British, French, Germans, and Italians said they believed their compatriots who move to the United States would have a worse or neither better nor worse life than said they thought life in America would be better, according to a 2007 Pew opinion poll⁴. The serpentine lines at U.S. consulates overseas seem destined to grow shorter.

But not all is lost. Bush’s victory in 2004, by removing him as the scapegoat on which Europeans dumped all their criticisms, can be a positive signal that the need for change goes well beyond the White House. Because, unfortunately, the war against terrorism seems far from over, it still provides the same incentives for the kind of new cooperation that has been so badly botched so far. This book suggests that what America needs most to win back its prestige abroad, to provide the right leadership for the twenty-first century and to safeguard its power, is to rediscover its roots. It was America that gave the world the dream of equality among the most diverse of peoples, of opportunity limited only by willingness to work hard, of the pursuit of happiness as a constitutional guarantee. As its power grew, it also gave the dream of a unique superpower that actually cares about its ideals, about freedom and democracy, about the rights of the vanquished and not only its own, that acted out of justice and not imperial arrogance.

Because it has pushed Europeans to admire, imitate and deferentially fear the United States, Europe’s dream has been to a great extent America’s power. Since the fourth century BC, historians have said that no superpower can survive using only the law of the strongest. America can beat a self-destructive destiny if it continues to exploit that treasure of goodwill, Europe’s dream. Europeans will challenge the United States the moment they stop believing that it cannot and should not be defeated because it represents an ideal, not naked power, and it serves as an example for the larger good. What a waste it would be if the United States allowed the post-9/11 freeze in transatlantic relations to cement itself, turning definitively warm feelings of universal participation into humiliated resentment and, eventually, very real challenges to America’s uniqueness.

What Europeans are telling Americans today is to reclaim dream America—or step aside. Europe does not want a changed America, it wants America as it believes it was founded to be and as Europe has been dreaming about. Europeans do not want to wake up and realize that this is the continent that was not there. If they do—and some already do—they will no longer have any reason to aspire to being Washington's partner. They will no longer wish America success but failure, because the United States will no longer be a hope but a threat. To prevent that failure, the United States must rise to the occasion—it must find a way to provide a leadership that the world, starting with Europe, finds worthy of the unique power America represents. Throwing an army around the globe has been tried before and it never worked for long. Europeans have long believed that America can offer a better solution, that it can beat history and be an exceptional, truly undefeatable power. Hardly any American can disagree with that, and that is the glue of the West.

America the country cannot afford to lose the world's faith in its ability to live up to the ideals of America the undefeatable concept. Believing in being free to make the best of ourselves is what makes us all American. It is in everybody's best interest that the United States continues to symbolize a power that people dream not of destroying, but of achieving.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. To speak of “Europeans” and “Americans” as single entities is, of course, an impossible generalization. The justification for doing so here is that, for the purposes of this book, the broad differences between Europe and America are greater than the differences within them, even despite the red and blue U.S. divide, as recent polls have found. Readers should still note that the terms “Western Europe” and “Europe” are used here to refer only to Great Britain, Germany, France, and Italy, in order to avoid useless repetition in the text, the same and only reason for which the two terms America and United States are also used interchangeably. Those four countries, the “Global Responsibility Four” (see European Parliament, “Motion for a Resolution,” PE 309.702 attached to report A5-0296/2002 of 1 September 2002, 14) are apparently considered the most important foreign interlocutors by U.S. State Department public diplomacy officials: Each “Issue Focus” issued by the Office of Research in Washington starts with Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, followed by Russia, “rest of Europe,” and other regions.

2. Andrew Kohut and Bruce Stokes, *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked* (New York: Times Books, 2006).

3. *Ibid.*, 47, 84.

4. Jeremy Rifkin, *The European Dream: How Europe’s Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2004).

5. Gianni Riotta, *N.Y. Undici Settembre. Diario di una Guerra* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001), 107.

6. Quoted in translation in Rob Kroes and Maarten van Rossem, eds., *Anti-Americanism in Europe* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1986), 7.

7. Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

8. Three sets of material were used to support this book’s arguments. The most important are the elite European newspapers. For the Spanish-American War period, coverage of America between August 1897 and January 1899 was collected from *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* for England, *Le Temps* and *Le Figaro* for France, *Frankfurter Zeitung* and *Kölnische Zeitung* for Germany, and *Corriere della Sera* and *La Stampa* for Italy. For the 9/11 period, coverage of America between March 2001 and March 2002, as well as November 2004 and November 2006, was taken from *The Times* and *The Guardian* in England, *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde* in France, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in Germany,

and *Corriere della Sera* and *la Repubblica* in Italy. (The first newspaper listed is considered more conservative and the second more liberal; they are the top-circulation elite newspapers in their countries.) In all, more than 3,700 articles were read, all in the original language and all translations from French, German, and Italian are the author's; articles reprinted from other newspapers or news wires were excluded. The second set of material comes from foreign policy, specifically all discussion about the United States in resolutions and debates issued by the European Union between April 2001 and September 2002, and between November 2004 and May 2005, as well as in the documents and diplomatic exchanges for the foreign offices of France, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy between July 1897 and April 1899. The third set of documents consists of public opinion polls commissioned by the European Union and by The Pew Research Center For The People & The Press between August 2001 and June 2007 (public opinion polls did not exist in the 1890s).

9. For the reader interested in specific methodology, this research was guided by discourse analysis as explicated theoretically by Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," in *Untying the Text*, ed. Robert Young (Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), chap. 3 and Michel Foucault *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972) and empirically by Teun van Dijk, "The Interdisciplinary Study of News as Discourse," in *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research*, ed. Klaus Bruhn Jensen and Nicholas W. Jankowski (London: Routledge, 1991), chap. 5; Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (New York: Edward Arnold, 1995); Norman Fairclough *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1992); Gunther Kress, "Ideological Structures in Discourse," in *Handbook of Discourse Analysis: Discourse Analysis in Society*, ed. Teun van Dijk, (London: Academic Press, 1985), vol. 4, chap. 3; and Nelson Phillips and Cynthia Hardy, *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2002).

Chapter 2

1. Rob Kroes, *Them and Us: Questions of Citizenship in a Globalizing World* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 153.

2. Quoted in Denis Lacorne, Jacques Rupnik, and Marie-France Toinet, eds., *L'Amérique dans les têtes: Un siècle de fascinations et d'aversion* (Paris: Hachette, 1986), 62, 269.

3. Charles W. Brooks, *America in France's Hopes and Fears, 1890–1920*, vol. 1 (New York: Garland, 1987). On French leadership, Tiziano Bonazzi, "Paradigmi Atlantici," in *America-Europa: la circolazione delle idee*, ed. Tiziano Bonazzi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1976), 214.

4. Quoted in Arnaldo Testi, "L'immagine degli Stati Uniti nella stampa socialista italiana, 1886–1914," in *Italia e America dal Settecento all'Età dell'Imperialismo*, ed. Giorgio Spini and others (Venice: Marsilio, 1976), 325.

5. H. Wayne Morgan, *America's Road to Empire: The War with Spain and Overseas Expansion* (New York: John Wiley, 1965), ix.

6. Quoted in Alfredo Canavero, "Stampa e opinione pubblica italiana di fronte alla guerra ispano-americana del 1898," in *Italia e America dal Settecento all'Età*

dell'Imperialismo, ed. Spini and others, 407; Daniela Rossini, "The American Peril: Italian Catholics and the Spanish-American War, 1898," in *European Perceptions of the Spanish-American War of 1898*, ed. Sylvia Hilton and Steve J.S. Ickringill (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999), 167–71.

7. *Avanti!*, 23 April 1898, quoted in Testi, "L'immagine degli Stati Uniti nella stampa socialista italiana, 1886–1914," 326.

8. "La civiltà americana del sec. XIX," *Messaggero*, 29 May 1898, quoted in Angelo Olivieri, "L'immagine degli Stati Uniti nella stampa liberale a Roma e Napoli," in *Italia e America dal Settecento all'Età dell'Imperialismo*, ed. Spini and others, 365–66; "Gli *Jingos* nordamericani," *La Stampa*, 10 March 1898, quoted in Canavero, "Stampa e opinione pubblica italiana di fronte alla guerra ispano-americana del 1898," 413.

9. Quoted in translation in Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), 185, 230. See also Serge Ricard, "The French Press and Brother Jonathan: Editorializing the Spanish-American Conflict," in *European Perceptions*, ed. Hilton and Ickringill, 133–48.

