

Geopolitical Fears, Geoeconomic Hopes and the Responsibilities of Geography

©Matthew Sparke

sparke@u.washington.edu
Department of Geography,
Box 353550, University of Washington,
Seattle, WA 98195, USA

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Hope and fear are huge swirling compulsions with enormous implications for the lives and deaths of every living thing on the planet. False hopes and groundless fears can be of dreadful deadly consequence. And yet justified fears when combined with sensible hopes can open new possibilities and thereby help mobilize change for the better, including both better lives and a better world in which to live. How can geographers help examine such consequences and possibilities? And what specifically can our geographical expertise enable us to contribute to wider negotiations with hope and fear as they continue to shape our world? Responding to these and other questions posed by the president of the Association of American Geographers in 2005 (Lawson, 2005), my basic suggestion in this article is that one of the most useful contributions which we can and do make as geographers involves critically exploring the geographical *grounds* of fear and hope. Our disciplinary calling demands that, amongst many other things, we map and study the production and extent of such grounds in all their physical, social, economic, cultural and political complexity. We may never actually agree on some single final explanation of what precisely and comprehensively constitutes the geographical grounds of hope and fear, or of anything else for that matter. But rather than seeing such disagreements as a disciplinary failure, I think we can more usefully view our contentious collective debates as a form of argumentative democracy that holds open the possibility of persistently examining how geographical grounds are constituted, a possibility that

also means constantly questioning what the grounds of our famously 'grounded' geographical approach can and should be.

Elsewhere I have drawn on a deconstructive reading of geography to describe the necessity for persistent examination in terms of acknowledging how the 'geo' of any particular geography is 'graphed', which is to say, produced by multiple, often unnoticed, space-making and space-changing processes (Sparke, 2005a). I argue that such an acknowledgement brings with it an ethical imperative to examine what is excluded in the production of any specific geographic truth claim. A whole series of philosophical debates over postfoundational ethics spiral out of this argument, but clearly one does not have to be a postfoundationalist philosopher to agree with the point that the collective work of geographers involves persistently questioning what is left out of the consolidation of any particular geographic account, vision, map or idea. It is precisely in such persistent questioning that I locate the responsibilities of geography (see also Sparke, 2006). Ultimately it is through these responsibilities, through their combination of worldliness and openness, and thus through the ongoing questions, empirical research, and theoretical debate to which they lead, that I contend we can provide a grounded approach to hope and fear. Such an approach can help debunk groundless fears and false hopes by examining how they operate and what they obscure. But, more than this, I argue, it can also help simultaneously to substantiate legitimate fears, and, by charting the processes that produce them, provide a basis for more liberating and sensible hopes too.

In order to illustrate the wider argument about geographical responsibility this article itself is focused on the political geographic grounds of some very specific fears and hopes: namely, those that have been at the center of American national security debates during the build-up phase, attack phase and, now, the counter-insurgency phase of the Iraq war. I argue that these fears and hopes can be most usefully examined in terms of the interplay of geopolitics and geoeconomics, terms which I define, use and interpret by drawing on the recent work of political geographers. With regard to fears this means that the analysis here begins with the groundless fears about Saddam Hussein's Weapons of Mass Destruction, his touted ties to Al Qaeda, and all the other over-played geopolitical threats to American security that underpinned the official explanations for the Iraq war. In terms of false hopes the focus is in turn with the utopian

geo-economic visions of spreading free market freedoms that the American military intervention was supposed to bring to the Middle East and through which the war was also repeatedly justified. In what follows I explain how we can usefully come to terms with this double vision of fear and hope through recourse to arguments about geopolitical 'scripting' and geo-economic 'enframing'. Critical investigations of the imaginative geographies produced by geopolitics and geo-economics help us thus to understand how the fears and hopes of those who promoted the war were both groundless and yet at the same time ground-changing. Following a number of other critical geographers (Hart, 2006; Harvey, 2003; *Retort*, 2005), I further contend that these ground-changing effects and all their inhuman violence can be usefully analysed in terms of *geographies of dispossession*. As such, they are geographies about which we ought to be genuinely fearful. However, in conclusion I argue that such fears are generating in turn many more hopeful *geographies of repossession* amongst activists around the world. Documenting these activists' open-ended idealism, and producing grounded analysis of both the opportunities and challenges that they face, I suggest geographers can do more to develop responsibly grounded and thus genuinely hopeful and human geographies of the global future.

Geopolitics, Geo-economics and the Power of Imaginative Geographies

Geopolitics is an old expression shaped by both academic and popular usages going back to imperial concerns with the links between geography, state territoriality and world power politics. By contrast, geo-economics is a relatively new term which has had much more limited academic adoption and which is used in popular writings to express ideas ranging from managerial concerns over the competitive economic positioning of states and cities (e.g. Schlevogt, 2001) to the basic 'post-Cold War' strategic notion that economic competition has now eclipsed military confrontation at the center of inter-state relations (e.g. Cruz de Castro, 2000). Geographers have occasionally used geo-economics (or close homonyms like geo-economy) to describe a still wider array of developments ranging from the regional economic impacts of military base closures (Warf, 1997), to the emergence of post-national commercial strategies (Barton, 1999), to the political consolidation of Euroland (Pollard and Sidaway, 2002), to the uneven geographies of the

global economy (Dicken, 2003). Here, though, it is the contrast with geopolitics that provides the underlying rationale for introducing the distinct formula of geoeconomics. Partly this is because in the context of the US War on Terror the contrast between geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses has been mapped on to the couplet of fear and hope. But it is also, and not unrelatedly, because it has been the contrast between the terms that has been the animating idea behind their use in mainstream American foreign affairs circles. According to Edward Luttwak (1990 and 1993), the US foreign policy pundit who did most to advance arguments about geoeconomics in the early 1990s, the term simply served to name the successor system of inter-state rivalry that developed in the aftermath of Cold War geopolitics. Luttwak's argument was still realist and state-centric, and did not address the state-transcending and state-remaking aspects of what others call neoliberal governance (see Sparke, 2006b for a review). He just argued that in the context of globalization the languages and logics of inter-state rivalry are increasingly predicated on “the grammar of commerce” (Luttwak, 1990). In this way, he maintained that state authority could actually be reasserted anew "not in the names of strategy and security this time, but rather to protect ‘vital economic interests’ by geo-economic defenses, geo-economic offensives, geo-economic diplomacy, and geo-economic intelligence” (Luttwak, 1993: 19).

