Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat

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There is something very characteristic of the indifference which we show towards this mighty phenomenon of the diffusion of our race and the expansion of our state. We seem, as it were, to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind. . . . We constantly betray by our modes of speech that we do not reckon our colonies as really belonging to us.

———J. R. Seeley (1883:8)

And finally, be straight with the American people. Tell them the truth—and when you cannot tell them something, tell them you cannot tell them.

———Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. Secretary of Defense (2002:32)

IMPERIAL AMNESIA

In 1982, Eric Wolf published *Europe and the People Without History* to identify and begin rectifying large gaps in anthropological knowledge. That project remains unfinished. In the past year,[1] since September 11, 2001, the necessity of filling in some of these gaps has become urgent. The history of relations between Western powers and transnational Muslim societies in the Indian Ocean is one of them.[2] An anthropologically nuanced understanding of such societies as diasporas, thought in tandem with their continued relations with Western empires over five hundred years, lends a useful perspective on a set of conflicts which is massively unfolding. Threatening to become a self-fulfilling prophe-

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[1] This essay was substantially completed in September 2002. Revisions in preparation for publication a year later were kept to a minimum, in order to preserve for the reader a sense of temporal location and orientation.

[2] Of the European traditions, Dutch scholarship has retained the greatest awareness of this issue over the past century, and a number of individual Dutch scholars continue to be proficient in the regional languages, such as both Arabic and Malay, today (van den Berg 1886; Hurgronje 1906; 1931; van der Meulen and von Wissman 1932; van Leur 1955; Schrieke 1960; Meilink-Roelofsz 1962; van Bruinessen 1995; Kaptein 1997).

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cy of a clash of civilizations (Huntington 1993) in popular discourse and political decision-making, a phenomenon on this horrendous scale remains within the purview of anthropologists if one sees it as an instance of culture contact under conditions of global imperialism, unmitigated by colonial administration.[3]

The distinction between imperialism and colonialism is critical. Talal Asad's *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (1973) launched anthropology on an auto-critique by noting that its quiet field sites were fields of colonial power, and its practitioners members of colonizing societies.[4] Colonialism refers to foreign presence in, possession of, and domination over bounded, local places. Today, the multi-sited ethnographies we increasingly pursue need to be analytically framed within a field of power which is transnational. The term imperialism refers to foreign domination, without the necessity of presence or possession, over expansive, transnational spaces—and many places.[5] Within the purview of U.S. power, then, the appropriate term for this frame is not post-colonialism, but ongoing imperialism. The time may soon be upon us for a sequel to Asad's volume, now trained on American anthropology and the *imperial* encounter. While the terms globalization, neo-liberalism, and late-liberalism may have been productive in probing the complexities of consent to contemporary transnational hegemony, they have been less attentive to its classical twin, coercion. While colonialism may be the past of British and French anthropology, imperialism is the long present of the American one. Thus the sense of urgency, again (Hymes 1999[1969]).

In what follows, I look at a series of contacts between Western empires and Muslim societies through the eyes of a Muslim diaspora, as it were, a mobile people with a written history. The review suggests that what is new to this history is the unique nature of American power worldwide. In its global reach it is imperial, but in its disavowal of administration on the ground, it is anti-colonial. Decoupling the concept of colonialism from that of imperialism is a necessary step in thinking about this new mode of domination, and it is a task this essay sets for itself.

[3] In his book which elaborated on the provocative thesis of his original 1993 essay, Huntington noted that the question mark in the essay title had been generally ignored (1997:13).

[4] Some of them were also imperial powers, such as Britain and France, while others, such as Belgium, were not. Connections among colonies, and between metropole and colonies within an empire were not anthropological topics when Asad launched his critique.

[5] The idea of foreignness often remains unremarked upon in these contexts. Hawaii is no longer considered a colony or imperial outpost because the foreign U.S. government assimilated Hawaii's native, Asian, and creole populations into its constitutional structure by fiat, thereby making itself not foreign. In contrast, creole Eurasian populations of *burgers* and *Indos* could not brush off the taint of foreignness in independent Sri Lanka and Indonesia, and mostly left after decolonization, despite centuries of local residence and intermarriage. Whether or not cultural identity and historical process matter are often incredibly simple decisions of state.

OCEANIC INTIMATES

For some years, I have been studying a diaspora of Arabs from Hadramawt, Yemen, across the Indian Ocean. In September 2001, I was reviewing British colonial files from the time of World War I and after, in which correspondence was taking place among British officials in Cairo, Jedda, Aden, Mukalla, Simla, Singapore, and Batavia discussing the movements and activities of Hadrami Arabs in these locations. The officials were concerned to distinguish Hadrami Arabs who were on their side from those aligned with their rivals: the Germans, the Italians, the Ottoman Turks, and Muslims agitating for a pan-Islamic Caliphate in South and Southeast Asia. Good Arabs were major landlords in Singapore, religious bureaucrats in Malaya, businessmen in Batavia, sultans in British southern Arabia, enthusiasts of T. E. Lawrence's pro-Sharif policy in Arabia—many loyal British subjects. Bad Arabs were pan-Islamic Caliphate agitators in Java, India, and Ceylon; Ottoman agents in British southern Arabia; Italian ones in Ethiopia and Somalia; fundraisers for the Yemeni Imam among wealthy, diasporic Hadramis in Singapore and Java. Good and bad Arabs were sometimes from the same far-flung Hadrami families, or even the same persons, appearing in different colonial files. The inter-colonial correspondence was important to formulating policy in two arenas: restricting travel for marked individuals across the Indian Ocean, and propaganda interventions in the newly international European and Arab presses. British officials needed to consult their counterparts in colonies elsewhere to cross-check information they were being fed by their Hadrami informers, who were themselves partisans in internal Hadrami disputes manipulating British fears for their own ends.[6] In the arc of coasts around the Indian Ocean, the British and the Hadrami Arabs were everywhere, and everywhere overlapping. A diaspora and an empire were locked in a tight embrace of intimacy and treachery, a relationship of mutual benefit, attraction, and aversion.