10. Markus M. Hugo, "'Uncle Sam I Cannot Stand, for Spain I Have No Sympathy': An Analysis of Discourse About the Spanish-American War in Imperial Germany, 1898–1899," in *European Perceptions*, ed. Hilton and Ickringill, 72–90; Olli Kaikkonen, *Deutschland und die Expansionspolitik der USA in den 90er Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 1980); and Lester Burrell Shippee, "Germany and the Spanish-American War," *American Historical Review* 30, no. 4 (October 1924): 764.

11. Quoted in translation in May, *Imperial Democracy*, 230.

12. *The Times*, 9 May 1898, quoted in John H. McMinn, *The Attitude of the English Press Towards the United States During the Spanish-American War* (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1939), 134–35. Also, Joseph Smith, "British War Correspondents and the Spanish-American War, April–July 1898," in *European Perceptions*, ed. Hilton and Ickringill, 195–98, 203.

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14. The phrasing derives from Rudyard Kipling's poem of the same title to be found on pp. 16–17 in Richard H. Miller, ed., *American Imperialism in 1898: The Quest for National Fulfillment* (New York: John Wiley, 1970). It was used in European scholarship to refer to the Spanish-American war; see Achille Vialatte, *Essais D'Histoire Diplomatique Américaine* (Paris: E. Guilmoto, 1905), 209.

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32. Loliée, "L'Opinion Américaine sur la Presse Française," 646–50, 716.
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Chapter 3

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Chapter 4

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correspondent and the Italian news agency Stefani. The German newspapers had no war correspondents in this crisis.

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4. *The Times*, 20 April 1898, 11.

5. *The Manchester Guardian*, 25 April 1898, 5.

6. "The United States Revenue Bill," *The Times*, 2 May 1898, 6.

7. "L'inevitabile," *Corriere della Sera*, 23–24 April 1898, 1 and "Spagna e Stati Uniti," *Corriere della Sera*, 18–19 April 1898, 1. *Corriere* was at the time an afternoon newspaper, hence the "double" date.

8. "Der Krieg um Cuba," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 21 April 1898, 2nd morning ed., 1.

9. *The Times*, 26 April 1898, 11.

10. *Ibid.*, 31 December 1898, 9.

11. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1898, 11.

12. "Alpinismo in America," *La Stampa*, 31 December 1898, 1; *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 22 April 1898, evening ed., 1.

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14. "Vigilia d'armi," *Corriere della Sera*, 22–23 April 1898, 1; "The United States and Spain: Rupture of Relations," *The Times*, 22 April 1898, 5; and "Mr. Sherman and the State Department," *The Times*, 25 April 1898, 5.

15. "The War: American Declaration," *The Times*, 26 April 1898, 7.

16. "Platonisme et Athlétisme," *Le Temps*, 25 December 1898, 2.

17. *Le Temps*, 24 August 1897, 2; *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 20 April 1898, morning ed., 3; "New York," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 April 1898, morning ed., 2; and "America," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 30 December 1898, evening ed., 2.

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19. "L'incubo americano della Spagna," *Corriere della Sera*, 21–22 August 1897, 1.

20. *La Stampa*, 22 August 1897, 3.

21. "Les États-Unis et l'ère nouvelle," *Le Temps*, 2–3 January 1899, 1.

22. *Le Figaro*, 25 April 1898, 2.

23. "L'America e l'Europa nel prossimo avvenire," *La Stampa*, 3 January 1899, 1.

24. "Neue und alte amerikanische Goldmärchen," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 22 August 1897, morning ed., 1.

25. *Le Temps*, 29 April 1898, 1.

26. *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 April 1898, 4.

27. "Der Krieg um Cuba," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 April 1898, morning ed., 2; "America: Theodore Roosevelt," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 3 January 1899, morning ed., 1.