Here in contradistinction to Luttwak I do not want to suggest that geopolitics and geoeconomics describe distinct geostrategic periods that have led from nuclear war dangers to commercial expansion opportunities in a clear-cut chronological progression. Instead, I am arguing that geopolitics and geoeconomics are better understood as names for distinct geostrategic *discourses*. They are discourses that reflect changing political geographies of governance, and they are also discourses that lead to world-changing as well as word-changing results, but they remain discourses all the same that take shape as imaginative geographies and which, as such, re-present political geographic complexity through diverse and politically-interested re-mappings and re-stagings. Guided in this way by all the work on the politics of geopolitical representation that has gone into developing the subfield of 'critical geopolitics' over the last decade, and inspired in particular by the analyses of geopolitical discourse developed by John Agnew (2003), Simon Dalby (1990 & 2003), Derek Gregory (2005), Jennifer Hyndman (2004), Gerard

Ó Tuathail (1996 & 2003), Joanne Sharp (2000), and Neil Smith (2004 & 2005) it is possible to explore how geoeconomics and geopolitics operate as alternately hopeful and fearful discourses shaping the worldviews of US security strategists and their audiences. This is not to suggest that official American arguments about security are the only venues in which we can find geopolitics and geoeconomics at work. Geopolitical discourse can take a whole host of other more informal and non-American forms (see Sidaway, 2002). Likewise, geoeconomic discourse is also being employed in many other parts of the world to imagine, amongst other things, a wide range of post-national and trans-border regional growth strategies (Smith, 2002; Sparke, 2002; Sparke and Lawson, 2003; Sparke, *et al* 2004; and Sum 2002). Moreover, it is also important to underline that even just in official American discourse geopolitics and geoeconomics are envisioned and deployed in different ways. This indeed is the main reason for using the two terms and emphasizing the contrast between geopolitical scripting and geoeconomic enframing.

Scripting is one of the main metaphors developed to describe the discursive work of geopolitical arguments by scholars of ‘critical geopolitics’. It is a dramatic metaphor that captures some of the performative power of geopolitical ideas while also alluding to their capacity to provide geopolitical actors with lines of argument that stage or otherwise dramatize and spectacularize political geographical reality. Different geopolitical visions are said in this way to script space in different ways, providing a repertoire of prescriptive imaginative geographies that divide safe spaces from dangerous spaces, civilized metropolises from uncivilized wild zones, heartlands from hinterlands, and so on. From the period of early colonialism in the 15th century right through to today, much has changed in terms of the staging and cast of characters used in the production of these geopolitical scripts. But as Derek Gregory (2005) shows so clearly in his recent account of the colonial present there has also been a remarkable continuity in the underlying ‘architecture of enmity’ and resulting divisions of space in the prevailing imaginative geographies of this western geopolitical tradition. It is in contrast to these imaginative geographies of enmity that the discursive work of geoeconomics seems so different: employing, as it does, inclusive economic abstractions that have a flattening force better described with the pictorial metaphor of *enframing*. Adapting Timothy Mitchell's argument about the modern colonial enframing of abstract space (Mitchell, 1988),

geo-economics can thus be understood as at once framing-out political and historical divisions while picturing a preferred future by framing-in the flat, smooth vision of space associated with utopian ideas about the so-called level playing field of free trade led development (see Sparke 2005a, chapter 3). It may well be argued that such geo-economic visions also still function as a form of script, a script that gives politicians and foreign policy experts a simple line of argument (about the inevitability of globalization) and an even simpler mental map (the level playing field) with which to explain their actions. Moreover, like geopolitical visions more generally this script and mental map presume an ocularcentric, omniscient and, as such, masculinist master of statecraft as the visionary who can 'play' on the globalized field. But notwithstanding such similarities, the contrasts are also important insofar as geo-economic abstractions generate quite different imaginative geographies.

Simply put, the imaginative geographies of geo-economic enframing differ from those of geopolitical scripting because they enable the imagination of an expanding economic flatness rather than the sorts of political partitions and unevenness that Agnew, Dalby, Ó Tuathail, Sharp and others have traced in twentieth century accounts of evil empires, clashing civilizational blocs and American exceptionalism (see Sparke, 2003 and 2005). Geo-economic visionaries tend as a result to anticipate capitalist inclusion rather than the expulsion or containment of evil others. Their focus is on networks not blocs, connections not iron curtains, and transborder ties instead of national territories. And rather than reproduce geopolitical understandings of 'us' and 'them' that fetishize place, they tend instead to fantasize about connectivity and pace. To connect this contrast to two big names, this is how Halford Mackinder (1904) – who originally imagined a modern geopolitical condition of competing empires and 'post-Columbian closed space' – differs geo-discursively from Thomas Friedman (2005) – the *New York Times* columnist who like many other geo-economic gurus of globalization enframes a post-Cold War world and, indeed, post-post-Columbian epoch of globally flat and level space. So while Ó Tuathail and Luke (1998 and 1994) have suggested that the electronic, digital and high-speed movement motifs that exercise the likes of Friedman represent 'fast geopolitics', and while these boundary transcending themes may well be said to comprise a 'postmodern geopolitical condition' (Ó Tuathail, 2000), I am arguing that the distinctive

vision of such geoeconomic gurus enframes the world in a newly smooth and planar way, an optimistic geoeconomic way that replaces closed and fearful visions of competing territories and enemy others with an expanding and supposedly level playing field of market-mediated integration.

Despite the differences from geopolitics, indeed, in part because of them, geoeconomic visions can nevertheless come together with fetishistic fears about dangerous spaces and others' places to create a forceful, albeit forcefully misleading and contradictory, double-vision (Sparke 2005). In short, while American geopolitical discourses lead to fear-filled fascination with foreign threats ranging from 'peer competitors' to 'rogue regimes' to 'terrorist cells', geoeconomic discourses compensate and console by offering a hope of transcending the divisions. Over and above the axis of evil and all the other enemies we are told to fear, the level playing field of global free market capitalism is envisioned as thus inexorably expanding and including all. And by endlessly enthusing about how There Is No Alternative to this geoeconomic expansion, TINA-touts (as I have described them elsewhere, Sparke 2006b) always offer an optimistic outlook on the possibility of incorporating the peripheral zones in which the playing field's global reach and rules appear challenged. How, then, did these sorts of hopeful geoeconomic enframings come together with fearful geopolitical scripts to fashion the grounds for the Iraq war?

