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Origins and End of the New World Order

Richard J. Bishirjian

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Origins and End of the New World Order," the text of which follows below, is a challenging examination of revolutionary trends in American foreign policy and practices in the twentieth century. Its author, Dr. Richard J. Bishirjian, is a long-time contributor and editorial advisor to *Modern Age*. His essay is bold in idea, incisive in content, trenchant in argument. Undoubtedly, too, it is an essay that will provoke sharp debate, given its conclusions, some of them at once disturbing and sobering.

Bishirjian's historical analysis and critical judgments with respect to some of the purposes and the consequences of an American foreign policy inevitably reveal the powerful influences of progressive ideologues like Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), whose idealism and messianism have come to define and shape foreign policy especially from the time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the present administration. Bishirjian, who expresses his thoughts with unusual candor, goes to the heart of his thesis when he writes: "Progressive ideologues like Woodrow Wilson sought a future world—within time—that approximated traditional Christianity's hope for eternal peace in a heavenly world. This secular, immanentist ideology successfully challenged the fundamental principles of the American regime—the philosophy of limited government of the Founders of the Constitution of the United States—and transformed the American nation into a 'Christ-Nation,' thus placing the American people at risk to even greater ideologies such as Nazism and Marxism."

The author's appraisal of the risks, errors, antinomies, and failures emerging from a foreign policy that has sought to implement the "ideological expectation of a New World Order" is, to say the least, disquieting. Indeed, his warnings cannot be easily dismissed, if the slightest possibility of greater disorders is to be avoided in the twenty-first century. Bishirjian's major concerns are not only inherently moral but also spiritual in character. The condition of the American commonwealth *and* of the American soul, he thus insists, simply can be neither compromised nor discounted. Indeed, it is precisely this nexus of concern that distinguishes "Origins and End of the New World Order," and that makes it incumbent on a reader to study its meaning. His essay in effect conveys a holistic perspective infrequently found in many writings on the same subject.

Understanding contemporary American foreign policy in relation to “modernist universalist internationalism” is distinctly aided by Bishirjian’s scrutiny. That he focuses on Woodrow Wilson as the arch-priest of a revolutionary “Redeemer-Nation” and of an imperialistic and universalistic ideology that imperils the American nation and soul, connects Bishirjian’s work with, and places him in direct succession of, the seminal conservative minds of Irving Babbitt and Russell Kirk, who earlier singled out Wilson as the inspirer of a New World Order that threatens ultimately civil society at home and promises chaos abroad, for “stuff happens.” In his magisterial *Democracy and Leadership* (1924), Babbitt warned in no uncertain terms: “Let one consider Mr. Woodrow Wilson, who more than any other recent American, sought to extend our idealism beyond our national frontiers. In the pursuit of his scheme for world service, he was led to make light of the constitutional checks on his authority and to reach out almost automatically for unlimited power.”

Bishirjian, it will be seen, brings Babbitt’s fears to their climactic point of truth. Wilson, surrendering to millenarian ideas, became still another victim of what Babbitt calls “the humanitarian confusion of values” and “idealistic distractions.” As a great Babbittian of more recent times, Kirk, has remarked in *Enemies of the Permanent Things* (1969) about Wilson’s faith in the liberal illusions of Progress, Equality, and the Republic; the twenty-eighth president of the United States betrayed one of the “classical virtues,” political prudence, by creating a modern political dream-world of “a world safe for democracy” and a “world safe from war.”

In his essay, Bishirjian authenticates both Babbitt’s and Kirk’s misgivings, and demonstrates how exactly Wilson’s legacy of a “redemptive ideology” emerges in our time in the specious form of America acting as a “Redeemer-Nation” in aggressive pursuit of an international New World Order. Bishirjian’s testimony should prompt deep soul-searching on the part of Americans in quest of a prudent American foreign policy in the twenty-first century. “Its object,” as Kirk declared in *The Politics of Prudence* (1993), “should not be to secure the triumph everywhere of America’s name and manners, under the slogan of ‘democratic capitalism,’ but instead the preservation of the true national interest, and acceptance of the diversity of economic and political institutions throughout the world.”

No less than Kirk, Bishirjian affirms the need for a principled conservative foreign policy, neither “isolationist” nor “interventionist”—and one that subscribes to the “Permanent Things” and not to the Marxisant doctrine of “revolution in permanence.” His delineation of some of the consequences of American secularistic ideology underlines the tensive nature of a “realism without virtue” and an “idealism without prudence.” Bishirjian’s essay shows not only the fallacy of “the millennial visions of the New Social Order,” but also the destructive errors of an abstract theory that prescribes formulas for bringing “an end to evil” through the intemperate unilateral efforts of systems-builders to impose “plebiscitary democracy” on a global scale.

Needless to say, then, Bishirjian is not alone in voicing his alarm about a new Jacobinism molding the world view of some conservatives. To read “Origins and End of the New World Order” alongside, for example, Professor Claes Ryn’s remarkable article, “The Ideology of American Empire,” published in *Orbis* (Summer 2003), will underscore dissenting views that are too often ignored or dismissed out-of-hand by the media elites, whether in print or in speech, as well as by mainstream political pundits and publicists.