When the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were hit on September 11, my train of thought jumped tracks. The British were immediately supplanted by the Americans, while the Hadrami diaspora remained. In particular, the dual aspect of Usama bin Ladin locked the pair of Western empire and Hadrami diaspora in place for me: he is at once a figure of revulsion and familiarity. His family, Hadrami owners of the largest Saudi construction conglomerate, are on

[6] Here is an example, from the India Office in London (responsible for India, Aden, Mukalla) to the Foreign Office (responsible for the Batavia consul): "I am to suggest that Mr. Beckett should be informed that the inhabitants of the Hadramawt are not Turkish subjects, and that all Arabs desiring to proceed from Java to that region must land at Aden first. He might at the same time be asked whether he can explain the sudden desire of these men to return to Arabia. Viscount Grey is aware that the Turkish commander at Lahej, Said Pasha, has been intriguing actively in the Hadramawt and that there is much pan-Islamic propaganda in the Dutch East Indies." ("Hadramawt Arabs Proceeding from Batavia (Dutch East Indies) to Mukalla (Hadramawt, Yemen)," FO371/2781, Public Records Office, Great Britain).

close terms with the ruling Saudi royal family,[7] and familiar terms with the Bush presidential family.[8] Bin Ladin visiting professorships are endowed at Oxford, and fellowships at Harvard. As events unfolded after September 11, the peculiar mix of intimacy and treachery I had observed between British empire and Hadrami diaspora continued to present itself to my eyes. Brzezinski's jihad trap for the Soviets in Afghanistan had come home to roost ("We now have the opportunity of giving to the U.S.S.R its Vietnam war.")[9]; Americans were now bombing bases and fortified cave complexes they had built in that country partly with Bin Ladin Group construction equipment. A succession of such observations made it clear to me that this whole tangled mess could be thought of productively in terms of a long-standing historical relationship between empire and diaspora. In contrast, globalization, poverty, and Islam vs. the West were floating concepts too distant from the ground of events. In Washington's eyes, the impassive face of evil transmogrified from Brezhnev's to bin Ladin's. How did communism and Islamism become interchangeable? Why were attacks on American interests arrayed around the Indian Ocean? The questions made me rethink my thoughts on empire and diaspora, and I did so by revisiting material on the history of relations between the two in the Indian Ocean. This essay presents the results of that investigation. It is a view of the imperial ship of state as seen from a smaller boat sailing the same seas.[10]

UNIVERSALIZING DIASPORAS

Twenty years ago, the word Diaspora referred to Jews, and was spelled with a capital D. The more general meaning is of a people who were originally ho-

[7] Usama's father Muhammad b. ʿAwad bin Ladin started off sitting close to the king at his audience, and being attentive to royal needs. He built a special external ramp for a debilitated King ʿAbd al-ʿAziz up to his bedroom, and was entrusted with the construction of royal palaces. Royal favor led to huge contracts for rebuilding the major religious sites of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, and the Bin Ladin Group became the largest construction company in the country on the back of the oil boom. Muhammad underwrote government salaries for a few months when King Faysal ascended the throne under difficult circumstances, and a number of Saudi princes got their start in business under bin Ladin tutelage. The bin Ladins are part of a broader phenomenon of Hadramis who reached the pinnacle of Saudi society and from there consorted with Texan politician-businessmen-oil elites in companies such as Arbusto, Harken, and Carlyle, extending the Saudi princely treatment to their sons.

[8] "Feds Investigate Entrepreneur Allegedly Tied to Saudis," *Houston Chronicle*, 4 June 1992; "Bin Laden Family Could Profit From a Jump in Defense Spending Due to Ties to U.S. Bank," *Wall Street Journal*, 27 Sept. 2001; "Bush y Bin Laden, socios en los negocios y amigos íntimos," *Sodepaz*, 29 Sept. 2001; "A Strange Intersection of Bushes, bin Ladins," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 12 Nov. 2001; "Republican-controlled Carlyle Group Poses Serious Ethical Questions for Bush Presidents," *Baltimore Chronicle*, 1 Oct. 2001.

[9] Interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski in *Le Nouvel Observateur* (France), 15–21 Jan. 1998, p. 76. Revising official U.S. accounts of Soviet aggression, the former national security advisor to then-President Carter now claims to have lured the Soviets into Afghanistan and directly caused their demise through imperial overreach. For this, the resulting creation of an armed Islamist movement like the Taliban is a small price to pay, he says.

[10] Bernard Cohn once called the imperial point of view the "view from the boat." There were other boats as well.

mogeneous, then became mobile.[11] Today, almost every ethnic group, country, or separatist movement has its diaspora. This is a notion of diaspora as a particularistic form of sociality. Let us call it the Jewish model—the notion of a people who were originally homogeneous, then moved.[12] There has been an explosion of such diasporas.

There is another way of thinking about diasporas, however, by reversing the terms—meaning peoples who moved, and as they did so became homogenized politically. Let us call this the British model. Recent work by British historians, such as David Armitage (2000), argues that after the union of the Scottish and English crowns in 1707, a coherent notion of Britishness grew up across the Atlantic, and was expressed most strongly first away from the homeland. Abroad, the notion of Britishness was understood in terms of belonging to an empire, a British empire. The concepts which informed this notion of empire—that it was commercial, maritime, Protestant, and free—were also concepts fundamental to the self-understanding of Britain as a nation, forged in warfare (Colley 1992).[13] The notion of a British empire abroad was central to bringing together the disparate groups and kingdoms of the homeland. If we think of the empire as a diaspora, then Scots, Irish, and Englishmen came to think of themselves as commonly British as they became mobile. They moved, and only then became homogeneous.

This British model understands diaspora as a composite. Mobility is a process which reshapes the basic units of sociality. The British became an imperial people—that is to say, they became *a people* as they became *an empire*: Britannia ruled the waves. In the concatenation of a people and an empire, the British model of diaspora became a powerful one. Britishers do not land on the shores of other people's states to become ethnic minorities and particularistic lobbies. They create states: the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa. When the ancient Greeks emigrated, they ipso facto left the polis city-state; when British people emigrated, they took the state with them (Arendt 1979:126–28; Seeley 1883:41). There are very few such diasporas, for obvious reasons. In their very success, such diasporas may also take on universalist ambitions, accommodate other peoples, and become hard to identify as diasporas. The British overseas, even after severing ties with the motherland, continued seeing themselves in very similar ways across their diasporic range. Specifically, their loyalties came to cluster around institutions, such as private

[11] See "Diaspora" entry in the *American Heritage Dictionary* (Morris 1980).

[12] I adopt this definitional schematism here because I am interested not in the question of origins nor in a narrow conception of ethnicity, but in outcomes, wherever they lead. Erich Auerbach, for example, argues that a particularly Jewish tradition was made universally embraceable as Christianity in the hands of Saint Paul (1959).

[13] Seeley's (1883) emphasis on the formative influence of eighteenth-century British-French rivalry informs innovative new work linking the internal and external dimensions of British history among Cambridge historians today.

property, free trade, Protestantism, a yeoman right to bear arms, equal access to law. While all this was seen as coming out of the tradition of the Freeborn Englishman, the elaboration of the tradition in this range of institutions ultimately served to deracinate it, and open up countries dominated by the British diaspora, such as the United States, to Germans, Italians, and non-Europeans as well, over time.[14]

The British model is good to think with, because the Hadrami diaspora is akin to it in being a composite. Over the past half-millennium, there has been a continuous and vigorous movement of persons from Hadramawt to destinations throughout the Indian Ocean: East Africa, western India, the islands of Southeast Asia (Dale 1997; Freitag and Clarence-Smith 1997; Ho 2001; 2002a; 2002b; de Jonge and Kaptein 2002; Mandal 1997; Martin 1971; Serjeant 1987; Van den Berg 1887). They are part of a broader flow of persons from Arabia and Persia, but a continuously visible part. The travellers are almost invariably men,[15] and they marry local women where they land. The offspring of such unions may assimilate into local society. But often they retain a mixed, creole identity and form whole new third communities, which are understood to be partly Arab, partly local, and fully Muslim. The Swahilis of East Africa and Mappilas of Malabar are thought to be such peoples. Before the twentieth century, most of the mobile Arabs from Hadramawt who were readily identifiable were descendants of the Muslim prophet Muhammad. Their movement became identified with a missionary purpose, of spreading the religion.