28. *The Times*, 26 April 1898, 11; "Aspettando . . .," *Corriere della Sera*, 29–30 April 1898, 1. Emphasis for English words in original; *times-money* is likely a misspelling of "time is money."
29. *The Times*, 21 April 1898, 9.
30. "L'America e l'Europa nel prossimo avvenire," *La Stampa*, 3 January 1899, 1.
31. *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 December 1898, 5.
32. "Platonisme et Athlétisme," *Le Temps*, 25 December 1898, 2.
33. "Neue Anhänger des Imperialismus," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 11 January 1899, 2nd morning ed., 2.
34. *The Manchester Guardian*, 21 April 1898, 4–5.
35. *The Times*, 28 April 1898, 9.
36. *Le Figaro*, 28 April 1898, 1.
37. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 3 May 1898, evening ed., 1.
38. "The United States and the Cost of 'Imperialism,'" *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 December 1898, 6.
39. *La Stampa*, 22 April 1898, 1.
40. "American Business Conditions," *The Times*, 31 August 1897, 8.
41. "La vie aux États-Unis," *Le Figaro*, 28 December 1898, 5; Ojetti, *L'America vittoriosa* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1899).
42. "Alpinismo in America," *La Stampa*, 31 December 1898, 1.
43. "L'America e l'Europa nel prossimo avvenire," *La Stampa*, 3 January 1899, 1; *The Times*, 3 January 1899, 7.
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45. *Le Temps*, 29 April 1898, 1; *Le Figaro*, 29 April 1898, 1.
46. "Washington," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 20 April 1898, 2nd morning ed., 2.
47. "Candia dell'Ovest," *Corriere della Sera*, 20–21 April 1898, 1; "Conséquences de la guerre," *Le Temps*, 20 April 1898, 1.
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49. "Der Nicaragua-Canal und der Clayton-Bulwersche Vertrag," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 24 December 1898, 2nd morning ed., 1.
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51. "L'inevitabile," *Corriere della Sera*, 23–24 April 1898, 1; *La Stampa*, 22 April 1898, 1.
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56. "Candia dell'Ovest," *Corriere della Sera*, 20–21 April 1898, 1.
57. "La Guerra," *La Stampa*, 22 April 1898, 1.
58. "La Guerre," *Le Temps*, 26 April 1898, 1.
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60. *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 April 1898, 4–5; 21 April 1898, 5.

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63. *The Times*, 20 April 1898, 11.
64. "The United States and Spain: Ultimatum Despatched," *The Times*, 21 April 1898, 5.
65. "The War: Congress and the Revenue Bill," *The Times*, 28 April 1898, 5; "La guerre," *Le Temps*, 23 April 1898, 1.
66. *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 December 1898, 7.
67. *The Times*, 28 December 1898, 3.
68. "The Spanish-American War," *The Times*, 31 December 1898, 9.
69. *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 January 1899, 4.
70. *Ibid.*, 26 August 1897, 4.
71. *Ibid.*, 23 April 1898, 8 and, verbatim, in "The War: Blockade of Cuba," *The Times*, 23 April 1898, 7.
72. Denis Guibert, "L'Europe et la Guerre," *Le Figaro*, 21 April 1898, 1; Whist, "Récriminations américaines," *Le Figaro*, 30 April 1898, 1.
73. "Der Krieg um Cuba," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28 April 1898, evening ed., 1; "Der Krieg um Cuba," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 21 April 1898, 2nd morning ed., 1; and "America," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 30 December 1898, evening ed., 2.
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75. "The War: Blockade of Cuba," *The Times*, 23 April 1898, 7.
76. *The Times*, 3 January 1899, 7.
77. "L'alleanza anglo-americana un fatto compiuto," *La Stampa*, 2 May 1898, 1.
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80. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 2 January 1899, evening ed., 1.
81. "L'America e l'Europa nel prossimo avvenire," *La Stampa*, 3 January 1899, 1.
82. Denis Guibert, "Le Devoir de l'Europe," *Le Figaro*, 3 May 1898, 2.
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85. "Récriminations américaines," *Le Figaro*, 30 April 1898, 1.
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87. "Mr Sherman and the State Department," *The Times*, 25 April 1898, 5.
88. "La guerre," *Le Temps*, 3 May 1898, 1; "Avant la guerre," *Le Temps*, 19 April 1898, 1.
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91. "Bombardment of Manila," *The Times*, 3 May 1898, 7; 3 May 1898, 11.
92. *The Manchester Guardian*, 29 April 1898, 5.
93. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 22 April 1898, evening ed., 1.
94. *The Times*, 22 April 1898, 9.

