

U.S.A. versus ‘Them’: Fomenting an Enemy for the Hegemonic Discourse

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Abstract

This article examines the ways in which the American foreign policy elite justify and formulate their policies against an imaginary enemy in the name of defending their people. Washington’s enemy does not exist, rather is fabricated by using binary constructions. It divides the world into two, based on the assumption that there is an unchangeable character of duality: us and them. Once ‘they or them’ were Communists, now, ‘they’ are Muslims or Islam. This political enculturation is done through spoken and written texts to help preserve its domination and justify its interventionism worldwide as ‘good wars’. The article also examines the media’s role in discourse setting which not only manufactures consent, but also criminalises dissent by using phraseology and labelling.

Key words: Discourse, Hegemony, Constructivism, Otherisation, Clash Regime.

Introduction

Americans have split the world between ‘them’ and ‘us’, they being any group that threatens western prosperity and control in world affairs. Once ‘they’ were communists, these days ‘they’ are Islamic fundamentalists.

-Noam Chomsky, Interview to BBC, 2003.¹

The United States (U.S.) after defeating Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany in World War II found itself allied with Europe all because of its age old traditions of power and values of economic internationalism, freedom of expression, representative democracy and above all its support for self-determination. The U.S. quickly cultivated a ‘dualistic’ image of world politics, postulating two contrasting views of politico-social life based on Soviet socialism and Western capitalism under its banner. This foreign policy outlook explained the U.S. vision of the international order

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¹ Noam Chomsky, interview by Francine Stock, *Pirates & Emperors*, September 20, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5GqdM35z1Y>.

and its approach towards the ‘evil empire’.² During the Cold War days, American elite discourse was primarily engrossed in using images of savagery to fabricate a ‘Soviet enemy’ and its proxies. The Cold War notion of the ‘clash regime’ is manifested in the Truman Doctrine and its spinoffs; and the ‘clash of civilisation’ thesis in post 9/11 discourse. This article focuses on the U.S.’s practices and ways of acrimonious binary construction of ‘clash regimes’ and ‘truth regimes’, and how it is explained by frequent exercises piloted by state institutions, media, the fields of cultural productions, academic, and political discourses of the elite.³

The discursive mentalities, the power of the presidential office and its associated ‘power to speak’ cannot be brushed aside. According to Foucault, exercising unprecedented power shapes and creates new knowledge and social realities.⁴ Furthermore, ‘clash regimes’ serve the purpose for building the discourses linked with the U.S. role and position in the international arena on the one hand, and of the presidency within the White House on the other.

At the end of the Cold War, the malicious demonising campaign against Muslims using the terms ‘Islamic terrorism’ and ‘Muslim terrorist’ by political figures and spin doctors mastered through the media by making the discursive link between Islam and terrorism, began, giving the impression that Islam is inherently a source of violence and conflict.⁵ Post-9/11 ‘Islamic terrorism’ discourse derives its roots from Western political-cultural discourses including the ‘good war’ narrative during the tussle against fascism, and the deeply entrenched ‘civilisation versus barbarism narrative’⁶, the cult of ‘virtuousness against the “rogue states”’, and the narrative around the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).⁷

Based on the constructivist framework, it is possible to formulate the hypothesis that:

² Ronald Reagan, “Evil Empire Speech” (speech, National Association of Evangelicals, Orlando, March 8, 1983), <http://www.nationalcenter.org/ReaganEvilEmpire1983.html>.

³ David Ryan, “Necessary Construction,” in *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Other*, eds. Michael Patrick Cullinane and David Ryan (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 187.

⁴ Michel Foucault’s ‘Knowledge Power Nexus’ quoted in Michael Patrick Cullinane, “Others Ourselves: The American Identity Crisis after the War of 1898,” in *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Other*, eds. Michael Patrick Cullinane and David Ryan (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 104.

⁵ Richard Jackson, “Constructing Enemies: ‘Islamic Terrorism’ in the Political and Academic Discourse,” *Government and Opposition* 42, no. 3 (2007): 405.

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilisations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations>.

⁷ Jackson, “Constructing Enemies,” 401.