Thus, while the British diaspora took the form of an empire, the Hadrami diaspora took the form of a religious mission. In this, the Hadrami diaspora had vastly greater universalist ambitions than did the British. It brought together not just peoples from the homeland, but peoples in destinations throughout the Indian Ocean as well. Here, Hadramis played a major role in the expansion of Islam (al-Ḥaddād 1971; bin Shihāb al-ʿAlawī al-Ḥaḍramī 1971), and conversion stories in the region often begin with the arrival of a Hadrami religious figure (Tāj al-Dīn 1982). In their marriages with local women, Hadramis and their offspring became Swahilis, Gujaratis, Malabaris, Malays, Javanese, Filipinos.

[14] New positions proposing minority group rights are being carved out in liberal philosophy, which has been individualist since the late eighteenth century. Led by Canadian philosophers such as Charles Taylor (1992) and Will Kymlicka (1995a; 1995b), they are vigorously discussed in other Anglo colonies such as Australia and the United States, and are part of the ongoing "multicultural" deracination of those countries and their dominant British diasporas. Liberalism as a unified political and economic doctrine finds its classic formulation in Adam Smith as an expressly anti-imperialist position. Free men and free trade would create the wealth of nations on more secure and moral foundations than the un-free men (slavery) and un-free trade (mercantilism) of the first British empire of the Americas. Thought of as an anti-monopolist position in politics and economics, liberalism's contemporary extension into culture, such as Taylor's politics of cultural recognition, is not an impossible stretch. It marks a late transformation of the expansive British diaspora into a universalizing constitutionalism, now embracing all cultural comers.

[15] As recorded in the literature, although there were exceptions (al-Saqqāf n.d.; Ho 1997).

They became natives everywhere.[16] At the same time, the men and their offspring continued to move throughout this oceanic space, for reasons of trade, study, family, pilgrimage, and politics (Ho 1997). Throughout this space, a Hadrami could travel and be put up by relatives, who might be Arab uncles married to foreign, local aunts. Many men had wives in each port. In the arc of coasts around the Indian Ocean, then, a skein of networks arose in which people socialized with distant foreigners as kinsmen and as Muslims. Like the British model, movement in the Hadrami diaspora brought together hitherto separated peoples, though not in an empire, but in a religion instead. Like the Jewish model, they began as a homogeneous diaspora, but like the British, they ended up a composite.

By religion, I mean not only a spiritual space, but a civil and political one as well. As the bearers of Islamic knowledge and prestige, Hadramis were everywhere potential creators of public spaces and institutions such as mosques, courts, schools, and pilgrimage shrines. Thus, in Muslim states undergoing expansion, one witnesses the arrival of Hadrami religious figures, who often marry local princesses. Such alliances connected obscure backwaters to the transregional networks of the Indian Ocean, and were sought after by both local potentates and diasporic Hadramis. From being religious creators of public institutions, some of the Hadramis became rulers of states in their own right (Ho 2001; 2002b). Muslim Mindanao in the present-day Philippines from the fifteenth century, the Comoros Islands in East Africa and Aceh in Sumatra from the seventeenth century, Pontianak and Siak in Borneo and Sumatra from the eighteenth, Perlis in Malaya from the twentieth century to the present—all have had Hadrami sultans. As people who maintained communications with relatives in foreign countries over centuries, Hadramis were very useful as diplomats in their countries of domicile. For example, the separation of British Malaya from Dutch Indonesia (enduring as the sovereign states Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore today) in 1824, which drew the border down the Straits of Melaka and through the Riau islands, was brokered by Hadrami diplomats who were married into ruling families on all sides (Ho 2002a). Today, they remain in the public light: the current foreign minister of Malaysia Syed Hamid Albar is of Hadrami descent, as are his two previous counterparts in Indonesia, Ali Alatas and Alwi Shihab. So are the king of Malaysia and the prime minister of independent Timor, Mari Alkatiri. Like that of the British in the Atlantic and the Pacific, the history of the Hadrami diaspora in the Indian Ocean is interwoven with the history of state formation and trade competition in the region. Moments of conflict and co-operation between Muslim and Western states are present in this history.

[16] The depth and breadth of this indigenization is reflected in attempts at tracking it, giving rise to encyclopaedic works in Hadrami literature: massive genealogies (al-Mashhūr 1984), a four-volume compendium of diasporic families (Bā Maṭraf 1984), and a five-volume one of poets (al-Saqqāf 1984).

DOMESTICITY DISRUPTED: VASCO DA GAMA STILL

> The great empires of Europe, through their colonies and spheres of influence, spread authority, order, and respect for the obligation of contract almost everywhere; and where their writs did not run, their frigates and gunboats navigated. Methods were rough, division of benefits was unfair, and freedom was not rated high among the priorities; but people, goods, and ideas moved around the world with less restraint than ever before and, perhaps, ever again (Acheson 1969:7).

In the fifteenth century, the Indian Ocean hosted a transregional network of peaceable trade and social exchange that was experienced by its diasporic natives as an extensive domestic realm. The transformation of that realm by the Portuguese, into an arena of military and commercial geo-strategy, was to give both religion and diaspora new meanings, in this first encounter of a Muslim transoceanic world with Western empires.

Across the Indian Ocean, a number of grand exchanges brought distant places into vital communication. Pepper, highly prized in Europe, was carried by Muslims from its source in Malabar to Cairo via the Red Sea, then from Alexandria across the Mediterranean to Europe by Venetians. The market for Gujarat's cloth stretched from Arabia to the Malay Peninsula, and Cambay became a fulcrum for trade between Jedda and Malacca. The Cambay sultan kept in close contact with Jedda and Mecca, while Gujarati merchants frequented Malacca. From Cairo to Malacca, through Jedda, Aden, Shihr, Hormuz, Cambay, and Calicut, Indian Ocean trade was conducted by traders and sailors who formed the sort of creole, transnational, Muslim networks of which the Hadrami diaspora was a part. Southeast of Malacca, it stretched to the spice islands of the Moluccas and Timor.

Throughout, what provided a public representation of commonness was not a state, but the Shafiʿi school of Islamic law coupled with Sufi practice, both furnishing a shared legal, ritual, and educational culture and curriculum. East of Malacca, the trade with China was no longer in Muslim hands, but carried on Chinese junks.

The arrival of the Portuguese and Spanish marked the advent of a truly global economy in the Indian Ocean, linking the Pacific and the Atlantic (Boxer 1969; Frank 1998). As few European products were in demand, Westerners brought silver from the Americas, mined by natives under duress, as their ticket for entry. This was a space in which Europeans came as newcomers to a preexisting, Muslim world of port-states, trading routes, and religious and kinship networks (Abu-Lughod 1989; Chaudhuri 1990; Hourani 1951; Tibbetts 1981).