It is salutary in this troubled time of our history for Americans to consider dissident views that help bring into question the attitudes of “the proponents of the ideology of American empire.” In particular, those who today espouse a “religious triumphalism,” which confuses the things of God and the things of Caesar, abet a “political-ideological imperialism” that is in mounting evidence in American foreign policy, or as Ryn categorically states in his essay: “...neo-Jacobinism has come to permeate American public debate and is finally within reach of controlling the military might of the United States.”

In publishing the following essay this quarterly review points attention to the constant need to identify the phenomenon of utopian thinking as an impelling force in the socio-political realm. At the same time, it is a way of reiterating the living tradition of dissent and debate as it was announced nearly a half-century ago in “Apology for a New Review,” appearing in the very first issue of *Modern Age*: “Our purpose is to stimulate discussion of the great moral and social and political and economic and literary questions of the hour, and to search for means by which the legacy of our civilization may be kept safe.” These words, also from the inaugural editorial, are of added significance: “In the realm of foreign affairs especially, we believe there is an urgent necessity for a return to principle.” If, then, “Origins and End of the New World Order” helps to confirm the high aims that the founders of *Modern Age* had in mind, it will also serve to reassert, retest, and revitalize *Modern Age*’s purposiveness and its endeavors to promote a reflective conservatism.

EVERY ONE-HUNDRED YEARS, since the Colonial era, America has changed its foreign policy. There is reason to suspect that these transformations represent not only changes in external ideas, or in intellectual fashion, but also changes in the interior condition of the American soul.

From the revolutionary era’s “Spirit of ’76”—which lasted through the failure of the Articles of Confederation until the Founding of the Constitution of the United States in 1787, and the Ratification Debates in 1789—eighteenth-century American foreign policy was one of exceptionalism and non-involvement.¹ The Monroe Doctrine capped that defensiveness with a statement of resolve to defend America’s interests and, by extension, the Constitutional system of limited government that the American

people fashioned to govern themselves, without the assistance of foreign powers. American foreign policy involved the prudential act of choosing between real possibilities, and their consequences, always framed by an appreciation for the limits of America’s resources, trade relations, and a young nation’s inability to project power.

In the nineteenth century, from Abraham Lincoln’s speech at Gettysburg and his Second Inaugural, through the expansionist and nascent imperialism of nineteenth-century America typified by President Theodore Roosevelt, a more robust, aggressive, and idea-oriented foreign policy developed. In some ways, nineteenth-century American foreign policy can be seen as an extension of the growth of the power of the state that was the consequence of the Civil War, America’s collective experience in the use of force, and the development of a military hardened by battle that foretold total war of the twentieth-century. The

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United States had now come of age, and was poised to act in such distant places as the Philippines, Venezuela, Spain, and Mexico. Still, American foreign policy had a nineteenth century classical character as symbolized in this passage from a letter of Theodore Roosevelt to Lord Trevelyan: "I dread the creation of a revolutionary habit and the creation of a class of people who take to disturbance and destruction as an exciting and pleasant business."² Nineteenth-century American foreign policy did not have revolutionary motivation and purpose, so much as it represented a willingness to assert American power just because it was there to use. Too, the Monroe Doctrine served to remind American leaders that the United States had self-interests that were to be protected. An interest-focused foreign policy was accepted as normal, even patriotic, and is contrasted by twentieth-century American policy notions that the United States is selfless, disinterested in its particular aims, and motivated by "higher" principles than carefully formulated policies that both project and preserve American power.

A sea-change occurred in the twentieth century as Wilsonian idealism came to define American foreign policy. That foreign policy involved a radical change from previous American statecraft, and reshaped how the American public views the purposes of American foreign policy. Wilsonian idealism is very much present today among our educated classes. This idealism conflicts with the practice of foreign policy by most nation-states that are motivated by the pursuit of their national interest. The motto of the United States Information Agency, founded after World War II, captures this sense of specialness: "Telling America's Story." Too often "America's Story" is one of foreign blunders that are the result of a selfless pursuit of a New World Order of world peace. This heritage was examined by Frank A. Ninkovich in his semi-

nal work on American cultural diplomacy, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*. Ninkovich traced the role of internationalists like Andrew Carnegie, Elihu Root, and Columbia University's president, Nicholas Murray Butler, in framing public opinion about the purposes of American foreign policy in terms of international law, and those "moral influences,"...as part of the progressive evolution of civilization, that were gradually, steadily in the course of centuries taking the place of brute force in the control of the affairs of men."³

An amalgam of Wilsonian messianism, a belief in progress, and the expectation that international agreements will shape a New World Order of eternal peace came to define America's foreign policy in the Progressive era, and the post World War II commitment to "Telling America's Story." These ideas became the hallmarks of the administrations of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter, George Herbert Walker Bush, and William Jefferson Clinton, and contributed to the foreign policy failures of those administrations.