The United States frames an 'enemy' placed in the world system, in order to justify its military campaigns to retain its global hegemon status.

Therefore, as Onuf's speech act theory indicates, the U.S. official discourse strives for a heteronomic nature of relations, in which it plays the role of the dominant power.

Constructivist hybrid Discourse Analysis (DA) has been employed for this analytical study to illustrate and highlight the inter-subjectivity between the written text, spoken word, and context in the formation of social realities. DA is a combination of multiple epistemological strategies of discourse theorising ranging from postmodernist, poststructuralist, and social constructivist in which language as constitutive modality has the role of identifying agents and their position in the international system.

Interpretivist logic has been used in two ways keeping in view the time, scope and limitations of the study. First, the discursive foundations practised by the American elite⁸ have been explored within the context of the Cold War; secondly, spoken and written text has been analysed for the way it is used for social construction and political expedience by the U.S. elite. For the text, official speeches, writings of influential scholars, and classic books have been consulted. Labels, metaphors, assumptions, and inferences employed by authors for narrative building have been discussed. Finally, this article also attempts to provide answers to the following questions: who are 'they'? Why does the America need an enemy? How is an enemy 'framed' by it? What is the relationship between this framed construct and U.S. hegemony?

Theorising Enemy Construction

Discourse exercises 'power' by constraining or enabling world views and actions. Therefore, it is said to be constitutive of social reality by producing resistance or compliance.⁹ Discourse Analysis (DA), in particular, is concerned with power and has roots in 'constructivism' because it is not an impartial device for conveying meanings.¹⁰ Foucault's DA explains how particular discourses 'systematically construct versions of the social

⁸ According to Foucault and Fairclough, discourse is a social practice with a discursive nature. Foucault, in his genealogical work, developed a theory of power/knowledge, which focuses on power instead of treating agents and structures as primary categories.

⁹ Penny Dick, "Discourse Analysis," in *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organisational Research*, eds. Catherine Cassell and Gillian Symon (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), 203-205.

¹⁰ Allan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 529.

world.¹¹ He further adds that actors and identities are subjectively produced through ‘knowing’ and identities initiated through speaking.¹² The power/knowledge nexus of Foucault reveals ‘discursivity patterns’: how language produces knowledge,¹³ and how knowledge serves power.¹⁴

Speech acts are social performances with direct social consequences. The patterns of speech acts and associated performances constitute practices that make the material conditions and artefacts of human experience meaningful, and shape the future against the past.¹⁵ Onuf argues that three types of speech acts create rules for social reality which determine the nature of an agent’s domestic and international policies. When applied to American political discourse during the Cold War and after, these three rules constitute the hegemonic, hierarchic or heteronomous structure of its pre-eminence in the world. These categories for constitutive purposes include *assertive* speech ‘I state that ...’; *directive* speech ‘I request that ...’; and *commissive* speech ‘I promise that...’¹⁶ According to this theory, the use of *assertive* statements, proclamations and descriptions towards the ‘other’ are what create the aura of America’s hegemonic status over any potential enemy.¹⁷ Rules that follow this constructed reality create hegemony. *Directive* speech acts constitute rules that yield a hierarchical structure in an anarchic world where the U.S. sits on the top. It creates a world with dominant versus submissive relations among agents, superpowers and client states. And finally, when *commissive* statements are converted into rules, they reduce the agents’ autonomy and create a structure of heteronomous domination.¹⁸ For example, American administrations in the process of achieving their foreign policy objectives use *commissive* language in their official political discourse.

Speech act constructivists lay overwhelming focus on language that, according to them, constitutes our reality and acts as an instrument to carry

¹¹ Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject* (New York: New York University Press, 1993) quoted in Brian David et al., “Qualitative Research: Discourse Analysis,” *British Medical Journal* 337, no. 7669 (2008): 570.

¹² Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1972), 55. Also see how identities are constructed, Marianne Jorgensen and Louise J. Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 5.

¹³ Dick, “Discourse Analysis,” 203.

¹⁴ Mats Alvesson and Kaj Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research* (London: SAGE Publications, 2000), 227.