From the European perspective, what was strange about this rich world of the Indian Ocean and its international economy was that no one state controlled it, or even had the idea of doing so. The Portuguese, with the scientific geographers assembled by Prince Henry the Navigator, were the first to think of this ocean as a unity and to thereby dream up a systematic strategy to monopolize the means of violence within it (Beazley 1904; Boxer 1969; Sanceau 1944; Sub-

rahmanyam 1993; 1997). Looking out from Lisbon, precious commodities such as pepper seemed to come directly through the hands of the Venetians, and behind them, their Muslim partners. A route around the Cape of Good Hope would cut out the Venetians, and beyond it, a series of strategic ports could control the seas and cut out the Muslims. Alfonso de Albuquerque realized this audacious plan in his lightning capture and garrisoning of Hormuz, Goa, and Malacca in the first decade of the sixteenth century. The Portuguese had brought a trading-post system of imperial garrisons pioneered by Venice and Genoa in the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. It remained incomplete, however, as Aden stood and the Red Sea thus remained open to Muslim shipping.[17]

A succession of European powers—Dutch, French, English, American—subsequently sought to carry the geopolitical strategic project through. Maritime empires came to dominate this oceanic space. The period in which this domination held, from the advent of the Portuguese in 1498 to the end of World War II in 1945 and Indian independence, has been called "the Vasco da Gama epoch" by the Malabar-born Indian diplomat and historian K. N. Pannikar (1993).

What made this period distinctive was the new importance of state violence to markets, of power to property, flag to trade, and their inseparability, as Dean Acheson cognized in his characterization of nineteenth-century European imperialism quoted above. The marriage of cannon to trading ship was the crucial, iconic innovation.[18] Whether markets were free or not, power over the ocean itself needed to be monopolized. Portuguese and American views, which cap the period at each end, share this assumption, and strategic security be-

[17] The international dimensions of this contest are seldom recognized. With minimal communications, Portuguese sailors fought with high morale far from home because they were assured of reinforcements without letup; Portuguese naval enterprise was well supported by capital from Antwerp. On the other side, two large Turkish/Egyptian fleets with cannon and over a thousand sailors briefly fought alongside Cambay and Calicut ships, mindful of their joint long-distance interests. The outcome was mixed, with the Turks garrisoning Aden, Cambay and Calicut retaining their port-cities and local naval presence, while the Portuguese commanded main channels on the high seas for the next century.

[18] In the specialist literature, discussion of this combination is driven by the concept of protection costs for trade. Merchants can pay others for protection, provide their own, or even sell protection to others. These analytical alternatives are used to characterize different historical situations. Thus in general, Asian merchants paid various others for protection before the Portuguese arrived, and costs were low; the Portuguese monopolized and sold protection, raising costs in the Indian Ocean; the Dutch and English provided their own protection on a large scale, "internalizing" the costs and bringing the vagaries of politics under the rationality of accountancy. Whereas the Portuguese state paid the costs of creating and selling protection, the English and Dutch states had merchants cover it themselves, giving large, joint-stock companies the right to monopolize trade and conduct warfare east of the Cape of Good Hope. The theoretical focus on protection and its financing had been introduced by Frederic Lane to describe how state power was used to increase the profits of Venetian merchants abroad, and was subsequently developed to explain western European dominance (and Portuguese decline) in the Indian Ocean by Steensgaard and others (Curtin 1984; Lane 1966; 1979; Steensgaard 1974). It remains useful to understanding how a publicly financed U.S. military protects and subsidizes private U.S. enterprise abroad today.

comes an end in its own right, first among all goods. The stakes are raised to such a height that only the interchangeable languages of empire, civilization, and religion are powerful enough—together—to match the unholy mix of money, might, and murder set in train when in 1498 the Christian Vasco da Gama arrived in an Indian Calicut dominated by Muslim merchants under a Hindu sovereign. Religion in the Indian Ocean would never be the same again once the medieval Crusades, that particular mix of universal religion with strategic politics, had come East.

And what of the Muslims in all this? The Indian Ocean had been called an "Arab Lake" by the early Europeans, but neither Arabs nor Muslims ever had a unitary state throughout the region, nor the ambition for one. What they did have was the network of trade, kinship, port-states, and religion that I have sketched. This network contained potentials of great power, potentials which could be harnessed and actualized by a leader who had the transregional consciousness, connections, and imagination to convince others that they were capable of powerful actions, if only they would act in concert. They were to act sporadically, and in concert only under the baton of phantom leaders who had mastered the secrets of ships, airplanes, and communications. It is no coincidence that these very vehicles of Western domination in commerce and warfare were to figure dramatically in Muslim responses to that domination.

DIASPORA AGAINST EMPIRE

From the sixteenth century onward, a series of wars of resistance against European colonization erupted in various parts of this oceanic realm. At least four features of these wars are notable: (1) Direct colonization created widespread social dislocations, generating a groundswell of opposition locally. (2) Leaders of resistance were often members of the Hadrami diaspora or their scholarly associates, who, being already mobile and in correspondence across the ocean, incessantly crossed and frustrated imperial jurisdictions. (3) Unrelated events of European colonial penetration, though spatially and temporally separate, provoked responses which bore family resemblances to each other in Muslim communities from Malabar to Mindanao. (4) The combination of these factors resulted in wars that were protracted, lasting decades.

The most dramatic of these encounters involved Muslim Malabar and Aceh, suppliers of pepper to the world, the pre-modern "black gold" sought after by Portuguese, Dutch, and Americans alike. The earliest American millionaires, operating out of Salem, Massachusetts, amassed their fortunes by going across the Pacific in the late eighteenth century to buy Acehnese pepper, bypassing Dutch blockades between Aceh and Malabar (Phillips 1949).

In the thirty-year war of conquest launched by the Dutch against Aceh in Sumatra in the late nineteenth century, a Hadrami leader figured prominently. Born in Hadramawt in 1833, ʿAbd al-Rahman b. Muhammad al-Zahir was taken to Malabar in India at the age of two, then educated in the Islamic sciences

in Egypt and Mecca.[19] He returned to India as a young man, began trading between India and Arabia as supercargo on his wealthy father's ship, and married in Malabar. He visited Turkey, Italy, Germany, and France. Like the mid-nineteenth century founders of the three Hadrami sultanates (Kathiri, Qaʿayti, Kasadi), he commanded troops on feudal commission as *Jamadar* for the Nizam of Hyderabad (ʿAkāsha 1985). But he was footloose, set up shop and villa in Calcutta as a successful goldsmith, shuttled between Bombay, Hyderabad, and Calicut, and found service with the Westernizing sultan of Johor in Malaya. In 1864, he finally went to Aceh, where his superiority in religious learning was quickly made apparent, and he became a leading jurist and administrator, marrying the sister of a senior minister, the widow of Sultan Ali Iskandar Shah. He streamlined taxation and organized cooperative efforts to build large central mosques and public works. He gained the ear of the sultan and became regent when the latter died, holding the reins of state in his hands.