The geopolitics of fear

The geopolitical discourse about the threats posed by Saddam Hussein's Iraq was so frequently repeated and stylized in the period leading up to the American offensive that the script is now all too familiar (for one of the most rigorous and official surveys of the misinformation that led up to the war see the *Investigative Status Report of the House Judiciary Committee Democratic Staff*, 2006). Two big fears dominated the Bush administration's geopolitical scripting. The first was that Hussein's regime possessed weapons of mass destruction or WMD, and the second was that these WMD could easily be passed on to terrorists because of known ties between Hussein and al Qaeda. Most famously perhaps it was in Secretary of State Colin Powell's speech before the United

Nations that the WMD story was told with the most effortful, and in retrospect, most tendentious claims to represent well-documented, evidence-based truth about real grounds for fear. "What you will see," said Powell, in an appeal to the truth of vision that is one of the classic tropes of the modern geopolitical imagination (Agnew, 2003; Ó Tuathail, 1996), "is an accumulation of facts and disturbing patterns of behavior."

Our conservative estimate is that Iraq today has a stockpile of between 100 and 500 tons of chemical-weapons agents. ... Even the low end of 100 tons of agent would enable Saddam Hussein to cause mass casualties across more than 100 square miles of territory, an area nearly five times the size of Manhattan. ... There can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, many more. ... This is evidence, not conjecture. This is true. This is all well documented (Powell, 2003).

This was also the same script from which President Bush himself spoke both before and after Powell's speech. However, the President's speech-making (which was generally designed for domestic consumption and not an international UN audience) explained the relevance of the WMD story in terms of the second main fearful script: in other words, in terms of Iraq's WMD getting into the hands of terrorists. "Today," announced the President in his 2003 State of the Union address,

the gravest danger in the war on terror, the gravest danger facing America and the world, is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to terrorist allies, who would use them without the least hesitation....With nuclear arms or a full arsenal of chemical and biological weapons, Saddam Hussein could resume his ambitions of conquest in the Middle East and create deadly havoc in that region. And this Congress and the America people must recognize another threat. Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda. Secretly, and without fingerprints, he could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists, or help them develop their own (Bush, 2003).

Insofar as Bush explained so much of his policy as an aggressive 'bring it on' response to the real terrorism of 9/11, these sorts of claims were to prove very powerful indeed, creating an affect-laden and, as such, effective means of legitimating the Iraq war (Ó Tuathail, 2003).

With Bush setting the model, the public geopolitical script of fear included repeated statements about overwhelming evidence combined with the affective appeal to

Americans to imagine another 9/11: another 9/11 made much more deadly with the help of Iraq's WMD. "America must not ignore the threat gathering against us," remained the administration's main fear-mongering message. "Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof - the smoking gun - that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud" (Bush, 2002). The President was, of course, ably assisted in this work of geopolitical scripting by other members of his administration. Most especially Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice-President Dick Cheney continued to reiterate the same twin fears about WMD and terror ties long after the attack on Iraq and a huge security sweep of the occupied country showed that their fearful geopolitics was groundless. In doing so, Rumsfeld and Cheney nevertheless also effectively underlined two key features of what made the geopolitical scripting of fear so convincing: namely, emotion and repetition. Thus, arguing against the critics that WMD would eventually be found in Iraq, Rumsfeld also showed how Americans' emotions about 9/11 lay at the heart of making the Iraq-as-threat geopolitics work:

The coalition did not act in Iraq because we had discovered dramatic new evidence of Iraq's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. We acted because we saw the evidence in a dramatic new light - through the prism of our experience on 9/11 (Rumsfeld, 2003).

And subsequently, even in 2004, Cheney was still demonstrating that the other key feature of making the groundless script function was repetition: "I think there's overwhelming evidence that there was a connection between al-Qaeda and the Iraqi government," he intoned (Cheney, 2004). In the real world, of course, there was no such evidence. Instead, as was later made clear by the statements of the British intelligence chief recorded in the Downing Street memos, "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy" (Danner, 2005). By this point, though, the ways in which the grounds were invented in order to fit the script no longer mattered. Emotion, repetition and their combined conjuring of fear had already done their geopolitical work.

So successful was the scripting of fear that subsequently even administration officials themselves indicated their backstage accomplishments with occasionally explicit, even prideful, asides about the bureaucratic expediency involved. For example, Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy Defense Secretary, caused a small media storm by acknowledging something along the lines that: "The truth is that for reasons that have a

lot to do with the U.S. government bureaucracy we settled on the one issue that everyone could agree on, which was weapons of mass destruction, as the core reason" (quoted in McIntyre, 2003). This admission (which was itself hedged in various ways) later came to seem minor in comparison with a much bolder account made to a reporter by a White House aide of the administration's more generally cavalier approach to geopolitical scripting. Given the gung-ho hubris of the account it is not surprising that this aide remains anonymous, but what he told Ron Suskind - the reporter - remains no less telling. The aide said that guys like me were "in what we call the reality-based community," which he defined as people who "believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality." I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. "That's not the way the world really works anymore," he continued. "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality -- judiciously, as you will -- we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors, and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do (Suskind, 2004).