¹⁵ Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 183.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁷ Onuf expanded the speech act theory upon the preliminary works of John Austin (1975), and John Searle (1975).

¹⁸ Nicholas G. Onuf, “Constructivism: A User’s Manual,” in *International Relations in a Constructed World*, eds. Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas G. Onuf, and Paul Kowert (New York: Routledge, 1998), 66-69.

out our intentions.¹⁹ By using language, American presidents can assert anything about the world that 'others' [will] accept, and subsequently, the former may demand 'others' to comply. Language constructivists believe that policies are non-existent without words that agents use to characterise them, agents also use rules in the same way as they use policies and commitments to affect 'others' conduct.²⁰

Islamic 'Otherisation' and the Role of Media: Constructing the Enemy Image of Islam

Previous research about enemy images has concluded that the media have a propensity to alter images. As attitudes of the political elite change, the enemy image keeps on evolving with changes in the international system.²¹ Media's discursive strategies are more inclined towards propaganda than to journalism. It is used as medium for disseminating disinformation into the news chain. In the contemporary globalised world, mass media has become more pervasive than ever before and deviated from its primary role – 'to inform, educate, and entertain.'²² During the Cold War, the American media propagated 'malicious generalisations' about Communism, which has now been replaced by Islam. In both cases, the relationship of the media and policy elite can best be understood by President Reagan's famous phrase 'Evil Empire' used in a speech; and the 'Axis of Evil' by President Bush Jr. It became more pronounced in the aftermath of 9/11 when the Bush administration sought to establish secular Ba'asit Saddam's relations with Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda.

After 9/11, the American news media focused less on reporting news and more on highlighting the 'icons of sentimental patriotism' by spreading oversized visuals of American flags behind the U.S. president. A coherent set of journalistic labels was developed about 'Muslim terrorism', 'Islamist militancy', and 'Jihad journalism'. Distorted reporting and biased analysis became the 'hallmark of the post-9/11 era.'²³ Muslims were 'caricatured in

¹⁹ Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas G. Onuf and Paul Kowert, eds., *International Relations in a Constructed World* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 77.

²⁰ Jennifer Sterling-Folker and Dina Badie, "Constructivism," in *Routledge Handbook of American Foreign Policy*, eds. Steven W. Hook and Christopher M. Jones (New York: Routledge, 2012), 111.

²¹ Rune Ottosen, "Enemy Images and the Journalistic Process," *Journal of Peace Research* 32, no. 1 (1995): 97.

²² Faatin Haque and Mahjabeen Khaled Hossain, "Global Media, Islamophobia and its Impact on the Conflict Resolution" (paper, Institute of Hazrat Mohammad (SAW), Dhaka), accessed September 10, 2015, <http://www.ihmsaw.org/resourcefiles/1260034024.pdf>.

²³ Lawrence Pintak, *Reflection in a Bloodshot Lens: America, Islam and the War of Ideas* (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 42-44.

a manner once reserved for Blacks and Hispanics’, maintains David Lamb.²⁴

War is inextricably linked with propaganda to ‘fabricate an enemy.’²⁵ The propaganda machine feeds disinformation into the news circles to construct an ‘official reality’²⁶ by branding terrorist networks as ‘enemies of America.’ After September 9, 2001, CNN, Fox News, and other mainstream print and electronic media networks successfully manufactured an ‘outside enemy’ – bin Laden and transformed him into Enemy Number One posing a threat to the West.²⁷ This consent manufacturing by media developed a *casus belli*, a justification, a political legitimacy for waging a war, frequently conveyed by George Bush Jr. in his speeches expressing unilateralist pre-emption in sugar coated words like ‘defensive war’, ‘a war to protect freedom.’²⁸