It is important, therefore, that we understand the origins of these twentieth-century ideas about foreign policy, their enervating spirit, and their consequences for policy. We shall argue here that the only truly *revolutionary* ideology to grip the American nation, and America's thinking about itself, was inspired by Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Croly, and the Progressive internationalists who championed a New World Order that opposed the old order of balance of power politics. The American Revolution was not revolutionary in the sense that modern ideologies that disrupted the world in the twentieth century are revolutionary. Woodrow Wilson's was. Progressive ideologues like Woodrow Wilson sought a future world—within time—that approximated tradi-

tional Christianity's hope for peace eternal in a heavenly world. This secular, immanentist ideology successfully challenged the fundamental principles of the American regime—the philosophy of limited government of the Founders of the Constitution of the United States—and transformed the American nation into a “Christ-Nation,” thus placing the American people at risk to even greater ideologies such as Nazism and Marxism.

The full magnitude of the damage done to American society by so-called “Progressives” has yet to be written. When that story is finally told, it will have significant consequences for American foreign policy. The policy of containment, for example, that became the face of American foreign policy in response to communist imperialism did not reflect America's true ability to force the Soviet Union into submission. Containment was not an outward-looking policy fashioned after careful consideration of the variety of options at America's disposal, but a policy that looked inward at tensions in the American mind. Containment represented the conscious choice not to act to repel a life-force that threatened Western civilization.

In protecting our national interests through a policy of containment, America experienced a loss of consciousness of what precisely it was fighting for, and its will to fight was thereby weakened. That weakening of resolve led to failures of will manifest in American foreign policy in Korea, Berlin, Cuba, and Vietnam. These foreign policy failures of twentieth-century American liberalism cast a pall over American politics, and allowed the Republican Party to dominate presidential politics for close to a quarter century (excepting the ill-fated administration of Jimmy Carter) between the presidencies of Lyndon Baines Johnson and George Herbert Walker Bush, and assured that Ronald

Reagan's exuberant, interest-oriented, foreign policy would contribute to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

If the United States is to survive a new century, the issue is not whether the Progressives' ideological expectation of a New World Order will be realized, but whether American citizens living now will allow modern ideologies to shape American foreign policy in the twenty-first century. In particular, there are two issues to contend with: (1) rejection of a moribund ideology that has weakened America's ability to respond to the challenges of global politics; and (2) shaping an intellectual alternative with a focus on the pursuit of America's national interests.

If current and future generations of American leaders do not rethink foreign policy in terms of national interest, these past ideologies will become even more fully absorbed into the American soul than they are at present. America will not realize its potential, and may well become a nation quite unlike that envisioned by the Founders of American constitutional government—an instrumentality seeking a New World Order and a source of disorder in world politics.

The philosophy of limited government of the Founders of the Constitution of the United States, of constitutional limits, of federalism, and a restricted executive power, constrained by the interests of the nation's representative institutions, will disappear, and this country may become something other than it is now—a revolutionary nation (not unlike the French nation of Napoleon), and a disruptive influence on the world stage, a threat to itself and to the stability and the order of traditional cultures, and world politics. That is the meaning of the title of this essay, the “Origins and End of the New World Order.” If the aspiration for a New World Order is not buried by a more robust and interest-oriented American foreign policy, American limited

government, as we know it, may well expire. The practical consequences of this theoretical essay in understanding contemporary American foreign policy are apparent.

The first, fitful steps in America's journey to becoming a new type of revolutionary Redeemer-Nation were taken by Woodrow Wilson, who may be ranked as the greatest president of the twentieth century because he created an ideology that now dominates the "American soul." In doing so, he fashioned something that can, at any moment, transform American government from one of constitutional limits into a new form of government knowing no limits, indeed, a truly revolutionary nation. In that sense, the New World Order is not a symbol of order, but symptomatic of spiritual disease and disorder of the American soul. And the aspiration to implement a New World Order by American presidents threatens civil society at home, and promises chaos anywhere in the world in which it is deployed. Understanding the basic concepts of the New World Order, and its appeal to American presidents from Woodrow Wilson to William Jefferson Clinton, is the subject of this essay and is offered as a meditative exercise for the recovery of the American soul and the shaping of a realistic foreign policy for the twenty-first century.

The mythos of America as a nation justified to act upon the world because of its historic, even divine, mission, has taken root in popular imagination and culture. So deep is this millennial current in American culture that liberals *and* conservatives are attracted by its resonance. But, only Woodrow Wilson was fully conscious that a Redeemer-Nation would unleash permanent revolution and that America's historic mission was not to live in peace and isolation, but to revolutionize world politics, destroy the order of balance of power among nations, and replace it with a New

World Order.

It will not be lost on students of modern ideologies that the spirit of the American craftsman of this universalist internationalism, Woodrow Wilson, is a kindred spirit to Karl Marx's call for a revolution in permanence and Nicolai Lenin's program of communist revolution. As such, Wilson, Marx, and Lenin must be given credit for being the most important revolutionaries of the seventy-year period from 1848 to 1918.

By coming to know the similar pathologies of their ideologies, we come to understand how totally opposed are the modern religion of a New World Order and the reality-oriented politics and policies that formerly defined American politics and foreign policy.