As scholars who remain committed to studying discernible reality, geographers (with the possible exception of non-representational theorists) may also be derided by those at the pinnacles of American power as located in the same low-lying reality-based community inhabited by journalists such as Suskind. But this has not stopped geographical studies from documenting with critical rigor the empire of unreality produced by the geopolitical scripting of the War on Terror. The use of the term 'empire' here is not just metaphorical, nor just a play on the imperial hubris enunciated by Suskind's White House aide. As Gregory's forthright critique of the colonial present makes clear, all kinds of geopolitical discourses with their roots and routes in imperialism - including the many imaginative geographies of imperial Orientalism famously critiqued by Edward Said (1979 and 1993) - were revitalized and put to work in both justifying and performing the War on Terror (Gregory, 2004). Gregory argues persuasively in this way that geopolitical scripts about despotic, hate-filled, orientals served to provide the fear-filled justification for treating whole communities as if they lay outside the bounds of humanity. Building on Gregory's analysis, Allan Pred has provided in turn a powerful critique of the groundless terror-talk into which so much of this fear-mongering fed and out of which so much geopolitical boundary-drawing ensued. "Terror may be instilled by way of a variety of strategies," Pred summarizes:

Through successfully perpetuating 'imaginative geographies' of Their Terrorist/Arab/Muslim space and Their uncivilized, subhuman barbarism. Through successfully folding distance into monstrous Difference. Through successfully insisting that They are a pervasive military threat to Our Civilization, to the security of Our way of life. Through avoiding any consideration of our role in precipitating militant radicalism, in provoking the spread of 'political Islam in its insurrectional forms'. Through successfully implanting a just-below-the-surface sense of fear by way of redundant representations strewn across the paths of everyday life (Pred, 2005).

As well as providing a useful summary of the geopolitics of fear at its boundary-drawing work, Pred's textual strategy of repetition also mimics and subverts the repetitive rhetorics of the fear-mongers themselves. In doing so, and by underlining how such rhetorics infiltrated American everyday life and became implanted in people's 'just-below-the-surface' sensibilities, he also draws our attention to another aspect of the geopolitics of the war on terror: namely, the way in which its enunciation became a performance of sovereignty and governmentality at the same time, a way of re-enacting the power of the traditional pre-modern sovereign to declare war on his own terms combined with a decidedly post-modern approach to making the war make biopolitical sense in American everyday life.

The performance of sovereignty *as* governmentality by the Bush administration - its way of simultaneously producing and ruling its 'own reality' by executive fiat - has elsewhere been theorized by Judith Butler in relation to the suspension of the Geneva conventions and the creation of special rules and special spaces for imprisoning 'illegal combatants' in the Guantanamo gulag (Butler, 2004). Butler's argument about this "resurgence of sovereignty within the field of governmentality" (Butler, 2004: 56) seems equally applicable to the way the administration also suspended reference to real intelligence in its geopolitical scripting of the Iraq war. However, outside of the exceptional space of Guantanamo (where only fear seems to rule), the field of governmentality in which the resurgence of executive sovereignty has been staged has been co-determined by another much more hopeful discourse too: the discourse of geoeconomics. Alongside all the fear, then, there has also been much hope, and this hope, expressed as a discourse about the inevitably inclusive and expansive aspects of capitalist globalization, has also, just like the geopolitical scripting, had a whole series of regulative effects both in America and elsewhere, including inside Iraq itself. In other

words, if we follow Butler in noticing how the Bush administration has invented its own sovereign realities within a post-sovereign world, and if we combine this with an understanding of governmentality as the organization of "the conduct of conduct" (Foucault, 1982: 220), we need to explore how the globalist common-sense about a globe-spanning level-playing field also came to legitimate and shape the Iraq war.

The geoeconomics of hope

In broad terms the geoeconomics that legitimated the war can be quickly summarized. Iraq in this discourse was right in the middle of an arc of instability stretching across central Asia to north Africa across the Middle East. Like so many other countries in the arc it was ruled by an authoritarian regime that refused to do business with the globalized world except in the crude terms of oil exports. Thus like so many other populations in the area, Iraqis were deprived of the benefits of free trade, free markets and all the other freedoms that supposedly flow from them. The obvious job of the US as the self-appointed leader of the free world, according to this geoeconomic discourse, was therefore simply one of helping ordinary Iraqis to reconnect to the world of globalization. A quick clean intervention with bombs would thus help remove the barriers to global exchange, level the playing field and prepare the way for business and the reconstruction of Iraqi life through capitalist bonds. It was a simple enough story to tell and a whole set of commentators ranging from Thomas Friedman himself to Pentagon planners like Thomas Barnett retold it repeatedly with relish (see Dalby, 2003; and Roberts *et al*, 2003). While there was a great deal of repetition involved here too, in contrast to the geopolitical discourse held together by repetition and appeals to Americans' emotions about terrorism, the discourse produced by the geoeconomic visionaries was consolidated by appeals to Americans' investments in TINA-tout inevitability arguments about globalism. For examples, one only needs turn to Barnett's copious self-promoting materials which provide innumerable soundbites that repeat the basic geoeconomic discourse (Barnett, 2004). His first interview with Wolf Blitzer on CNN is in this sense an especially useful illustration of the resulting enframing of the world.

BARNETT: Well, this new way of looking at the world begins with a simple series of observations. First, you look at where [the US] has sent its military forces around the world over the past 12 years, or basically since the end of the Cold War, a total of 132 cases. ... You draw a line around those regions of the world and you ask yourself, what's the common characteristic here that defines why we seem to be sending military troops into these regions time and time again in this era of globalization? And the basic argument I make is, these are the countries or regions that are having a hard time with globalization. In effect they can't integrate their national economies with a global economy because of repressive political regimes, endemic conflict, abject poverty, perhaps they just don't have the robust legal systems to attract foreign direct investment.

BLITZER: And so I was going to say, that's why you think a war with Iraq right now is not only inevitable and desirable, but clearly imperative for the United States and indeed for Iraq. That's also your argument?

BARNETT: Yes, because when you talk about the parts of the world that aren't integrating in this larger process we describe as globalization, it's very instructive to note that these are the places we're sending our troops again and again. So you've come up with this new security paradigm that says, it's disconnectedness that tends to define danger in this era of globalization. And when you're talking about the Middle East, you're talking about a region of the world that has very little connectivity with the rest of the planet. Basically, they offer oil, and what we're trying to do is prevent terrorism from coming out of there.

BLITZER: But do you really believe, Mr. Barnett, that the U.S., with this military engagement, can transform that region, beginning with Iraq, into vital democratic robust nations?

BARNETT: Well, my argument is basically, we've got to shrink these parts of the world that are not integrating with the global economy, and the way you integrate a Middle East in a broadband fashion with the rest of the global economy is to remove the security impediments that create such a security deficit in that part of the world. And the biggest security impediment right now, I would argue, is the regime of Saddam Hussein. You move that out of the area, you eliminate that source of conflict, and hopefully, you can talk about integrating part of the world that over the past several decades has woefully underperformed economically (Barnett, 2003, see also Barnett, 2004).