The campaign against Muslims was carried out quite vigorously not only internationally, but also at home by using anti-Muslim propaganda campaigns to shape public opinion and conceived discourses for political expedience. In February 2012, the *Think Progress* website issued a study that underlined specific methods that Fox News used to manipulate language to pre-set results, or in various cases, state unambiguously, that ‘Muslims and Islam are to be feared.’ Using three months’ data gathered from numerous television programmes from November 2010 to January 2011 showed how the network (Fox) disproportionately developed terms that portrayed a negative image of Muslims, more so than by its competitors. For example, the channel used the term ‘Shria’ 58 times over a three month period; whereas CNN 28 times; MSNBC 19 times. Similarly, its hosts brought up the phrases ‘radical Islam’ or ‘Islamic terrorism’ or ‘extremist Islam’ 107 times in three months, while CNN used the terms 78 times, and MSNBC only 24 times. It used the word *Jihad* 65 times; CNN 57 and MSNBC used it 13 times.²⁹

²⁴ Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills, “Discourses of Dehumanization: Enemy Construction and Canadian Media Complicity in the Framing of War on Terror,” *Global Media Journal* 2, no. 2 (2009): 10-12, http://www.gmj.uottawa.ca/0902/v2i2_steuter%20and%20wills.pdf.

²⁵ Michel Chossudovsky, *America’s War on Terrorism* (Canada: Global Research, 2005), 151.

²⁶ Chaim Kupferberg, “The Mystery Surrounding the Death of John O’ Neil: The Propaganda Preparation for 9/11,” Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), June 13, 2002, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/article/Kup206A.html>.

²⁷ Chossudovsky, *America’s War on Terrorism*, 151.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 156. Also see White House, “President Bush Calls on Congress to Act on Nation’s Priorities,” (speech, Army National Guard Aviation Support Facility, Trenton, September, 23, 2002), <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020923-2.html>.

²⁹ Alex Seitz-Wald, “Fox News Watchers consistently more likely to have Negative Views of Muslims,” *ThinkProgress.org*, February 16, 2011, <https://thinkprogress.org/fox-news-watchers-consistently-more-likely-to-have-negative-views-of-muslims-60a0947218dc#.50>

This is how the media helped the American political elite and interest groups construct an outside enemy to keep their military industrial complex flourishing and taming likely threats to preserve the their hegemonic status in the global political and economic order.

Discursive Foundations of 'They'

Discourse necessitates the power to describe, to spread and preserve ideological differences relative to others, to galvanise public support, and to create a 'sphere of discourse,' or what Foucault calls the 'regime of truth - types of discourses it accepts and makes function as true.' This involves enabling these speeches and proclamations to look true, including how they are authorised; and the 'status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.'³⁰

The thesis of 'American exceptionalism' and 'manifest destiny', that holds that the country is a special case with unmatched expanded reach, is deeply entrenched in the thinking of its foreign policy elite.³¹ This belief requires United States to assume the lead role in global affairs because of having liberty and democracy at home. The wider political spectrum of American polity seems to be steered by Alfred Thayer Mahan, who once advised Americans to align themselves with the Western civilisation by tracing their roots to the European continent.³² This strengthened a broader narrative centred on the confrontation between a 'civilised Anglo-Saxon West' as the truth regime and a 'savage barbarian other' under the clash regime.'³³

After World War II, the European alliance with the U.S. is evident under the broader banner of Western civilisation. During the Cold War, the notion of a 'clash regime' was manifested in the Truman Doctrine and its spinoffs, and subsequently in the 'clash of civilisation' and post 9/11 discourse.

The discursive mentalities, the power of the presidential office and its associated 'power to speak' cannot be brushed aside. According to Foucault, exercising unprecedented power shapes and creates new

ptkbq6u. Also see for details about the role of media in promoting Islamophobia, Nathan Lean, *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 69.

³⁰ Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, *A Metahistory of the Clash of Civilisations: Us and Them Beyond Orientalism* (London: Hurst and Company, 2011), 5-6.

³¹ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalisation or Empire?* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 123.

³² Marco Mariano, "Identity, Alterity, and the 'Growing Plant' of Monroeism in U.S. Foreign Policy Ideology," in *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Other*, ed. Michael Patrick Cullinane and David Ryan (New York; Berghahn Books, 2015), 66.

³³ *Ibid.*

realities.³⁴ Furthermore, ‘clash regimes’ serve the purpose for building the discourses linked with the American role and position in the international arena, on the one hand, and of the presidency in the White House, on the other.