The New World Order is a religiously motivated lust or, to use St. Augustine's concept, *libido dominandi*, because it hopes for a resolution of the conflicts of existence of this world by human thought and action. Marx and Lenin sought such a resolution in proletarian revolution (led by the Communist Party), Wilson sought it in revolutionary democracy (led by Woodrow Wilson). Christianity's universal hope for peace in God's presence after history has taken new form, replacing traditional Christian expectations of fulfillment after death with a this-worldly belief that the end sought will occur in time, in this world, in history. This displacement of Christian faith in a transcendent resolution of the conflicts of existence beyond life on earth by an immanent expectation of resolution in time is the most significant sea change in popular culture in recent American history. Its presence in intellectual culture coincides with the decline of Christianity in the everyday lives of American citizens.

The modern universalist internationalism of the New World Order, therefore, must be taken seriously, comprehended for what it is, and its consequences scru-

tinized, for when a nation is guided by leaders for whom a future international order in time is a possible reality, we become, literally, a revolutionary nation. That is what the American nation aspired to become during the administrations of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter, George Herbert Walker Bush, and Bill Clinton.

To understand the New World Order—as the revolutionary ideology it is—requires that we appreciate what is “new.” What is “new” is distinct from Christian “faith” and the “theology” of traditional religions.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith in *The Meaning and End of Religion* makes this distinction: “...the concern of the religious man is with God; the concern of the observer is with religion.” And, indeed, “it is not entirely foolish to suggest that the rise of the concept ‘religion’ is in some ways correlated with a decline in the practice of religion itself.”⁴

The growing popularity of belief in a New World Order could occur only when traditional religion in American culture—Christianity—was in decline. Only the decline of traditional religious “faith” explains how a modern political religion could successfully vie with the traditional and become *the* interpretation of the American experience.

“Faith...is not an entity,” Smith writes, “it is, rather, the adjectival quality of a person’s living in terms of transcendence.”⁵ An inquiry into the origins of a New World Order requires that we probe the loss of faith of America’s Progressive elites at the turn of the nineteenth century, and their unconscious, and sometimes conscious, rejection of Christianity. That spirit of rejection lies at the heart of this new religion of a New World Order that defined American foreign policy in the twentieth century. During that century, Americans completed the construction of a full-blown administra-

tive state. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the private sector dominated. At its end, the public sector in full panoply dominates every aspect of American life and threatens to spread the viruses of nineteenth and twentieth century political religion by asserting the prerogatives of the nation state. President Clinton spoke of this truth when he observed that there were “enemies of the nation state,”⁶ by which he meant the bureaucracies that oversee the redistribution of wealth on terms more just than free markets and public choice.

In many ways, the spirit of the New World Order in America is a mix of socialist economics, Enlightenment notions of rationality, and very deep and rich traditions of medieval millennialism that were carried to America by Protestant preachers who, as Richard Gamble writes, made America into a “permanently revolutionary nation.”⁷ Gamble calls the outcome of this development the “Christ-Nation,” a symbol by which “Wilson reassigned the divine attributes of Christ to the American nation: the U.S. was the Mediator, the light of the world, the peacemaker, the bringer of salvation.”⁸ In this concept, Gamble writes, we see “the worst of disordered loves.”

Richard Kennington’s essay, “René Descartes,”⁹ is also important because it places these phenomena in the context of the Enlightenment: that “The classic tradition appeared to [Descartes]...as a corruption of the wisdom of the golden youth of the world in some pre-Socratic *siècle sage*. ...it was necessary for Descartes, following Bacon, to ‘enlighten’ society....”

Kennington sees three meanings of the concept Enlightenment in the context of conscious rejection of classical philosophy—what we may call the “political program” implicit in modern philosophy. He writes that “...Enlightenment rhetoric has a permanently divisive social function” that encourages

modern man to engage in the mastery of nature; to advance science, and communication between scientists; and to promote “open” societies versus those that “seek the autonomous cultivation and preservation of their own morality and way of life.”

This “permanently divisive social function” of modern, Enlightenment philosophy found fertile soil in the shaping of Wilson’s successful challenge of traditional religion by converting America into a Christ-Nation devoted to permanent revolution.

The source materials were there for Woodrow Wilson’s use. Key passages in Scripture have been used in the past to shape American political religion. They include Isaiah’s prophecy of a reconstituted nature, “when the wolf shall lie down with the kid,” and Isaiah’s expectation of universal world peace, “when one nation shall not raise the sword against another.” There is also the Book of Daniel’s prophecy of a “fifth monarchy” that concludes history and the Book of Revelation’s “New Jerusalem,” when God dwells among men and governs them directly without the mediation of worldly government.

With the growing social and political dominance of the Progressive movement came a reworking of old-time religion into a powerful rhetoric for national self-realization. Herbert Croly, founder of *The New Republic*, symbolized that mixture of influences when he wrote in *The Promise of American Life*:

For better or worse, democracy cannot be disentangled from an aspiration toward human perfectibility and hence from adoption of measures looking in the direction of realizing such an aspiration.¹⁰

Woodrow Wilson—September 7, 1911—followed:

There is approaching upon our modern times a sort of expectation of still greater

days to come, when every man may lift his eyes with hope to the horizon, when there has come a day of peace and righteousness—when the nations shall be glad in the presence of God.

And, again, Woodrow Wilson—October 24, 1914—states:

Man has progressed, and will continue to progress to that day when man “shall live in the full light...where all the light that illumines mankind shines direct from the face of God.”