Chapter 5

1. *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, series 1, vol. 14 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1957), 430, 239.
2. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 201.
3. *Ibid.*, 207.
4. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 226–27.
5. Hanotaux was France's foreign minister until the end of June 1898, when he was replaced by Théophile Delcassé.
6. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 263.
7. *Ibid.*, 239.
8. Chamberlain's Memorandum, in Bourne, *Foreign Policy of Victorian England*, 454.
9. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 185.
10. *Ibid.*, 246.
11. *Ibid.*, 263, 356.
12. *Ibid.*, 261.
13. *Ibid.*, 297.
14. *Ibid.*, 129.
15. *Ibid.*, 297.
16. *Ibid.*, 330.
17. *Ibid.*, 355.
18. *Ibid.*, 382.
19. On Manifest Destiny and U.S. expansionism in the late nineteenth century, see Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963) and Ernest May, *American Imperialism* (New York: Atheneum, 1968).
20. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 359.
21. *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871–1914* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1924), 15:47; *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 246.
22. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 130; *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, series 3, vol. 2 (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1962), 319.
23. Salisbury dispatch to the British ambassador in Berlin, in Bourne, *Foreign Policy of Victorian England*, 455; Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, third Marquess of Salisbury, was both prime minister and foreign secretary between 1895 and 1902.
24. "Memorandum respecting the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty," in Bourne, *Foreign Policy of Victorian England*, 458.
25. G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, eds., *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898–1914* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1927), 2:254.
26. Chamberlain's speech in Manchester, in J.L. Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (London: Macmillan, 1934), 3:304.
27. *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, series 3, vol. 3 (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1962), 100. In 1898, Italy had three foreign ministers: Emilio Visconti Venosta was substituted on June 2 by Raffaele Cappelli, who was replaced by Canevaro in early July.
28. In Garvin, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, 301–2.

29. Ibid., 303.
30. *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, 3–3, 23.
31. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 381.
32. Ibid., 290. “Yankees” was emphasized in original.
33. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 215.
34. In E. T. S. Dugdale, ed., *German Diplomatic Documents, 1871–1914* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1929), 2:507.
35. In Bourne, *Foreign Policy of Victorian England*, 459–60.
36. *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette*, 64.
37. Ibid., 96.
38. Dugdale, *German Diplomatic Documents, 1871–1914* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930), 3:46, 56.
39. *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette*, 60.
40. *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, series 1, vol. 15 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1959).
41. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 264.
42. Ibid., 331.
43. Ibid., 445.
44. Ibid., 264.
45. In Dugdale, *German Diplomatic Documents*, 2:497.
46. Ibid., 486.
47. Ibid., 511; emphasis original.
48. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 248.
49. Ibid., 264.
50. Ibid., 330.
51. Ibid., 373.
52. “Spain and the United States,” *The Times*, 19 April 1898, 8.
53. *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, 3–2, 302.
54. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 247, and 1–15, 169.
55. Ibid., 356.
56. “Spain and the United States,” *The Times*, 19 April 1898, 8.
57. Quoted in R. B. Mowat, *The Life of Lord Pauncefote: First Ambassador to the United States* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), 204.
58. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 233.
59. Chamberlain to Balfour letter, in Garvin, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, 299; emphasis original.
60. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–14, 156.
61. Ibid., 247.
62. Ibid., 46, 86, 143.
63. In Dugdale, *German Diplomatic Documents*, 2:506–7.
64. *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1–15, 171.
65. *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, 3–2, 306.
66. *Documents Diplomatiques: Négociations pour la Paix entre l’Espagne et les États-Unis* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1898), 10.
67. *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, 3–2, 340.
68. Ibid., 360.
69. *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette*, 57.
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Chapter 7

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93. "What the World Thinks in 2002," 4. The interviews were conducted between July and October 2002.

94. "Views of a Changing World," 19. The interviews were conducted in April and May 2003 in 21 countries; unreleased data from the 2002 survey was also included in this report.

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96. "Views of a Changing World," 22.

97. "Results of a Multinational Poll in France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy: Bush Unpopular in Europe, Seen as Unilateralist," The Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, August 2001, 1. The percentages are as follows: 85 percent in France, 73 percent in Germany, 74 percent in Italy, and 79 percent in Great Britain said the United States was acting solely to its advantage; 74 percent in France, 75 percent in Germany, 53 percent in Italy, and 75 percent in Great Britain said Bush was less understanding of Europe than his predecessors. Telephone

interviews for this survey were conducted in August 2001 with a sample of nearly one thousand people in each country studied here.

98. "Results of a Multinational Poll in France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy: Bush Unpopular in Europe, Seen as Unilateralist," 2-3. On Kyoto and developing missile defense, the breakdown was as follows: 85 and 75 percent, respectively, in France, 87 and 83 percent in Germany, 80 and 65 percent in Italy, and 83 and 66 percent in Great Britain disapproved of the U.S. position.