When war broke out between the Dutch and the Acehnese, al-Zahir travelled to British Malaya as envoy of the Acehnese sultan, went on to Malabar in India where he visited with his wife, then to Jedda where he collected recommendations from the Sharif of Mecca and other notables. Then he was on to Istanbul where he was received by the Ottomans as emissary of Aceh, decorated by the Ottoman ruler, and promised help against the Dutch. His presence stirred reports in the pan-Islamic press of Ottoman intervention in Aceh, creating consternation in European diplomatic circles. Ottoman help never quite materialized, but on his return trip he was now well received by Dutch and British consuls in Jedda, Singapore, and Penang. By involving the Ottomans and the British in the Acehnese war, he set up many new, international constraints on the Dutch. The British had their own reasons for getting involved, including arms sales and pepper purchases. When al-Zahir finally returned to Aceh, he was lionized, and received as a representative of the grand Ottoman Caliph, who to the Acehnese was the leader of the only Muslim empire in the modern world.[20] Al-Zahir went on to lead the Acehnese in war against the Dutch.

As he moved around, al-Zahir's sophisticated strategies of self-representation increased his stature. His visit to the governor of British Penang on horseback in full regalia created "a spectacle" (Reid 1972:39). His expensive inter-

[19] I draw on a number of sources here (al-Mashhūr 1984; Hurgronje 1906; Reid 1969; 1972; Said 1981). Reid and Said locate the biography within an analytical narrative of Acehnese history. It is important to note that al-Zahir was not *sui generis*, but one in a long line of diasporic Hadramis from Arabia, Gujarat, Malabar, and Penang who became sultans, saints, innovative scholars, and Sufis in Aceh. These may be found in the preceding references, as well as in Azra (1992).

[20] There was a history of Acehnese declarations of Ottoman overlordship, such as in 1515 and 1850 under the Acehnese sultans Sayyid Firman Shah and ʿAlaʾ al-Din Mansur Shah, confirmed by the Ottoman sultans Salim I and ʿAbd al-Majid (Said 1981:697–98). Further documentation and examples are given in Reid (1969:3, 83–84, 259) and Ozcan (1997:27). Assertions of Ottoman suzerainty were also declared in Hadramawt at similar times, against Portuguese and English claims (al-Bakrī al-Yāfiʿī 1956).

national diplomacy was financed by telegraphic transfers of Acehnese pepper profits. He was like a mirror which reflected the glory of the ever more powerful figures he met and was associated with. While on one level he moved in a very personal space of the Hadrami diaspora, visiting wives and relatives along the way, on another he was able to harness and actualize potentials embedded in the larger Muslim networks of the Indian Ocean. In his mobile actions, we may say that his masterful command of a whole diasporic repertoire of constituting a persona—routes, relatives, and representations—magnified a local conflict in Aceh to international proportions, making it larger and more protracted.

Al-Zahir was not the first such figure in the Hadrami diaspora, nor was he to be the last. This model, of a confrontation between an empire and an Islamic community represented by a diasporic persona, provides a framework for thinking about the current confrontation between Usama bin Ladin and the United States. Bin Ladin is a member of the Hadrami diaspora. The geography of his operations, from East Africa to the Philippines, is an old venue for it. Wealth and mobility combine iconically in the family, in the ownership of airplanes and travel in Europe. In his movements between Arabia, Sudan, and South Asia, he has been able to build his stature by association with important states and causes. He has been able to harness great potentials by expressing, in a religious idiom, notions of unity in an otherwise discombobulated congeries of Muslim states, societies and causes. Like pepper-rich Aceh, another state endowed with a prized world commodity is involved—Saudi Arabia. Whether he is actually intermarried with Taliban leader Mullah Umar's family or not, the issue arises precisely because it is part of an old pattern. Diasporic mobility often proceeds via moral exchanges within local institutions in new locations.

The salience of communications technology recurs also. ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Zahir cut his teeth trading as supercargo on his wealthy father's ship between India and Arabia. His long journeys undertaken in conducting resistance against the Dutch were aboard European steamers. Usama bin Ladin's wealthy father Muhammad ʿAwad, flying in his private airplane, claimed distinction as the first Muslim since the Prophet to have prayed in Jerusalem, Medina, and Mecca in the space of a day. He had bought the plane while executing exclusive contracts for rebuilding some of the holiest sites of Islam. When he crashed and died, the Saudi king Faysal took the family under his wing, and banned them from flying for a decade. Usama's brother Salim, an avid pilot, also died in a plane crash, in Texas in 1988. Salim's family still owns the Houston Gulf Airport, bought on the recommendation of his U.S. trustee James Bath, an erstwhile friend of George W. Bush who invested in Bush's early oil ventures. They met while pilots in the Air National Guard. The use of airplanes and satellite television against the United States in recent events needs no reiteration here.

Although the war in Afghanistan and beyond is of a scale and complexity which dwarfs all the previous confrontations between Europeans and Muslims

led by Hadramis in the Indian Ocean, the existence of this pattern, of moments of cooperation and conflict between empire and diaspora, gives us one way of thinking about relations between Muslims and Westerners. Specifically, alertness to historical precedent helps us think through the peculiar suddenness with which the stakes have been rhetorically ratcheted upward to the moral absolutes of a conflict between whole religions and civilizations, as has happened more than once before. In the Indian Ocean, the notion of jihad as just war was articulated directly in response to Portuguese depredations of the sixteenth century. It emerged out of diasporic Muslim circles, and its expression affords us one view of empire through diasporic eyes, in the earliest encounter. Before Aceh's confrontation with the Dutch, the Malabar coast of southwest India had already borne the brunt of imperial aggression. It is to Malabar that we will now turn.

JIHAD, LONG MEMORIES OF AN OLD BUSINESS

In the 1570s, a book was composed in Malabar entitled *Gift of the Jihad Warriors in Matters Regarding the Portuguese* (al-Maʿbārī 1987). The author was Zayn al-Dīn al-Malibārī (or al-Mulaybārī, or al-Maʿbarī), a Malabar Muslim jurist associated with networks of Hadrami religious scholars.[21] The book catalogued Portuguese atrocities against Muslim communities in Malabar and elsewhere across the Indian Ocean in great detail. Similar descriptions are given in Hadrami chronicles from the same period, recounting Portuguese atrocities in East Africa and Yemen (Bā Faqīh 1999). Portuguese accounts of the events generally agree with them in substance but not judgment.

Al-Malibari composed his book with the express purpose of mobilizing Muslims to take up arms against the Portuguese, and gifted it to Sultan ʿAli ʿAdil Shah of Bijapur.[22] The first chapter makes a case for jihad, and sets out the legal arguments: "I have made this compilation out of the desire to have the people of faith fight against the slaves of the cross. Jihad against them is a religious obligation, on account of their entering the countries of the Muslims and harming them. I have called it *Gift of the Jihad Warriors in Matters Regarding the Portuguese.* In it I recount what has transpired of their vile deeds, relate the appearance of Islam in Malabar, and include a section setting forth the principles of jihad, the greatness of its rewards and the texts of revelation and tradition that call for it" (al-Maʿbārī 1987:47).