Wilson’s language had great resonance for Americans of the early twentieth century for whom the language of the Bible was their common language. Yet, Wilson was not addressing the aspirations of Christian believers who expected a resolution of the conflicts of existence beyond the world, at the end of history. Wilson was a “modern” in the sense that to be modern means to focus your aspirations on life in this world, not the next. Like his ideological soul mates, Marx and Lenin, Wilson was prepared to achieve a New World Order by revolutionary action. The similarity between Marx, Lenin, and Wilson is little appreciated, but all three accepted Marx’s concept of “Revolution in Permanence.”

Gerhart Niemeyer observed that Lenin saw that “history subdivides, not into successive worlds of social order, but into successive stages of revolution. The revolution is the continuum, the ongoing reality, that makes a concept of history possible. ...In each of the successive phases [of revolution], a peculiar strategic situation confronts the revolutionary forces, so that to every phase corresponds a temporary revolutionary program.”¹¹

That, essentially, is what Woodrow Wilson aspired to in his address to the United States Senate, July 10, 1919, presenting the treaty of peace with Germany:

Every true heart in the world, and every enlightened judgment demanded that, at whatever cost of independent action, every government that took thought for its people or for justice or for ordered freedom would lend itself to a new purpose and *utterly destroy the old order of international politics.*

And, again, Woodrow Wilson, September 5, 1919, speaks in defense of a proposed “League of Nations”:

[America] has said to mankind at her birth: “We have come to *redeem* the world by giving it liberty and justice.” Now we are called upon before the tribunal of mankind to redeem that immortal pledge.

Redeemer-Nations, inspired by redemptive ideologies, lead to redemptive foreign policies; an America encumbered with that legacy enters the twenty-first century in pursuit of a New World Order.

Professor James Stoner observes that “In all these matters, the aim seems to be to build up a body of world opinion and ‘soft law,’ which can influence and perhaps eventually even determine the legal outcomes in particular societies. Indeed, through creative lawyering...these bodies of so-called ‘customary international law,’ even when the treaties on which they are founded have not been ratified by the United States Senate, are starting to find their way into American courts.”¹²

It should not go unnoticed that always accompanying the “lawyering” of international bodies in pursuit of the New World Order is military intervention. Stoner argues, “we need to restore a sense of the national interest to our considerations, and to restore this sense in light of universal principles.” He further stresses that the principle of subsidiarity should prevail, and also the linkage of individual rights with self-government. Democratic elections are not by themselves sufficient unless accompanied with constitutional government and the

rule of law.

Though Norman Graebner, Richard Gamble, James Stoner, Jeremy Rabkin, Michael Ledeen, Robert Nisbet, and other scholars representing a scholarly tradition rooted in reality have tried to chart a course avoiding the treacherous revolutionary utopian waters of the internationalist New World Order, their effort is made difficult by the absorption of Wilsonian idealism into the American soul. Like Wilson, who as Graebner writes, “was unable to conceive of international relations except in moral terms...,”¹³ the American people ceased to think about foreign policy except in terms of a higher morality. Traditional ideas of liberty and equality were hypostatized—spun off from the context of the rule of law, federalism rooted in the Constitution of the United States, and historical experience—and made into parts of an American “creed.” This dogmatic system of hypostatized ideas divides America today. As a result, the American people are easily attracted to appeals to American idealism. Americans easily run to support foreign wars, but just as easily run the other way when a price is paid in American treasure and blood for imposing a hypostatized liberty and equality upon an unsuspecting world. The contest between impulse and prudence involves a choice between the pursuit of American national interests, or the pursuit of a New World Order by “revolution in permanence.” That is the choice in Iraq where the United States is being urged to turn over society to the ministrations of the United Nations, and our own intellectual “idealist” classes. If we choose the latter we may reap greater chaos than that which was replaced by American arms.

The decision America must now make is whether to recognize that nations have interests, or whether the national interest of the United States is served by denying the United Nations anything

more than a role in providing humanitarian aid to Iraq, or anywhere else. The Bush Administration has shown that it has decided to dominate politics in the region. What it has not yet confirmed is that it knows how to do that. In other words, the United States must decide whether it is to act as an indifferent “redeemer” and intermediary for a supranational New World Order administered by the United Nations, or whether the United States will pursue a foreign policy rooted in the pursuit of American national interests.

America’s choices seem to fall into these categories: accept the secular religion of a New World Order; destroy traditional culture in the Middle East through the imposition of the “permanently divisive social function” of Enlightenment rationality; or pursue a foreign policy that seeks to preserve America’s national interests; accept that the Islamic culture of the Middle East has value, and adapt American policy to the best features of that culture.

In deciding which of these choices to make, I offer some basic truths that intelligent Americans should reflect upon when deciding whether to follow a foreign policy based on national interest or one that seeks to impose a New World Order.

1. The political religion of the New World Order is a nineteenth-century ideology.

Though this political religion still resonates with environmental activists, and appears in the language of ill-educated elected leaders, and the detritus of Eurotrash culture, Wilsonian internationalism runs aground on reality. Wars are costly, and the American people pay for war with high taxes and spilled blood. After awhile, they vote out of office internationalists and policies not driven by national interest.