"Hopefully, you can talk," indeed: and as the war unfolded, many more official voices returned to hopefully talking-up this same optimistic enframing of Iraq's future as a newly integrated node on the globalized level playing field. Moreover, as the geopolitical grounds of WMD and terror ties started to look like more groundless grounds for regime change, the appeal of the geoeconomic discourse also noticeably spread from predictable sites such as the US Trade Representative's office - in which it was and remains the standard script (e.g. Zoellick, 2003 & 2004) - into many other administration

offices and speeches (e.g. Powell, 2003). Outside of America too it was also to some extent the same hopeful geoeconomic script that helped secure the ongoing collaboration of Tony Blair's government in the UK (see Hodge, 2003), as well as the more grudging accommodation of 'Old' Europe critics as they quickly adjusted to the economic opportunities opened by the 'new' Iraq (e.g. Schroder, 2003). However, it is also worth underlining as I have sought to do at length elsewhere (Sparke, 2005a, chapter 5), that even at the heart of the hyper-hawkish, neoconservative arguments for war, geopolitical fears about the 'present danger' were combined right from the start with hopes that military intervention in Iraq would enable the invisible hand of the free market to tip dominos of democracy and freedom right across the Middle East. In fact, it can be argued that one of the distinguishing features of the neoconservative worldview held by many in the Bush II administration - a view that has distinguishes them from conservatives such as Lawrence Eagleberger and Brent Scowcroft who worked in the Bush I administration - is this neoliberal capsizal of Cold War containment and domino theories, a capsizal emphasising global integration instead of containment, and therefore justifying American dominance as a form of systems management geared to removing security impediments from the global level playing field (see Sparke, 2004). In any event, the very document that provided the blueprint for pre-emptive war and the aggressive use of American power against geopolitical threats - the 2002 National Security Strategy - was also especially clear in its recitation of geoeconomics too: “[T]he United States will use this moment of opportunity,” it declared,

to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets and free trade to every corner of the world (National Security Strategy, 2002, preface).

As these commitments continued to be rehearsed through the attack and counter-insurgency phases of the war, it was apparent that the high hopes of geoeconomics were playing every bit as crucial a role as the low fears of geopolitics in providing the groundwork of legitimation.

In practice the inarticulation of geopolitics and geoeconomics in legitimating the war has clearly run into difficulties on the ground. Just as there were no WMD and terror ties to Al Qaeda discovered in Iraq, the rising insurgency, the descent into civil war, and

the way this has increased the influence of authoritarian Iranian leaders in the region, have done little to vindicate the rosy geoeconomic hopes (although it has apparently increased a vibrant and diverse cross-border trade between Iraq and Iran). Clearly, the initial resistance did not stop the American interim government under ambassador Paul Bremer from introducing massive free market reforms by executive order. In this sense the combination of geopolitical and geoeconomic mindsets had brought about another resurgence of sovereignty, in this case into a field of distinctively neoliberal governmentality. As such, as Naomi Klein suggested, it represented a form of "privatization in disguise" (Klein, 2003). "After all," she argued,

negotiations with sovereign nations can be hard. Far easier to just tear up the country, occupy it, then rebuild it the way you want. Bush hasn't abandoned free trade, as some have claimed, he just has a new doctrine: 'Bomb before you buy'. It goes further than one unlucky country. Investors are openly predicting that once privatization of Iraq takes root, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait will be forced to compete by privatizing their oil. 'In Iran, it would just catch like wildfire,' S. Rob Sobhani, an energy consultant, told the *Wall Street Journal*. Soon, America may have bombed its way into a whole new free-trade zone.

Klein captured Bremer's 'business suit and boots' approach well (see also Klein, 2004), but what came much sooner than a new free trade zone was the ambassador's own expedited departure from Baghdad in the midst of the rising insurgency. Thus while the new free-trade zone may still have been the ultimate imaginative geography to come out of the geopolitics plus geoeconomics double-vision, it clearly remains only imaginative at present and seems unlikely to become an actual economic geography anytime soon at all.

Mapping the Global Future After Iraq

If both the Bush administration's geopolitical fears and geoeconomic hopes have been seriously challenged by events on the ground in Iraq, this has not stopped national security experts in the US from continuing to use related discourses to imagine future geographies. The National Intelligence Council's release of its report entitled *Mapping the Global Future* exemplifies in this way a particularly imaginative rearticulation of geopolitics and geoeconomics in the service of developing national security strategy. Fears of WMD and Islamic terrorism are a high profile feature of the report, but so too are high hopes about the opportunities arising from economic globalization which the

authors describe as the "overarching 'mega-trend, a force so ubiquitous that it will substantially shape all the other major trends in the world of 2020" (NIC, 2005: 10). As a result, the report's remapping of the world suggests that "[t]raditional geographical groupings will lose salience in international relations" (26). Gone, then, will be a host of Cold War East-West and North-South divisions. And gone too will be Mackinder's very own geopolitical favourite: "Eurasia". In its place comes a certain sort of Huntingtonian geopolitics filled with fears about clashing civilizations, but alongside or rather underneath and enframing the resulting vision of an "arc of instability" from SE Asia to North Africa remains an underlying faith in globalization, its connections, and its hubs of hope.

More than just mentally remapping the world through the double-vision of geopolitics and geoeconomics, the authors also do a great deal more detailed work of imaginative geo-graphing. Drawing on a form of business-based 'future scenarios' modeling developed by, amongst others, Goldman Sachs, Shell, the RAND corporation, and Toffler Associates, the report outlines, justifies and, most imaginatively, dramatizes four scenarios to envision possible world scenes that the US national security apparatus will likely be facing in 2020. Two of the scenarios, which are referred to in the report as 'Davos World' and 'Pax Americana', are presented as hopeful utopias, while the other two, 'The New Caliphate' and 'Spiral of Fear', are put forward as plausible but fear-filled dystopias. Here again, then, we meet hope and fear, and, not surprisingly, geoeconomic and geopolitical discourses play their allotted roles in making the variously utopian and dystopian scenarios seem to make sense. This is not to suggest that the analyses in the report are as groundless as the claims about WMD, terror ties and free trade possibilities that were made in relation to Iraq. Indeed, reading the report carefully one senses that the NIC is actually attempting to rebuild the reputation of American intelligence in the aftermath of CIA director George Tenet's claim that the evidence of Iraq's illegal weapons programs was a 'slam-dunk' (Woodward, 2004: 219). Numerous data, tables, charts, and graphs are presented to back up the empirical claims about everything from global growth trajectories, to oil consumption tendencies, to the spread of different religious practices, to even worldwide patterns of disease development. Moreover, while it reveals the striking dependency of the national security analysts on corporate