99. "Results of a Multinational Poll in France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy: Bush Unpopular in Europe: Bush Unpopular in Europe, Seen as Unilateralist," 3. Fifty-seven percent in France, 62 percent in Germany, 54 percent in Italy, and 64 percent in Great Britain approved the continued presence of U.S. troops in Bosnia and Kosovo.

100. "Results of a Multinational Poll in France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy: Bush Unpopular in Europe: Bush Unpopular in Europe, Seen as Unilateralist," 2, 13. Fifty-seven percent of the British, 45 percent of the Italians, and 55 percent of the French said interests had stayed the same; 40 percent of the Germans said they had grown closer.

101. "Results of a Multinational Poll in France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy: Bush Unpopular in Europe: Bush Unpopular in Europe, Seen as Unilateralist," 13-14.

102. "America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism," The Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, December 2001, 11. Seventy-six percent said 9/11 was the beginning of a new era. Interviews were conducted with 275 opinion leaders in November and December 2001; for Western Europe, interviewees were selected in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

103. "Flash Eurobarometer 114: International Crisis," vol. A, EOS Gallup Europe upon request of the European Commission, November 2001, 8. Telephone interviews were conducted in mid-November 2001 with around one thousand people in England, France, Germany, and Italy. Percentages of respondents who said they should "certainly" or "maybe" fear attacks are as follows: 87.4 in the United Kingdom, 74.6 in France, 69.5 in Germany, and 62 in Italy.

104. "Flash Eurobarometer 114: International Crisis," 11. Percentages are as follows: 85.4 in the United Kingdom, 85.1 in Italy, 83.1 in Germany, and 80.8 in France.

105. "America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism," 9. Eighty-four percent said people in their countries would be saddened by America's suffering.

106. "America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism," 13-14. Among the 47 percent who said their countries would be targets for terror, 34 percent favored a close alliance with the United States.

107. "America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism," 1. Sixty-six percent said people in their country considered feeling vulnerable to

be good for the United States; 34 percent said the United States was acting multilaterally.

108. "Flash Eurobarometer 114: International Crisis," 2, 3. On intelligence services: 85.7 percent in France, 79.3 percent in Italy, 70.6 percent in Germany, and 62.1 percent in the United Kingdom. On military bases: 66.5 percent in Italy, 65.4 percent in Germany, 65.2 percent in France, and 55.2 in the United Kingdom.

109. "Flash Eurobarometer 114: International Crisis," 5. Here, the United Kingdom led with 65.5 percent, followed by Germany with 54.6 percent, France with 54 percent, and Italy with 51.3 percent.

110. "America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism," 2, 16. Only 22 percent of leaders said U.S. actions were a major reason for liking the United States. Sixty-six percent of leaders said U.S. power was at the root of dislike; other reasons selected were U.S. policies contributing to an increasing gap between rich and poor, as well as the "growing power" of American corporations across the world.

111. "America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism," 17. Seventy-three percent of opinion leaders cited the "land of opportunity," while 68 percent mentioned the appeal of U.S. democratic ideals.

112. "America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen as Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders: Little Support for Expanding War on Terrorism," 6.

113. "Flash Eurobarometer 114: International Crisis," 12. Percentages are as follows: 92.2 in France, 89.3 in Italy, 86.7 in the United Kingdom, and 86.3 in Germany.

114. "Bush Ratings Improve but He's Still Seen as Unilateralist: Americans and Europeans Differ Widely on Foreign Policy Issues," The Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, April 2002, 3.

115. "Bush Ratings Improve but He's Still Seen as Unilateralist: Americans and Europeans Differ Widely on Foreign Policy Issues," 1, 3. On Bush: 85 percent in France, 69 percent in Germany, 71 percent in Italy, and 80 percent in Great Britain. On the war on terrorism: 80 percent in France, 85 percent in Germany, 68 percent in Italy, and 73 percent in Great Britain. See also "What the World Thinks in 2002," 1, 69.

116. "What the World Thinks in 2002," 58. Seventy-six percent in France, 58 percent in Italy, and 52 percent in Great Britain lamented lack of U.S. consideration.

117. "Bush Ratings Improve but He's Still Seen as Unilateralist: Americans and Europeans Differ Widely on Foreign Policy Issues," 1. On "axis of evil": 62 percent in France, 74 percent in Germany, 60 percent in Italy, and 55 percent in Great Britain. On steel tariffs: 81 percent in France, 74 percent in Germany, 58 percent in Italy, and 65 percent in Great Britain.