The League of Nations, the United Nations, and all the other international organizations that the New World Order has fostered, ultimately conflict with an American foreign policy grounded in the pursuit of national interest. Though internationalist rhetorical cant clutters our intellectual journals, academic fora, and media discourse with ideological concepts at conflict with national interest, the practice of statecraft and the pursuit of national interest ultimately prevail. Still, the process takes time. So deeply rooted are the internationalist aspirations of our intellectual classes, that the hypostatized ideas of *democracy*—absent the rule of law; *equality*—absent a consciousness of justice; and *liberty*—absent a sense of responsibility, have become the common language of politically correct elites. In light of those hypostatized ideas, historical communities must be judged to be defective, including our own nation that spawned and allows Political Correctness police to educate our young.

A critical reading of this passage from John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural address serves to explain this confusion in the American culture and how deep the revolution in permanence has seeped into the American soul: “Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”

To be sure, these beautiful, idealistic, words were much celebrated by a generation who thought working for the state was a noble calling, but, they, too ran aground on the rock of reality. First, it is not the liberty of the American political community that is to be defended, but liberty in general. Second, other nations, even those friendly to American interests, are put on notice that they will be judged by the standards of an ideal liberty evoked by an arrogant American

president. America's international relationships and policies will be based not on mutual interest and security, but on our friends' willingness to impose uniquely American concepts of civil liberty upon their own societies. Third, this Presidential rhetoric overestimated the capacity of American citizens to pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, particularly as the toll of death of young Americans in Vietnam was tallied. Fourth, since the revolution in permanence is destructive of traditional cultures—including our own, and should not even be sought by prudent statesmen—a skepticism about the ability of the American nation's ability to meet the exigencies of international politics (and a skepticism about politics itself) sets in. At the very moment that the American nation has been thrust into preserving the balance of power in every part of the world, America's educated classes believe that pursuing a balance of power in the world is "un-American."

A good deal of the rejection and loathing of politics, and of our international prominence, by our educated classes is due to an underlying sense that the entire enterprise is corrupt, false, and incompatible with aspirations for a New World Order. Even today, otherwise intelligent Americans think of themselves as "cynical" when they understand that the nation has interests, and that those interests should be served. The secular religion of the New World Order has become the American political tradition, and American constitutionalism and an interest-oriented foreign policy rejected. Conflicted by idealism posing as statecraft, the American people have become skeptical.

The ideology of revolution in permanence *breeds* skepticism because it leads to failure, revolution, and destruction of order. In turn, skepticism leads to a vicious realism that lacks virtue. In a

public arena filled with unrealizable ideals now perceived as lies, American politics yields a Richard Nixon, a Henry Kissinger, and other amoral "realists" for whom amorality provides respite from falsehood. Kissinger's defense of the government of the People's Republic of China when it suppressed China's democracy movement is an example. In reaction to the acid of that skepticism, the American electorate coughs up personages such as John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, and William Jefferson Clinton whose foreign policies constitute a vicious idealism absent of prudence. As a result, American foreign policy exists in tension between two poles: realism without virtue and idealism without prudence.

The first and foremost imprudent idealist was Woodrow Wilson. Though he is dead, he created an ideological mold, which was not broken upon his death, and also upon the deaths of thousands of Americans in the European trenches of World War I. Since World War II, American politics has shifted between leaders in the mold of Wilson and a newer form bearing the outlines of practical statesmanship that has yet to be given a name. Today, President Bush seems to have consciously rejected the claims of a New World Order over the needs of a reality-based foreign policy, and, in doing so, has set the American nation on a course of spiritual, and political, recovery. Yet even this realistic foreign policy is compelled to clothe itself in idealism, in selfless disinterest, and in a desire to help others. There is reason to believe that the compulsion to use idealist symbols is waning. Stoner writes:

...the fight against twentieth century totalitarianism, the hot war of the 1940s and the cold one for forty years thereafter, elicited reserves of virtue and wisdom that pessimists in the early years of the century would never have predicted; and no small part of that story involved

the withering away of a once dominant historicism, and a rebirth of interest, in philosophy, in literature, in music, in art, and even in architecture, in classical ideas and forms.¹⁴

The postwar revival of classical political theory, for example, and the creation of a new class of scholars trained in that philosophy is unprecedented since the Founding era when an educated man was expected to have studied classical Greek and Latin, and also the history of ancient Rome and Greece. Though few, if any, of these men have risen to high elective office, literally thousands of classically-trained individuals have gravitated to positions of influence in the judiciary, legislative, and executive branches of American federal and state government. Their influence has been salutary, if tentative.

II. Universal peace is not a real possibility.

St. Augustine's *The City of God* should be required reading for every educated American because it teaches us about true realism, quite different from the flawed vision of the Nixons and the Kissingers of American politics. For a man who is sometimes accused of being so otherworldly that he has little to say about pragmatic political reality, St. Augustine's observations on peace are eminently practical. His civilization had collapsed, Christianity was held accountable for the collapse, and Augustine attempted to rally his fellow Christians to a consciousness of the community of the City of God.