calculative practices, and while it therefore illustrates another case of how restatements of national sovereignty are mediated by an embeddedness in the field of neoliberal governmentality, the authors of the report also go to some considerable lengths to be transparent about their research and projection methodologies. Unfortunately, there is not enough space here to do justice to the ways in which these data and methodologies come together in the report's revealing claims about the development of China and India. Neither can I explore the ambient neoliberalism of its economic assertion that by 2020 "the gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' will widen unless the 'have-not' countries pursue policies that support application of new technologies—such as good governance, universal education, and market reforms" (NIC: 2005, 11). And nor can I address its equally and, on this issue, more usefully economic argument that: "The freer flow of people across national borders will continue to face social and political obstacles even when there is pressing need for migrant workers" (NIC, 2005: 27). Instead, I simply want to point to the hopes and fears that finally come together in the report's four futuristic scenarios.

In terms of how the scenarios are presented it is hard to overstate the work of cultural imagination that the intelligence experts put into their mental maps. As one savvy critic put it, the report reads something like "the NIC's equivalent of the Iowa Writers' Workshop" (Engelhardt, 2005). All four scenarios are dramatized in the form of fictional communications: two invented letters, an imagined diary entry, and a text-message cell-phone exchange. The result is a kind of high-tech sci-fi epistolary novel which is presented in its online version with artsy graphics designed it seems to make the invented writings and messages appear more plausible and real. From the start the authors are keen to underline that the scenarios are still meant to be fictional, and indeed, it may even be argued that the aestheticized work of dramatization is designed specifically to remind readers that each scenario needs to be read more in the way of science fiction - as a creative exploration of possible trends and trajectories - rather than as providing a clear-cut scientized prediction. The connections in this respect with risk management and the performance of culture in neoliberal corporate calculations (Thrift, 2000) would again be interesting to explore further. But here my main point is that the major result of the work of dramatization is another illustration of the influence and

confluence of geoeconomic and geopolitics as discourses. As such, all the NIC's disclaimers about not providing actual forecasts need to be weighed against the track record of geoeconomics and geopolitics as powerful cultural influences on US policy.

The *Davos World* scenario, introduced in the form of a letter from the head of the World Economic Forum to a former US federal reserve chairman, "provides," in the language of the report, "an illustration of how robust economic growth, led by China and India, over the next 15 years could reshape the globalization process—giving it a more non-Western face and transforming the political playing field as well" (NIC, 2005: 16). Reflecting the rise of China in particular, the letter is written on quasi-official World Economic Forum notepaper which with its Chinese gate decoration indicates that the elite gathering of neoliberal leaders has moved to Beijing from Davos, Switzerland. Moreover, the attention to increasing Asian influence in the global economy allows a certain mixture of geoeconomic fears (about outsourcing, and the loss of US competitiveness) to be mixed in with ongoing geopolitical worries (especially over Taiwan). But in the end the mega-trends of globalization arrives as a *deus ex machina* of inevitability, bringing with it a hopeful geoeconomic conclusion: namely, that China's ascendancy will take the pressure off America as the target of anti-globalization discontent.

Concerned to acknowledge that American hegemony may nevertheless be still required (and thus somehow legitimate) in 2020, the authors next introduce the second scenario of *Pax Americana*. This, we are told, "takes a look at how US predominance may survive the radical changes to the global political landscape and serve to fashion a new and inclusive global order" (NIC, 2005: 16). Again this is a broadly optimistic story in tone. It is told this time in the form of a private diary entry of the UN secretary general, who like the American president in the scenario, is playfully presented by the security strategists as being a woman in 2020. Despite these dramaturgical gestures - which combine, it must be noted, with a more substantive acknowledgement elsewhere in the report of ongoing challenges to women's equality (38 - 39) - the metaphors employed to describe the difficulties that lie ahead for American leaders under *Pax Americana* remain masculinist, with lots of talk about heavy lifting and the need for the US to assert

leadership both as a geopolitical peacemaker in Asia and as a geoeconomic mediator between an economically more powerful Asia and the rest of the world.

With the third scenario the tone of the report abruptly changes from utopian to dystopian. Entering with a letter from a fictional grandson of Osama, Sa'id Muhammad Bin Ladin, written in "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful," comes a fearful future presented as *A New Caliphate*. The letter recounts the "struggles of the Caliph in trying to wrest control from traditional regimes and the conflict and confusion which ensue both within the Muslim world and outside between Muslims and the United States, Europe, Russia and China" (83). Here all the orientalist codes lead not surprisingly to geopolitical fears of increased instability and terrorism, but there remains a geoeconomic sensitivity, it seems, to the linking and leveling possibilities of globalization too.

"Muslims in regions benefiting from globalization," reads one of the 'lessons learned' at the end of the scenario, "may be torn between the idea of a spiritual Caliphate and the material advantages of a globalized world." In these sorts of gestures the report's authors quickly seem to put aside all their careful comments about the contradictions of globalization, and return to a Barnett like script.

However, in the fourth scenario the contradictions are allowed to return with a vengeance in the unremittingly bleak dystopia of the so-called *Cycle of Fear*. This scenario is dramatized by the text messages exchanged between two arms dealers. One, we are told,

is ideologically committed to leveling the playing field and ensuring the Muslim world has its share of WMD, while the other is strictly for hire. Neither knows for sure who is at the end of his chain—a government client or terrorist front. As the scenario progresses, the cycle of fear originating with WMD-laden terrorist attacks has gotten out of hand—to the benefit of the arms dealers, who appear to be engaged in lucrative deals. However, fear begets fear. The draconian measures increasingly implemented by governments to stem proliferation and guard against terrorism also have the arms dealers beginning to run scared. In all of this, globalization may be the real victim (104).