118. "Bush Ratings Improve but He's Still Seen as Unilateralist: Americans and Europeans Differ Widely on Foreign Policy Issues," 5. The percentages hovered around 40 percent on "somewhat" fear of attacks (42 in France, 46 in Germany, 38 in Italy, and 40 in Great Britain, compared with 45 in the United States). Seventy-six percent of British, 66 percent of French and Germans, and 63 percent of Italians said they liked U.S. pop culture ("What the World Thinks in 2002," 66, T-57).

119. "What the World Thinks in 2002," 63, T-54. The percentages ranged from 71 in France to 67 in Germany, 58 in Italy and 50 in Great Britain.

120. Flash Eurobarometer 151b: Globalisation," EOS Gallup Europe upon request of the European Commission, November 2003, 20, 41.

121. "Bush Ratings Improve but He's Still Seen as Unilateralist: Americans and Europeans Differ Widely on Foreign Policy Issues," 4. Sixty percent of the French advocated distance from the United States, with 59 percent of Italians and 51 percent of Germans. The British public was split: 47 percent wanted more independence, while 48 percent argued the relationship should remain as close. The percentages in continental Europe rose in 2003, while the British public remained divided; see "Views of a Changing World," 2, 29.

122. "Views of a Changing World," 93. A third of the French, 37 percent of the British, 40 percent of Germans, and 55 percent of Italians agreed with the statement, "Our people are not perfect, but our culture is superior to others."

123. "Bush Ratings Improve but He's Still Seen as Unilateralist: Americans and Europeans Differ Widely on Foreign Policy Issues," 7. Seventy-one percent in France, 67 percent in Italy, 64 percent in Germany, and 57 percent in Great Britain lamented lack of U.S. commitment to peacemaking.

124. "What the World Thinks in 2002," 61, T-53. Forty percent of the British and 42 percent of the Italians said the United States did too little; 40 percent of the French said it did too much; 49 percent of the Germans, however, said it did the right amount. Seventy percent in Germany, 69 percent in France, 58 percent in Italy, and 53 percent in Great Britain said the United States was enlarging the divide between the rich and the poor.

125. "What the World Thinks in 2002," T-51. Italians were split at 44 percent; 55 percent in Great Britain, 58 percent in Germany, and 65 percent in France blamed different policies.

126. "What the World Thinks in 2002," T-55. A small French majority disliked U.S. democratic ideas (53 to 42 percent); a small Italian majority liked U.S. democratic ideas (45 to 37); Germans and British were closely divided between liking and disliking (47 to 45 in Germany, 43 to 42 in Great Britain).

127. "Global Unease with Major World Powers," The Pew Global Attitudes Project, June 2007, 100. The percentages are as follows: 38 percent in Italy, 36 percent in Great Britain, 31 percent in Germany, and 23 percent in France said they liked American ideas about democracy.

128. "A Year After Iraq: Mistrust of America in Europe Ever Higher, Muslim Anger Persists," 38. Seventy-eight percent of French, 70 percent of Germans, and 45 percent of the British had less confidence.

129. "A Year After Iraq: Mistrust of America in Europe Ever Higher, Muslim Anger Persists," 32-33. Sixty-five percent of Germans and 61 percent of French said the U.S. effort was insincere; of them, 53 percent in France and 46 percent in Germany said the United States was out to conquer the world.

130. "A Year After Iraq: Mistrust of America in Europe Ever Higher, Muslim Anger Persists," 29.

131. Department of State, Office of Research, Foreign Media Reaction, Special Report, "9/11 Anniversary: Two Years On, Media Sympathy Has Waned," 25 September 2003.

132. Gianni Riotta, "Nel 2123 la tartaruga Ue raggiungerà la lepre Usa," *Corriere della Sera*, 16 March 2005, 15.

Chapter 8

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6. Severgnini, "Un giorno da stelle e strisce: Trionfa il 'logo' più amato," 17 September 2001, 7.

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9. Ojetti, *L'America vittoriosa*, 244; ellipsis in the original.

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28. *The Times*, 20 April 1898, 11.
29. Zucconi, "O con noi o con i terroristi," *la Repubblica*, 21 September 2001, 2; Colombani, *Tous Américains? Le monde après le 11 septembre 2001*, 60.
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Chapter 9

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79. "Global Unease with Major World Powers," The Pew Global Attitudes Project, June 2007, 104. The percentages are 43 percent in France, 42 percent in Germany, 41 percent in Italy, and 38 percent in Great Britain.
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