As discussed earlier, the use of the term ‘Islamic terrorism’ by political figures and spin doctors mastered through media tools has been making the linkage between Islam and terrorism, giving the impression that Islam is inherently a source of violence.³⁵ President Bush’s ‘Axis of Evil’ speech in case of Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction profusely justified pre-emptive war against countries like Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. The branding of ‘Axis of Evil’ by the highest authority projected by a mind numbing media blitz created then (as it does even now) an environment of fear, which mobilises strong American patriotism and unconditional support for the state and its political and military elite.

While setting a new narrative of the Muslim ‘other’, a series of labels are used for like Islamic world, the West, Islamic revival, political Islam, Islamism, extremism, radicalism, fundamentalism, religious terrorism, *jihadists*, Wahhabis, militants, moderates, global *jihadist* movements, and, Islamic terrorism.³⁶ Additionally, this branding was (and continues to be) arranged in opposite binaries like the West versus the Rest; militant versus civilian; democratic versus totalitarian; and brutal versus civilised.³⁷ These labels enable nations to conceptualise their existence through the prism of what they are not. This novel way of identity formation is matchable to the Hegelian ‘*Master Slave Dialect*’. The identity of the slave and master is completely interdependent.³⁸

Necessary Constructions: The ‘Other’ in the Cold War and After

Washington’s enemy is ‘that does not exist,’ we are fighting an Islamic enemy that Washington believes is out to kill us because we are free, because we have freedom, we have elections, because we have women in the workplace. It’s an enemy that does not exist, it did not exist when bin Laden was alive, and it does not exist now. America is being attacked because of its foreign policy towards the Muslim world.

- Michael Scheuer³⁹

³⁴ Foucault’s “Knowledge Power Nexus” quoted in Cullinane, “Others Ourselves: The American Identity Crisis after the War of 1898.”

³⁵ Jackson, “Constructing Enemies,” 405.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 402.

³⁸ Cullinane, “Others Ourselves,” 104.

³⁹ Michael Scheuer, interview by Gayane Chichakyan, *Ex-CIA Agent: America Creates its Own Enemies*, November 13, 2011,

After the tragic attacks of 9/11, for purposeful binary construction, President Bush chronicled in his diary that 'The Pearl Harbour of 21st Century took place today.'⁴⁰ In the coming days, he would replicate the event. The use of these infamous words echoed in American culture and shaped the context, emotions and intents. Two months after September 11, he used the word 'Holocaust', and in January 2002 he coined 'Axis of Evil' and termed Iraq, North Korea, and Iran – the rogue states posing a threat to U.S. homeland security.⁴¹ The binary construction formula of the Cold War was still relevant for crafting a 'good war' to cast the new crisis in an old packaging, argues John Dower.⁴²

In 1983, when the Cold War was in full swing, President Ronald Reagan's famous 'Evil Empire' speech denounced the Soviet Union:

Let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.⁴³

After the departure of former Soviet Union from the world scene, there was an anxious sense of indirection in the early years of Bush Sr. The Secretary of State James Baker acknowledged the end of an era leaving U.S. foreign policy, directionless.⁴⁴

In 1989, the former head of the policy planning staff, Francis Fukuyama, introduced his landmark 'End of History' thesis heralding the triumph of idealism and liberal democratic capitalism. But, this did not give the American foreign policy elite any future options. Then came Samuel P. Huntington's much cited 'Clash of Civilisation' thesis that had greater appeal for cultural discourse. It was significant not only in terms of its timing, but also for the craving to find direction and purpose, to frame a new identity, and to form a 'new enemy other' around which the American identity and strategic interests could be rallied.⁴⁵ The thesis was owned by the institutions and individuals accustomed with the Cold War discourse and years of enculturation into the national security sermons on a global scale.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLjZoA3GaVE>.

⁴⁰ George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (London: Virgin Books, 2010), 126-149.

⁴¹ Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack: The Definitive Account of the Decision to Invade Iraq* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 24.

⁴² John W. Dower, *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbour/ Hiroshima/ 9-11 /Iraq* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 10.