In a sense then, the fourth scenario depicts the end of the great globalization mega-trend, the end of the end of history, and the final destruction of the level playing field vision by increasingly securitized nation-states. And yet, of course, even here we find that the fearful geopolitics is being played out according to a certain geoeconomic script, with at

least one of the text-messaging arms dealers committing himself to "leveling the playing field" of access to WMD.

The *Cycle of Fear* scenario, I think, is a fitting fictional finale to where the double-vision of geopolitics and geoeconomics can lead: a dead end. For the NIC, the lesson to be learned from all this is that the legal capitalist business of globalization must be kept on track at all costs. It will be necessary, the authors aver, to fight the insecurity as much as possible without letting disconnection become a danger to all. But is this the real lesson we can learn from the scenario and the wider ways in which geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses are bound together in official accounts of hope and fear? In the conclusion that follows, I would like to suggest that for those of us who question fiction-based foreign policy and who prefer to live in the reality-based community there are other, better and more hopeful lessons available.

Other lessons to be learned

As I suggested at the start, one way critical scholars have analysed the impact of policies driven by geopolitical fears and geoeconomic hopes is in terms of geographies of dispossession. From the scale of the global and the contradictions of 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2003; Hart, forthcoming), to the scale of the homeless woman's body in South Africa (Meth, 2003), geographers are underlining the real fears produced by policies created in the mixed-up mindsets of groundless hope and fear. We can certainly learn a great deal from such analyses, including a geography as well as a history of what Jean-François Bayart calls "extraversion" - or obscured connectedness (Bayart, 2000). Such historical geographies can teach us - and ideally ought to teach the likes of Thomas Barnett and the NIC analysts - that it is not disconnection so much as a *dispossessing form of connection* that explains the current arc of instability about which they fear and hope so much. But as well as learning about the fear-making impacts of geopolitics and geoeconomics as policy, we can also develop real hopes based on real fears about dispossession. In other words, we need to learn to learn from the dispossessed about their hope-filled struggles to create geographies of repossession too. Many geographers are increasingly seeing this work of learning as a critical responsibility: one entered into in a spirit of ongoing critical questioning as well as open

exploration (Sparke, forthcoming). Whether it is investigating the ways localized communities of children resist, survive and rework processes of dispossession (Katz, 2004), or examining the global struggles of anti-corporatization social movements (Featherstone, 2003; Routledge, 2004), this work can in Rebecca Solnit's words, help us find "hope in the dark" (Solnit, 2004). "It bears repeating," as the Retort group, including Michael Watts, remind us, that in 2003 millions marched against the Iraq war right around the planet. "The marches began in Melbourne and Sydney, and swept westward with the sun. The centers of Rome, Tokyo, London, Paris, Madrid, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Dhaka, Barcelona, New York, San Francisco, and a thousand other communities were choked with banners and echoing with rejection and disgust. Believable estimates the day after put the number of demonstrators in February between fifteen and twenty million, maybe higher; even the networks and newspapers of record - desperate as ever to keep the Great Refusal off the front page - were not able to shrink the figure by more than a factor of two. The 'embittered few' had become the disbelieving and contemptuous many" (Retort, 2005: 1).

Retort, 2005: *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War*, New York: Verso.

To turn in closing to a quotation that Solnit herself employs to evoke such grounded hope, it can help us connect with the spirit of resistance articulated so powerfully by Sub Commandante Marcos from within the dispossessed reality-based community of Chiapas.

A new lie is being sold to us as history. The lie of the defeat of hope, the lie of the defeat of dignity, the lie of the defeat of humanity.... In place of humanity they offer us the stock market index. In place of dignity, they offer us the globalization of misery. In place of life, they offer us an International of Terror. [Against this,] we must raise an International of Hope. Unity, beyond borders, languages, colors, cultures, sexes, strategies and thoughts, of all those who prefer a living humanity. The International of Hope. Not the bureaucracy of hope, not an image inverse to, and thus similar to, what is annihilating us. Not power with a new sign or new clothes. A flower yes, that flower of hope (quoted in Solnit: 2004, 43).

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Geographic illiteracy led us to be hoodwinked into war

March 18, 2006

BY ALEXANDER B. MURPHY

Amid all the recriminations over the disaster in Iraq, no one has placed the ultimate blame where it properly belongs: with the president of Harvard University. No, not poor hapless Larry Summers, but his predecessor, James Conant, who announced in 1948 that "geography is not a university subject."

That pronouncement lies behind both the American schoolchildren who locate North Korea in Australia and an administration that thought of Iraq as a contemporary, interchangeable counterpart of the Japan and Germany of the 1940s.

During the course of the 20th century, geography virtually disappeared from elementary and secondary schools, and it was abolished at some of the nation's leading universities. This has served to undermine our capacity to understand America's role in the world or to consider how something as basic as ethnic distributions might be relevant in our foreign engagements.

Only a geographically illiterate public could have been hoodwinked by the characterizations of Iraq spouted in Washington at the time of the invasion. Yet even "educated" opinion -- normally a brake on the worst sort of policymaking stupidity -- could not and did not act as a brake because it, too, was uneducated.

In a world where Iraq was little more than a blank space in most people's minds, few were in a position to point to the obvious once America moved in: the importance of strengthening institutions such as the Iraqi army that promoted state nationalism (not recognized); the strategic advantages that could come from securing Iraq's borders against foreign intruders (not prioritized); the need to guarantee a sharing of oil revenues given the lack of significant oil fields in Sunni areas (not considered); the value of showing that the United States had no long-term military designs on Iraq (not only ignored, but undercut as plans went ahead for new military bases).

The blinders that got us where we are today have not disappeared. The

debate centers on what is going on inside Iraq itself. Yet what are the implications of the invasion of Iraq for the larger geopolitical picture? What impact has it had, for example, on America's influence in Southeast Asia? What role does Iraq play in widening the geographic scope of violent extremism?

The crisis in Iraq should not distract us from the gravity of such questions. Unless they become the focus of attention, the administration can continue to claim, without challenge from significant segments of the electorate, that Iraq is at the leading edge of the war on terrorism.

The absurdity of this claim becomes clear when one considers that the Iraq invasion has been used relentlessly and effectively by those seeking to undermine American influence in other parts of the world. Al-Qaida sympathizers from Europe have gone to Iraq, and then returned to Europe in a position to wreak more havoc than they ever could have imagined without the training Iraq had provided them. We cannot have a serious discussion of the role of Iraq in the larger terrorism picture if such matters are not part of the conversation.