The peace of the City of God is what you would expect of a community of men who love God. Their souls turned to God, they look forward with hope (while in the pilgrim condition of this life) to a life of eternal peace after death. In contrast, the peace of this world is fragile,

easily broken, and often more cruel than war. Will there be a moment in time, perhaps for a thousand years, when men will live in peace? No, St. Augustine writes. The millennium cannot be taken literally. It is but a metaphor for the age initiated with the coming of Christ that will end only with his Second Coming.

Contrast those words with the millennial visions of the New World Order, and the utopian notion that nations will turn swords into plowshares that has captivated American elites for two centuries. What is the engendering experience of this hope? Is it a lust for immortality? Since wars are not desired by reasonable men, and a world that is not at war, a New World Order from which war has been banished is not expected by reasonable men. An element of irrationality has in affect entered intellectual culture, and has become socially dominant. Seen in this context, the New World Order should be understood as the prototype of the "modern" rejection of the reality of our mortality and the injection of irrationality in the American soul.

The rejection of mortality, however, is only one aspect of a panoply of modern rejections including rejection of gender differences (feminism and homosexuality); rejection of aging through plastic surgery; rejection of the human tendency to pursue unhealthy things such as alcohol and smoking—and attempts to prepare for life after death through quick-freezing. All the "New Age" nostrums are parts of a greater scheme of spiritual disorder.

III. The rule of law, political rights, and constitutional government are the antipodes of egalitarianism, universal rights and the will to impose plebiscitary democracy on non-Western cultures.

America must preserve its commitment

to justice and respect for human rights, but that commitment must be based on an articulated theory of justice and political philosophy.

The account of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis speaks of equality that is rooted in reality. The Elohim, having decided to make man “in our image” (Genesis 1:26), gives rise to the recognition that all men have an obligation to treat their fellow men with justice—as a moral obligation. Every man should be treated equally with the justice required of beings made in the image of God. But recognizing our obligation to be just is one thing. Dedicating our foreign policy to the imposition of American concepts of human rights and democracy on other countries is another.

Our guide should be Aristotle, who tried valiantly to confront the Sophistic notion that *nomos* (law) and *physis* (nature) were opposed. The Sophists, in the late stage of their development, had become moral relativists, and argued that the laws create principles of right or justice that have as their purpose to keep down the strong. So the natural strength of the stronger, which of right should prevail, is opposed by the laws of the weaker, though numerically larger community of men, who fear the strong. Justice, the Sophists argued, is the will of the stronger.

Aristotle’s answer, no more than two pages of his life’s work, is one of the most significant contributions to the corpus of Western political theory, and a theory of justice that has ennobled Western civilization through the principle of “natural law.”

There is right (*dike*), Aristotle wrote, by convention. But there is also right by nature. Justice exists by law, *and* by nature. Yet because what is right by nature everywhere has the same force, and because it nevertheless changes, it requires the judgment of just men to know which is which. The just man is the

measure by which what is right by nature can be known. Right requires judgment, not definition.¹⁵ Here is stated a truth on which stability and order of all societies is grounded—the education of men both for citizenship and for the just life. Societies are just which enable men to be good men and good citizens. This is a very simple measure by which to distinguish traditional cultures from aberrations deformed by modern ideologies.

Advocates of a New World Order are not guided by this truth. Instead, they are motivated to establish a world in which force has been banished, a world where nations may not seek their own national self-interest by unilateral action, and a world in which supranational organizations determine when force may be used. In fostering this myth, they absolve nations and human actors from making judgments about right and wrong, justice and injustice, peace and war. And they ignore an economy of justice by which statesmen judge whether to shed blood or not. That economy was ignored by Woodrow Wilson when, in the name of peace, he brought the twentieth century to its knees and created an imbalance of power into which stepped Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, and Mao.

IV. Underlying the imposition of hypostatized concepts of liberty, democracy, and peace on other countries is a complex of secular messianism, moral arrogance, and ignorance of political philosophy.

Self-government, from the Wilsonian perspective, is better than good government. Independence is better than ordered society. Self-determination thus becomes the supreme political good, and for its sake we are prepared to accept brutality. Though quite silly when looked at from some distance, the arrogance of utopian democracy is danger-

ous precisely because it is added. The complex network of social interrelationships in non-Western countries is such that to impose a democratic paradigm on these subcultures is to do no more than superimpose an ideological overlay that will be fragile at best. The substance of traditional religious, social, and political order is disoriented as a result, and what order existed previously may even cease to be viable, leaving only the ideological rhetoric of democracy in which no one believes. This dilemma has faced the United States in Iraq, and any other parts of the world into which American power may be projected. Once an American order is established, will it destroy traditional order? Will the virus of Enlightenment rationality carried by our academic, politically correct elites be unleashed in a fit of "nation-building" so destructive to traditional cultures that future generations of Americans will perish as a consequence?

The truth is that it is not in our interest in the long term to impose our ideas on others, because, in the end, American boys will pay the price in blood, if we persist. The feminization of the American military; the choice of female ambassadors for countries whose women are second-class citizens, the flaunting of our "right" to choose sexual preferences, and other reflections of our cultural crackup can only lead to failed foreign policy. Instead we should take inspiration from the Founders of the American republic who saw that the rule of law, of constitutional practices, and limitations on popular will and power of government were necessary in order to balance the demands of freedom and order.