⁴³ Reagan, "Evil Empire Speech."

⁴⁴ Ryan, "Necessary Construction," 198.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

Huntington's theory propagated the notion that 'Fault lines between the civilisations will be the battle lines of the future.'⁴⁶ The Cold War would be replaced by another war of cultural divisions between 'Europe and Western Christianity on the one hand, and orthodox Christianity and Islam on the other.' It is noteworthy that, after WWII, the U.S. had aligned itself with the European 'Christian' nations; and created a dual image where USSR was the 'other'. Gearóid Ó Tuathail (Gerard Toal) proved that such discursivity, though inescapably textual, 'promotes a special way of thinking that arranges different actors, elements and locations simultaneously on a global chessboard.'⁴⁷

Unquestionably, the embryonic discourse on the *clash between Islam and the West* has reverberated throughout, especially since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, resultant hostage crisis, and Western media portrayals of Islamic terrorism. The reductionist orientalist reduced the 'West against the Rest' view of "a Western 'here' and a Rest 'over there' to more precisely a clash between an 'us' and 'them'".⁴⁸ Orientalists were spot on because Huntington had borrowed this idea from Bernard Lewis's *Roots of Muslim Rage* based on the assumption that there is an 'unchangeable character of the duality between 'us' and 'them'.⁴⁹ Ultimately, Huntington's thesis formed another bipolar description of the world that resonated in the aftermath of 9/11; and all because the USSR had retreated – and it was time to think about 'another', so why not 'revolutionary Islamism?'

After 9/11, when President Bush asked, 'Why do they hate us?' and himself answered that 'because we have freedom of expression, freedom of speech, women at work, and freedom of vote, and democracy that is why they hate us'⁵⁰, it was an effort to brand Muslims as savages because the perpetrators had come from Muslim lands and to steer public opinion to an imaginary enemy like the Taliban (or Al-Qaeda). On the other hand, John Mearsheimer, a renowned U.S. realist scholar, responds that – 'they hate us' because of our [U.S.] foreign policies, not because of who we are.⁵¹ In

⁴⁶ Huntington, "The Clash of Civilisations?"

⁴⁷ Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Thinking Critically about Geopolitics," in *The Geopolitics Reader*, ed. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge (London: Routledge, 1998), 1.

⁴⁸ Edward W. Said, "The Clash of Definitions," in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 577.

⁴⁹ Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *Atlantic* 266, no. 3 (1990), <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/issues/90sep/rage.htm>.

⁵⁰ White House, "Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress," in *Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush: 2001-2008* (U.S. Government, 2001), https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf.

⁵¹ John Mearsheimer, *Imperial by Design* (Washington, D.C.: National Interest inc., 2011), <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0059.pdf>.

reality, the Taliban in Afghanistan had preferred the Argentinian company Bridas Corporation over the American company Unocal⁵² for a gas pipeline contract; and hence, regime change in Afghanistan was sought by the neocons for their personal gains which were aligned with American national interests by breaking the Russian monopoly over energy pipelines in the Caspian region.⁵³

The choice of words by world leaders, however, unavoidably constituted the Muslim as a mysteriously ominous bogeyman who would 'follow us home' unless American dealt with it iron fisted.⁵⁴ This 'ruthless Islamic enemy', to sanction U.S. aggression' was exhibited in countless speeches and talks by former Vice President Dick Cheney and by President Bush Jr. himself. Bush warned American people and the Congress, 'If we fail in Iraq, the enemy will follow us home.' This fear inducement resulted in more finances for the war machine.⁵⁵ Dick Cheney, while speaking to the U.S. Israel Public Affairs Committee in 2007, used many labels to malign Islam:

We are prime targets of a terror movement that is global in nature and, yes, global in its ambitions. The leaders of this movement speak openly and specifically of building a totalitarian empire covering the Middle East, extending into Europe and reaching across to the islands of Indonesia, one that would impose a narrow, radical version of Islam that rejects tolerance, suppresses dissent, brutalises women and has as one of its foremost objectives, the destruction of Israel.⁵⁶

Almost similar views were shared by Mitt Romney, former presidential candidate, when he launched a media campaign against Muslims and Islam. According to him 'violent radicals' wanted to topple moderate governments of Islamic states. For doing so Shias and Sunnies both rallied around Hamas, Hezbollah, Muslim Brotherhood and Al-

⁵² Union Oil Company of California.