In a world where the gap between political rhetoric and reality is growing by the day, public accountability is impossible in the absence of a basic level of global understanding and inquisitiveness. There will always be differences of opinion on policy initiatives, but the Iraq venture has been conducted and promoted through a combination of on-the-ground illusions and unasked questions -- all made possible by a geographically challenged general population.

The results now lie starkly before us. If we are to salvage anything reasonable from the wreckage and avoid similar policy pitfalls in the future, we can no longer let political grandstanding trump serious consideration of the cultural, political and environmental character of the contemporary world.

Alexander B. Murphy is vice president of the American Geographical Society and a past president of the Association of American Geographers.

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Francis Fukuyama, NYT, 2006, 02

The most basic misjudgment was an overestimation of the threat facing the United States from radical Islamism.

Although the new and ominous possibility of undeterrable terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction did indeed present itself, advocates of the war wrongly conflated this with the threat presented by Iraq and with the rogue state/proliferation problem more generally.

The misjudgment was based in part on the massive failure of the American

intelligence community to correctly assess the state of Iraq's W.M.D. programs before the war. But the intelligence community never took nearly as alarmist a view of the terrorist/W.M.D. threat as the war's supporters did.

Overestimation of this threat was then used to justify the elevation of preventive war to the centerpiece of a new security strategy, as well as a whole series of measures that infringed on civil liberties, from detention policy to domestic eavesdropping.

The Bush doctrine, before and after

By Francis Fukuyama

The Financial Times

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The "Bush doctrine", as elaborated by George W. Bush in earlier speeches as well as in the National Security Strategy of the United States in September 2002, was a logical and well thought-out response to the terrorist threat in the wake of September 11, 2001. A senior Clinton administration official once confided privately that in their eight years, the Clintonites never managed to produce a strategy of comparable sophistication. Nonetheless, in Mr Bush's

second term, its key components lie in shambles. The doctrine is unlikely to have a lasting impact on US foreign policy in future administrations, Republican or Democrat.

The first aspect of the "doctrine" concerned the pre-emptive use of force. The NSS argued quite cogently that in the face of suicide terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction, deterrence and containment —, the centrepieces of cold war strategy —, would not work and that the US needed, as the president has repeatedly stated, to fight them "over there" rather than waiting for them to attack the American homeland.

Pre-emption, as John Lewis Gaddis has noted, is not a new idea in American strategic thinking; it was used or considered at various times such as in the Cuban missile crisis. What was innovative about the NSS was how it collapsed the distinction between pre-emption (against an imminent attack) and preventive war (in which the threat lay several months or years in the future) and argued that the post 9/11 environment required the latter against rogue state proliferators harbouring terrorists.

Under the right circumstances, it is impossible to make a normative case against preventive war: if suicide terrorists with WMD are clearly planning an attack on the US on the territory of another country, it is hard to argue that America does not have the right to take matters into its own hands rather than wait for United Nations Security Council permission to act. Even the UN's High Level Panel on reform admitted as much. The problem is that, in the real world, such conditions almost never exist. We seldom have good information about our enemies' capabilities or reliable ways to predict their future behaviour. Failure to find Iraqi WMD exposed the limits of US intelligence capabilities. The Bush

administration merged the terrorism/WMD problem with the rogue state/proliferation problem in a way that skewed the risk-reward calculation toward preventive war. The Iraq war showed that traditional prudential strictures against preventive war (Bismarck once called preventive war "committing suicide for fear of death") remain valid even in an age of suicide terrorism.

The second dimension of the Bush doctrine has to do with its approach to allies and legitimacy, also known as "unilateralism". I do not believe that most administration officials were contemptuous of global public opinion. Many felt, however, that legitimacy had to be won *ex post*, rather than *ex ante* via a Security Council resolution. Officials such as Donald Rumsfeld believed, not unreasonably, that the collective action mechanisms of the UN and of the Europeans were broken, as evidenced most recently in the Balkans where only US leadership brought the Bosnian and Kosovar conflicts to a close. In its own eyes, the Bush administration was playing the role of "benevolent hegemon", providing global public goods that the rest of the international community could not.

The Bush administration failed to anticipate the almost uniformly hostile reaction to benevolent hegemony, not only among those countries traditionally hostile to US purposes, but also among America's closest European allies. Legitimacy came neither *ex ante* nor *ex post*. At an elite level, leaders may seek to restore good relations with Washington out of self-interest, but at a mass level there has been a seismic shift in the way much of the world perceives the US, whose image is no longer the Statue of Liberty but the hooded prisoner at Abu Ghraib.

There are several reasons for this. A hegemon has to be perceived not just as benevolent but competent.

With the administration's failure to find Iraqi WMD and its bungling of the Iraq reconstruction process, Washington's credibility plummeted. The Bush doctrine's preventive war doctrine was, moreover, based on implicit assertion of US exceptionalism. Given that the US would almost certainly criticise a similar anti-terrorist policy proclaimed by Russia, China or India, its assertion of this right rested on the premise that America is somehow more disinterested than other nations. Americans may believe in their own good intentions but international legitimacy emerges only if others do as well. Long before the Iraq war, Americans failed to perceive deep currents of anti-Americanism building up.

The final aspect of the Bush doctrine, democracy promotion via coercive regime change, was again something whose defects were practical rather than normative. The Iraq war seems to have been planned on the assumption that democracy was a kind of default condition to which societies reverted once tyrants were removed, rather than a collection of complex institutions that needed to be painstakingly built over years. The administration grossly underestimated the costs and capabilities required to stabilise Iraq.

The best way to assess the durability of the Bush doctrine is to ask how likely it is to be applied again in the future —, that is, how ready is the US to again intervene unilaterally to topple a rogue state proliferator and engage in another nation-building exercise? The answer comes from the Bush administration itself, which has already backed away from military confrontations with both North Korea and Iran in favour of multilateral approaches, despite much clearer evidence of nuclear programmes in those countries. This suggests the doctrine has not survived into Mr Bush's second term, much less become a permanent component of US strategy against global terrorism.

The writer is professor of international political economy at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and editorial chairman of The American Interest, a new magazine.

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