As a jurist, al-Malibari gives anti-Portuguese struggle a specific legal basis

[21] His legal textbook *Fatḥ al-Muʿīn* (al-Malibārī n.d.) continues to be published in Indonesia and used in Yemen today, and is commented on by Indonesian scholars (Nawawī Bantanī 1938)

[22] A major Muslim state in the Deccan, the ʿAdil Shahi sultanate extended patronage to itinerant Muslim scholars (Eaton 1978). A few decades after the composition of al-Malibari's book, the Hadrami sayyid Shaykh b. ʿAbd Allah al-ʿAydarus cured Sultan Ibrahim ʿAdil Shah of a chronic disease and wielded great influence on him, successfully enjoining him to wear Arab dress (al-Shillī 1901:117–19).

in Islamic law, as a just war against those who would harm Muslims. But in making the case, he marshals ethnographic and historical arguments to paint a broader picture of Malabar society, of what it is that the Portuguese are attacking (al-Maʿbārī 1987:69–75). His account includes Brahmins and Nayars, carpenters and fisherfolk, caste relations, and prohibitions against commensality—a range of phenomena familiar to anthropologists today. The ethnography maintains the perspective of an outsider describing local customs; the call for a just war is not a nativist anti-colonialism. Neither is it simply religious warfare, for the Malabaris under threat are also non-Muslims, long-settled Christians, and Jews who fled persecution in Portugal. In Al-Malibari's depiction, Malabar society was a civic, commercial, urban realm, a string of cosmopolitan port-cities with merchants of different religions engaged in peaceable long-distance trade.

His historical account of how this society developed articulates legends of the king Cheraman Perumal with foreign peoples.[23] Under the influence of a group of Sufis, the king conceived an affection for Islam and its prophet, divided his realm, and sailed for Arabia. He remained at the Hadrami port of Shihr for a long time, then fell ill. Before passing away, he gave written instructions to his companions to take back to Malabar. They subsequently returned, divided gardens and lands among chiefs, and built mosques in the towns of Calicut, Cranganore, Kanjercote, Quilon, and others. Congregations of Muslims settled around the mosques. Rulers dealt with the Muslims fairly, so their port-cities attracted Muslim traders from all directions and prospered. Muslims submitted to the justice of non-Muslim rulers, and if a Muslim was executed, his body would be returned to the community for washing and burial. Al-Malibari described the customs (*ʿadat*) peculiar to each community to show how they led to inter-communal reciprocities. Among Brahmins, strict rules of primogeniture meant that only eldest sons could marry, to avoid inheritance conflicts. Younger Brahmin sons thus consorted with women of the Nayar community, whose matrilineal and polyandrous customs allowed for such complementary arrangements. Rigidities of caste distinction, such as maintaining social-spatial distance, washing upon contact, and caste endogamy, meant that individuals who transgressed strictures found themselves repudiated. They left their communities, and if they were young boys or women, were threatened with enslavement among strangers. To save themselves, they converted to Islam, as they did to Christianity also.

Al-Malibari's Malabar Muslims were a community facing in two directions: on the one hand bound in multiple moral and legal relations with non-Muslim rulers and peoples over generations in Malabar, and on the other engaged in trade with distant places. It was precisely these creole Muslim networks which

[23] Early Portuguese accounts of Cheraman Perumal correlate with al-Malibari's in many respects, as they do with his observations on caste practices (Barbosa 1918[1518]: 3–5).

the Portuguese targeted, as they established their forts across the Indian Ocean in places like Hormuz, Muscat, Diu, Sumatra, Malacca, the Moluccas, Milapur, Nagapatam, Ceylon, and all the way to China (al-Maʿbarī 1987:109–10). In addition to plunder and murder, the Portuguese reserved for themselves trade in profitable items like pepper and ginger, thus seeking to ruin the Muslims in all departments.

In short, Portuguese colonial and imperial actions were destroying the multi-religious, cosmopolitan societies of trading ports in Malabar, and the diasporic Muslim networks across the Indian Ocean which articulated with them. Vasco da Gama's epoch-setting journey in 1498 had gone from Lisbon to Calicut, the premier spice emporium of the mid-Indian Ocean, a joint operation of its Hindu ruler the Zamorin and Muslim merchants. As the Muslims were victims throughout the length and breadth of Portuguese ambitions, it is not surprising that Muslim scholars such as al-Malibari were most aware of the imperial scope of those ambitions, and most resolute in resisting them. From that time onward, opposition to Portuguese, Dutch, and English colonial rule in Malabar has continually been formulated in religious terms of martyrdom, as Dale (1980) has shown.[24] Between 1836 and 1921, under British rule, thirty-two outbreaks of rebellion by Malabar Muslims were recorded, a majority of them led by the Hadrami-Malabari scholar Sayyid Fadl. Sayyid Fadl was a third-generation Hadrami in Malabar and came from a line of scholars and public figures. He was finally expelled by the British in 1852, went to Yemen and Mecca, and became an official of the Ottoman court in Istanbul (Buzpinar 1993). As Ottoman governor of Zufar in present-day Oman from 1875–1879, he was to return as a threat to British dominance over the Aden-Bombay shipping route. He lived out the rest of his days at the Ottoman court of the pan-Islamist sultan Abdul Hamid the Second. It was this sultan who patronized the earliest modern political Muslims, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, and declared himself the universal Caliph (Deringil 1998; Keddie 1968; Ozcan 1997).

When the Caliphate was abolished in 1924 by the Young Turks, who gave up an empire to win a nation, movements were set up in India and Dutch Indonesia to reinstate it. Gandhi aligned the Muslim Caliphate movement in India with the larger anti-colonial struggle, involving Muslims and Hindus on the same side. In Malabar, however, mobilization for the Caliphate movement led directly to a major Muslim rebellion in 1921. Muslim clerics, including one of Sayyid Fadl's descendants, led the revolt, and the terms were familiar from the nineteenth- and sixteenth-century struggles. In its desperate phase in 1922, a

[24] One of the leading authorities on the Mappilas is Stephen Dale (1997; 1980), whom I draw upon here. Hadrami sources include al-Mashhūr 1984 and Bā Wazīr n.d.[1954]. Dale has shown the way by drawing parallels among the anti-European, Muslim movements in Malabar, Aceh, and the Philippines. While he views these areas as transformed into frontiers by European militarization, following Witteck on Anatolia, my argument rests on seeing them as a connected, domestic realm in which a diaspora is at home.

number of suicide charges took place (Dale 1980:207–8). The issue of the Caliphate was to re-emerge in bin Ladin's conflict with the United States, as we shall see below.

We have so far been using the terms diaspora and empire. Diasporas we know still exist and continue to multiply. But what about empire? I believe the term continues to be useful, even critical, in thinking about the United States today. How is the United States an empire? By comparison with the Portuguese, Dutch, or British, the United States enjoys a curious misrecognition of its place as a world power.