⁵³ Chossudovsky, *America's War on Terrorism*, 72-76.

⁵⁴ White House, "President Bush Discusses Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, War on Terror at American Legion" (speech, American Legion Washington, D.C., March 6, 2007), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/03/20070306-1.html>. Also see for details how malicious campaigns against Muslims and Islam are launched in the media for political expedience. John L. Esposito and Ibrahim Kalim, eds., *Islamophobia: The Challenge of Pluralism in 21st Century* (New York: Oxford Press, 2011).

⁵⁵ Esposito and Kalim, *Islamophobia: The Challenge of Pluralism*.

⁵⁶ White House, "Vice President's Remarks at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee 2007 Policy Conference," (speech, Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C., March 12, 2007), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/03/20070312.html>.

Qaeda.⁵⁷ Arizona Senator, John McCain, even ascribed his run for the presidential office to his apprehensions about ‘radical Islamic extremism’ which he termed the burgeoning challenge faced by America in the Twenty-First Century.⁵⁸

Former Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld expressed his concerns about the emerging threat of ‘zealots and despots’ more grave than the U.S. assumptions.⁵⁹ Francis Fukuyama outlined that, ‘Radical Islam can’t beat democracy and capitalism, and we are still at the end of history.’ By declaring so, Fukuyama broadened the spectrum of the threat enculturation by urging the West to pose a united front against the rival civilisation.⁶⁰ To a great extent, he validates the Clash of Civilisation hypothesis by arguing that ‘the successful attack on the centre of global capitalism was evidently perpetrated by Islamic extremists unhappy with the very existence of Western civilisation.’⁶¹

The use of this phraseology by American leaders and scholars depicts the efforts for fabricating an enemy and laying the grounds for its aggression and interventions on the soils which are a source of stupendous geopolitical and geostrategic interest to them. Without having an ‘outside enemy’, the U.S. would find it very hard to expand and retain its global hegemonic position.

Non-Democratic ‘Other’ in the Twenty First Century

Promotion of democracy abroad has been the cornerstone of American foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. After removing USSR from the scene, the U.S. extended liberal economic reforms to former Soviet countries under the overarching political ideology of democracy.⁶² These efforts mirrored the same approach employed by them after WWII when it bailed out war-torn European economies and helped them under the ‘Marshall Plan’. This very financial assistance in the post-WWII international political landscape gave the U.S. legitimate access to the

⁵⁷ “DNC: Romney’s ‘Jihad’ Ad Show Lack of Foreign Policy Credentials,” *PR Newswire*, October 12, 2007, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/dnc-romneys-jihad-ad-shows-lack-of-foreign-policy-credentials-58539917.html>.

⁵⁸ John McCain and E. J. Dionne Jr., “A ‘Challenge’ Worth Challenging,” *Washington Post*, February 19, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/18/AR2008021801537.html>.

⁵⁹ Robert Spencer, “Rumsfeld Fears Losing War on Islamic Extremism,” *Jihad Watch*, June 6, 2004, <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2004/06/rumsfeld-fears-losing-war-on-islamic-extremism>.

⁶⁰ Francis Fukuyama, “The West has Won,” *Guardian*, October 11, 2001, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/oct/11/afghanistan.terrorism30>.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, (U.S. Government, 1993), <http://nssarchive.us/national-security-strategy-1993/>.

European continent that later on resulted in the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In case of Central Asian Republics and Eastern European nations, America wanted to remove all sorts of leverages which potentially Russia could have enjoyed.