V. And, then, there is the willingness of internationalists to forget justice at home. The New World Order was pursued by Woodrow Wilson without reference to domestic justice.

Ideologies are not rooted in a profound sense of concern, and in the pursuit of justice and truth. Western ideological system-builders always subsume ethics to "history." Woodrow Wilson, who presided over the establishment of Jim Crow, was indifferent to the plight of American Negroes. Disenfranchisement of Blacks met with no response by Woodrow Wilson. "Jim Crow laws multiplied rapidly. Begun tentatively in the 1880s and accepted by the Supreme Court in 1896, legal segregation moved inexorably forward during the Progressive Era in state after state."¹⁶ The New World Order of Woodrow Wilson was blind to the civil rights of racial minorities because it was not based on a political philosophy concerned about the order of the soul and the order of society. Justice plays no role in the revolution in permanence.

Today, apparently in gratitude to the Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson Administrations' policies on civil rights, by which discrimination by government was rejected, and civil rights affirmed by federal civil rights laws, Black Americans vote in lock step with those committed to a sociology of ever-increasing state power. The greater glory of the centralized, bureaucratically-administered state is the knee-jerk political philosophy of America's Black leaders. Their alignment with one party, though politically astute in the short term, promises great difficulties for future generations of Black Americans. The power of the state in future years may well be used to destroy their liberties, just as it affirmed them in 1865 and in the 1960s. After fifty years of repudiation of America's racist past through the use of federal power, it is not as clear that this same power will not be used to impose new forms of slavery in the next century on *all* Americans.

The link between those who favor increasing state power in domestic

United States politics, and those who advocate an idealistic foreign policy transcending American interests, is indelible. This commitment to an internationalist foreign policy and the growth of the administrative state are linked to the Seventeenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. Adopted in 1913 by Progressives so as to provide for direct election of United States Senators, the great sucking sound that was heard throughout the body politic emanated from the escape of power from local governments, and state legislatures, into the federal government. At last, an institution of the federal government could be turned to the advancement of “moral causes” unmediated by non-ideologically driven motives, by “interests,” and by prudential considerations.

If one examines the ideological conflicts that have torn American society apart, and fueled American national politics in the twentieth century, it will be seen that virtually all are rooted in the Progressives’ politicization of the electoral process through the direct election of the United States Senate. By that means, the United States Senate became the playground of elected officials who hitch their political careers to ideological “causes.” The result removed state government as the focus of the most ambitious and qualified politicians. The Founders expected the Senate of the United States to represent state interests, not ideologies. The Progressives arrogantly asserted in 1913 that the Founders were wrong, and thus changed the nature of American politics forever.¹⁷

1. Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (Boston, 1997), 15-38. This essay is a distillation, and re-formulation, of the Introduction to my *Public Philosophy Reader* (New Rochelle, 1978), a speech delivered at a regional meeting of the Philadelphia Society in Washington, D.C. in 1980, subsequently published in the campus publication of Hillsdale College, *Hillsdale Review*, as well as my *History of Political Theory: A Critical Analysis* (1978). 2. H.W. Brands, *TR. The Last Romantic* (New York, 1997), 570. 3. Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (Cambridge, Eng., 1981), 10. 4. New York, 1964, 22. 5. *Faith and Belief: The Difference Between Them* (Oxford, Eng., 1998). 6. President Clinton’s adaptation of the office of the presidency to an eternal campaign should be looked at as the application of Marx’s “revolution in permanence” to domestic politics. Clinton was Woodrow Wilson’s, and Marx’s, intellectual heir. 7. “Savior Nation: Woodrow Wilson and the Gospel of Service,” *Humanitas*, Volume 14, #1, 2001, 4-22. 8. *Ibid.* 9. In Strauss and Cropsey, ed., *History of Political Philosophy* (Chicago, 1969), 354-378. 10. Citations from Croly and Wilson are taken from Richard J. Bishirjian,

A Public Philosophy Reader (New Rochelle, 1978), 53-60. 11. *Between Nothingness and Paradise* (Baton Rouge, 1971; South Bend, 1998). 12. “United States Sovereignty and World Order,” presented at the National Meeting of the Philadelphia Society 2001. Published in: Stoner, James R., Jr., *Common Law and Liberal Theory: Coke, Hobbes, and the Origins of American Constitutionalism* (Lawrence, Kan., 1992). 13. Norman A. Graebner, ed., *Ideas and Diplomacy: Readings in the Intellectual Tradition of American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1964), 406-417. 14. “United States Sovereignty and World Order,” presented at the National Meeting of the Philadelphia Society 2001. Published in *Common Law Liberty: Rethinking American Constitutionalism* (Lawrence, Kan., 2003). 15. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1134b16-1135a5. 16. Thomas K. McGraw, “The Progressive Legacy,” Lewis L. Gould, ed., *The Progressive Era* (Syracuse, 1974). 17. Ralph Rossum, “The Seventeenth Amendment and the Death of Freedom,” prepared for delivery at the Panel on “Republicanism, Federalism, and the Constitution” of the 2003 Fall Regional Meeting of the Philadelphia Society. See Ralph A. Rossum, *Federalism, the Supreme Court and the Seventeenth Amendment: The Irony of Constitutional Democracy* (Lanham, Md., 2001).