EMPIRE OR REPUBLIC? AN ANTI-COLONIAL EMPIRE

The United States is an empire without colonies. This sounds anomalous because we have come to think of imperialism and colonialism as the same thing. Analytically, they are not. Colonialism is the occupation of territory by foreign settlers, soldiers, or administrators. Colonies are possessions of master societies, so master and subject populations answer to different laws. A relation of owning and being property is generalized to two categories of persons—colonizer and colonized. Imperialism, in contrast, is the projection of political power across large spaces, to include other states whatever the means: colonies, mercenaries, gunboats, missiles, client elites, proxy states, multilateral institutions, multinational alliances. No assumption of property need ground the imperial relationship, and influence rather than presence is what counts. Two colonies in an imperial space may have different significances: British Egypt in the 1890s was held as a means to a higher end—British India and its security. Merely comparing them as colonies (and post-colonies subsequently) obscures the connective and differential analysis demanded by the concept of empire. A brief characterization of European imperial history, and its American avatar, will help clarify what I mean by a non-colonial empire, or an anti-colonial one.

The roles of conquest and commerce in the creation of European empires have varied over time, as have their ideological valences. A shift in ideological emphasis, from conquest to commerce, may be discerned in the half-millennium of European imperial experience. This was the thrust of eighteenth-century Enlightenment argument against empire, which Anthony Pagden has demonstrated with rare erudition (1995). The shift may be correlated with a military-industrial history in which *colonial occupation has been declining, even as the projection of imperial power expanded apace.* Competitive imperialist expansion created a technological ratchet of military domination over ever-thinner geographical media that increasingly approximated a smooth, frictionless plane of decreasing resistance: cavalry over flat plains; warships on the oceans; aircraft in the skies; and, potentially, new devices in the vacuum of outer space. This history can be thought of in three phases:

(1) The first European empires, of the Americas, were established by com-

plete settler colonization. Power was projected and maintained manually, by horses and populations on the ground. Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal rushed for and through the New World on this common basis. On the cusp of this expansion at the opening of the sixteenth century, Machiavelli had observed that colonial settlements—which Rome always planted after foreign wars—were the surest way to make foreign conquest profitable and permanent rather than ruinous (Machiavelli 1983:291–93, Bk. 2,6). Territories and peoples were the private property of Europeans to be worked. As inter-state analogues to private property, colonies were economic and political monopolies held by imperial states against each other.

(2) The second European empires, of Asia and Africa especially from the nineteenth century onwards, expanded via the projection of power on water, and on land were maintained by the demographically lighter colonization of company, army, and administration rather than a settler population.[25] While political territories were owned or monopolized by European states as colonies, peoples were free as labor. Ideas of civilization and commerce, in contrast to conquest and extraction, provided the ideological writ in this phase. These ironically derived from late eighteenth-century Enlightenment critiques of the first European empires as monopolies, that kept prices high and production low, retained colonies with novel standing armies and navies, and burdened home populations with the taxes to pay for them (Smith 1981:591–641).[26] Free trade, celebrated by Montesquieu as "sweet commerce," would bind nations in peace, liberate capital to seek energetic producers whether in colony or metropole, enlarge the markets that gave products value, and supplant the violence that held empires and their monopolies in place:

> For the languages in which the nineteenth-century empires sought to frame themselves were transfigured products of the early-modern forbears. They were the transfiguration, however, not of the languages of empire but instead of the critique which the enemies of imperialism had levelled against them in the closing years of the eighteenth century. This had insisted that the inescapable legacy of all forms of colonialism could only be human and material waste followed by moral degeneracy. Empire's relationship with the non-European world should, in future, be limited to a programme of harmonious exchange (Pagden 1995:10).

(3) In the third European empire, that of the United States, there is no formal colonization. Both political territories and peoples are free, owners of them-

[25] The earlier American empires had seen more European-native liaisons, and the adoption of indigenized identities by their creole/mestizo descendants, as in Mexico. Such boundary crossings were curtailed in the second European empires (Hyam 1991:117).

[26] It is not surprising that in leading figures such as Condorcet, Montesquieu, and Smith, the anti-imperialist Enlightenment flourished in France and Scotland. The long eighteenth century of world-wide Anglo-French imperial rivalry through foreign wars in the West and East Indies was creating the characteristic modern centralized state in France and England, with its standing army and huge war debts (England's went from under a million to 840 million pounds by 1817), bonds, and a central bank to pay for them (Seeley 1883:17–36).

selves. There is maximal projection of military power through sea and air space, a system of subordinate sovereign states, and multilateral institutions. Just as critiques of the first European empires underwrote the second, critiques of the second empires, for being colonial, underwrote the third. The U.S. empire supplanted its predecessors at the end of World War II, when it pushed a devastated Europe to decolonize and supported independence movements against them. The idea of empire had dissolved in the minds of the British-Indian soldier[27] and the British politician confronting national reconstruction. It was a rare moment when American, British, and anti-British independence interests were aligned.[28] The ideological coin struck in this third European empire is independence, freedom, democracy for all—not a return to pre-colonial native despotisms, but progress in American-style anti-colonial republicanism. While ideals of commerce and free trade from the previous phase continue to be pursued, a more temporally complex form of economic engagement is at stake: not universal exchange, but investment on a global scale.

As plantations, mines, factories, and debtors, new nation-states are not property like colonies, but rather free agents with contractual obligations to investors, partners in their development. They needed short-term help with balance of payments and currency stability, long-term help with infrastructure and human development, and attention forever as local guarantors of the regime of private property. Respectively, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and non-communist independent governments, all constituted after World War II, were the institutions charged with furnishing the public goods of this new, non-colonial world for private investment. How these institutions, which did not exist before, came to be vitally interconnected so suddenly may be compactly seen through the eyes of Dean Acheson, who, in the service of the U.S. State Department from 1941 to 1953, styled himself "Present at the Creation" (1969).[29] He wrote the World Bank's charter. The world of colonies, previously rushing headlong into independence, all of a sudden stopped and waited to be developed, as the "Third World." The language of development, which inherited the civilizing mission of colonialism, is one of investment—public and private, foreign and domestic. Ideologically, why could independent colonies not revert to the hunting bands, chiefdoms, kingdoms, and even empires of their glorious past? Absent the old European empires, the nation-state

[27] The sight of non-Europeans—the Japanese—puncturing Britain's vaunted invincibility in Malaya and Burma, and America's in the Philippines and Hawaii, was a major step in the decolonization of the mind.

[28] That rare moment did not last long, as independence movements were infected with communism; de-colonization without communism proved to be a delicate operation. This is a period of history which has been much neglected, overlooked on account of the modern teleology of national independence (Ghosh 2001; Hobsbawm 1990; Kelly and Kaplan 2001; Louis 1977).

[29] The sixteenth-century Portuguese monarch Dom Manuel, newly rich from the Indies trade, adopted a less elevated title: "Lord of the Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India." Others called him the "grocer king."

provides the only accountable, acceptable, and disciplinable custodian for investments from far away and for social welfare domestically. Nations were no longer dependent colonies owned by Europeans, nor the private domains of native kings, but free contractors with obligations to creditors and partners, including a newly enfranchised population with an escalating bill for social welfare. This was a persuasive argument for decolonization.