Democracy to Americans has a definition that suits them, and its promotional practices are not universal either. They cherry pick and demonise *others* where they have strategic interests. The Middle Eastern region is another example of double standards. President Bush in his famous 'Axis of Evil' speech and President Reagan's famous 'Evil Empire' speech denounced 'rogue states' who suppress the liberties of their citizens and deny political and individual rights. But two of the three rogue states lay in the region which is a source of strategic wealth [oil] and one of the greatest material prizes for the U.S. in the world. The Bush administration rooted the War on Terror in the larger 'freedom agenda'⁶³ after having the self-serving realisation that only democracy can transform hatred and resentment into decency and tolerance.⁶⁴ While explaining the Iraq War as a 'Just War', he [Bush] stated, 'I don't expect Thomas Jefferson to come out of this, but I believe people will be free.'⁶⁵ This is a glaring example of 'American exceptionalism' that grants the U.S. a self-styled and self-righteous position as a leader of the free world. John Mearsheimer criticised Bush's Freedom Agenda calling it an 'epic manifestation of speeding up of the Fukuyama process on a rifle barrel.' He writes that both liberals and neocons share a consensus on the democratic agenda as this serves American geopolitical designs.⁶⁶ Ikenberry and Smith argue that since interventionism in the name of democracy serves them in world affairs, it has been a core theme of both liberals and democrats in their foreign policy discourses.⁶⁷ In accordance to the realist dictums, American military interests prevail over democratic ideology. It is rather ironic that American interventions do not promote democracy, rather often become the cause of reversing it.⁶⁸ The Iraq War is viewed with scepticism as hegemonic interventionism with the iron fist of the military industrial complex.⁶⁹

⁶³ Thomas Carothers, *U.S. Democracy Promotion During and After Bush*, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007), http://carnegieendowment.org/files/democracy_promotion_after_bush_final.pdf.

⁶⁴ George W. Bush has discussed at length his Freedom Agenda in his book *Decision Points*.

⁶⁵ Michael H. Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance* (University of Carolina Press, 2009), 279.

⁶⁶ Mearsheimer, *Imperial by Design*.

⁶⁷ Michael Cox, John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, introduction to *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 15-17.

⁶⁸ David P. Forsythe, "Democracy, War, and Covert Action," *Journal of Peace Research* 29, 4 (1992): 388-389.

⁶⁹ Carothers, *U.S. Democracy Promotion During and After Bush*.

In case of Russia, from Serbia to Georgia – Washington sponsored colour revolutions with support of non-government organisations like the Rockefeller Foundation, Freedom House and Open Society of George Soros, raised eyebrows of many. Michel Chossudovsky recorded that democracy promotion in a number of countries like Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Tibet, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Belarus, as well as Serbia were forced towards regime change to control Russia under American-sponsored colour revolutions.⁷⁰ Countries are carefully selected, for so-called democratisation, that lie proximal or parallel to America's geostrategic interests. Evidently, the country has a history of being at ease while dealing with dictators and monarchs, its sugar coated democracy promotion rhetoric driven by its strategic interests and its position in the international system.

Conclusion

Since WWII, United States' foreign policy has been driven by the *outside enemy* signposts. Through elite discourse, America sets its image relative to others – creating an unchangeable conceptual duality of 'us' and 'them'. Its presidents, during the Cold War, through the 'power to speak' associated with the presidency allied the U.S. with Europe and constructed the Soviet 'other' for domestic cohesion and mobilisation to engage in the world. Presidents used language for binary construction of *official social realities* and urged Americans to search for the monsters to destroy abroad. Communism was maliciously demonised for being an 'evil' ideology with their own democracy touted as a 'good' ideology; socialism was projected as the *problematic other* versus capitalist *decency*. To keep its imperial reach intact and its war machine production going, America needed a new enemy, a new 'other'. Therefore, the ideological basis has now changed with culture and civilisation based 'otherisation' developed by Samuel P. Huntington. Muslims have now been fabricated as the new enemy by portraying imaginary fault lines between Christian Western civilisation and the Islamic civilisation, bringing in another bipolar depiction of the world. ■

⁷⁰ For more details about U.S. staged coups and use of NGOs for geopolitical and geostrategic interests on a global level and about pipeline politics, see F. William Engdahl, *Full Spectrum Dominance: Totalitarian Democracy in The New World Order* (Baton Rouge: Third Millennium Press: 2009), 41-43.