It is important to understand that U.S. anti-colonialism is not simply a cloak for U.S. empire, but rather a language that informs the very representation of its imperial authority. It is a broad language of political self-understanding developed before American empire acquired world status. Its vocabulary becomes discernible at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War in 1763, when Britain decisively beat France in rivalry for North America and India (Pocock 1975:509–10; Seeley 1883:25–30), and boosted its presence as a state in its American colonies (Conway 1998; Greene 1987; Lenman 1998). A world-straddling government, imposing a standing army of 10,000 men financed by burgeoning state debt and new taxes, engendered among the American colonists a paranoid fear of a British government "conspiracy against the rights of humanity" (Wood 1969:39; Bailyn 1967:144–59), whether they saw it in English Whig terms as monarchical advantage over commoners in the constitutional balance (Wood 1969:28–36), or Florentine Machiavellian ones of imperial expansion threatening republican virtue (Pocock 1975:510). In any case, rejection of their status as possessed colonies in the American revolution was understood as a repudiation of monarchy and empire *in defence* of the English constitutional balance between estates of society. From the outset, American anti-colonialism was wedded to a belief in constitutional order (Maier 1974). A free people were at liberty to own, but could not themselves be, a colonial possession, property of the English government. The new British impositions were especially galling because the American citizen-militias and allied Native Americans had fought alongside the British to expel the French, and now felt betrayed in victory. Fortified by experience in actual inter-imperial combat, they now had the self-confidence to project a new, independent "third way" separate from imperial entanglements, as enunciated in Washington's farewell address, and they achieved it through guerrilla warfare against a conventional army (Lenman 1998).

By 1787, the U.S. federal Constitution was enacted no longer for society, but for a state. Stability and protection of liberties lay not in a balance between social groups, but divisions of government. Sovereignty flowed from the people, who vested immense powers in their representatives. Those powers could not be turned against the people because they were parcelled out among government branches which balanced each other. Theoretically, who the people were and what their virtues were no longer mattered; an internally balanced government could accommodate all interests. The federal Constitution was thus a structure capable of "indefinite expansion" (Pocock 1975:523), of being both

republic and empire. What it could not be was colonial, as power and sovereignty were assumed to flow from the people.

As the United States expanded on the continent, it avoided colonialism by incorporating new territories and populations under the constitutional structure.[30] The Northwest Territories set the precedent for what was basically temporary colonialism. Congress chose governors and judges from resident freeholders; a legislature formed as population increased, with statehood and full constitutional cover ultimately being granted. Initial colonial power in the form of Congressional authority from above was ultimately supplanted by popular sovereignty from below. Although built up by European settler colonization in the meantime, the final political form was not that of a colony owned by the United States, but the cellular addition of a free and willing republic. New territories, even conquered ones, were purchased by the federal government wholesale, as it were, and retailed to citizens freehold in fee simple. Thus the Union could be thought of as an expanding empire of freedom and legitimate property rather than of conquest and colonial dispossession.

Louisiana, with its large French population in New Orleans, modified the precedent with initial, absolute colonial power in the hands of the U.S. president, officials from non-freeholders, and a longer journey to statehood. Faced with a large non-English-speaking population in Louisiana, the application of the Constitution was not easily separated from its ethnic roots, as guaranteeing the freedom of an English people. When further territories were captured from Mexico in 1848, Daniel Webster challenged the sort of colonial, extra-constitutional limbo Louisiana had been through, arguing that either constitutional cover and statehood be granted immediately or the territories be left separate.

As the United States expanded, the courts invented, or "discovered," ever new statuses for peoples and territories beyond the pale (Perkins 1962), because the Constitution was fundamentally an internalist document, concerned to "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity" (U.S. Constitution, preamble), not to foreigners. When foreigners and their lands came into U.S. possession and rule, authority was granted now to Congress, now to the president. This indeterminacy became even more apparent when the United States assumed trans-oceanic control of the Philippines, Guam, Cuba, and Puerto Rico in 1898 from Spain, and annexed Hawaii, resulting in a full-blown debate over whether the country should pursue imperial ambitions. Total incorporation or total separation are the only legally rigorous solutions provided for in the Constitution, as its republican axiom of the people's sovereignty makes it necessarily anti-colonial. The United States had been colonial in its continental ex-

[30] An apparently non-colonial outcome was achieved over Native American populations by making them invisible and thus beyond representation through physical extermination, cultural genocide, and banishment to miniscule, isolated reservations. As these were sovereign, they were foreign and had no claim to constitutional cover.

pansion from the point of view of Native Americans and Mexicans and at their expense, but colonialism became fully visible and acknowledged only with the undeniable appearance of possessions overseas.

THE IMPERIAL REPUBLIC ABROAD

American citizens cede immense powers to their representatives and government because constitutionally they can recall them, and because the branches of government balance each other. Peoples who came under U.S. colonial rule did not have representation, and more seriously did not have the full machinery of constitutional government to protect them. Since World War II, the categories and numbers of such persons have multiplied, to include those living outside of direct U.S. colonial rule but within the purview of its empire. Condemned to invisibility by the U.S. Constitution, they are subject to tyranny—in the classic Whig sense of domination by a powerful few, and in the U.S. constitutional sense of unchecked power of one branch of the U.S. government—often the executive—with overseas organs, whether it be the military, intelligence, or foreign service.

That constitutional invisibility of the foreign has translated into customary policy and practice within the executive, Congress, judiciary and citizenry at large. In a recent example, federal judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly ruled that foreign prisoners held at the U.S. Navy's Guantanamo base were not covered by the U.S. Constitution because they were not on U.S. territory.[31] United States occupation of enemy Cuban land entails no legal encumbrance despite its possession in perpetuity on lease. While the courts have been creative in discovering in the Constitution new territorial statuses to justify U.S. government possessions overseas since 1898, they have oxymoronically denied that the same Constitution applies overseas. In consequence, the U.S. enjoys rights in those lands but owes no legally demandable obligation to foreigners there; it is a generalized right to enjoy one's own property in private. Without recourse to U.S. law, prisoners at Guantanamo are subject to the unchecked and therefore tyrannical power of the U.S. president. The judge's denial of their request for *habeas corpus* condemns them to invisibility in precise legal terms.[32] There is a history of such judgments, and the reasoning can best be understood in the clear language of the earliest precedents.

In a test case over Puerto Rican tariffs a century ago, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled (in *Downes v. Bidwell*) to the effect that the Constitution suspended itself temporarily on the colonization of alien races, leaving Congress to its discretion. The judgment reads, in part:

[31] "Judge Rebuffs Detainees at Guantanamo," *New York Times,* 1 Aug. 2002.

[32] In 1992, the first President Bush had also consigned a group stigmatized in U.S. public opinion, HIV-infected Haitian political refugees, to the legal limbo of Guantanamo; the U.S. Supreme Court deferred to the executive (Farmer 2003; Johnson 1993).

A false step at this time might be fatal to the development of what Chief Justice Marshall called the American Empire. Choice in some cases, the natural gravitation of small bodies toward large ones in others, the result of a successful war in still others, may bring about conditions which would render the annexation of distant possessions desirable. If those possessions are inhabited by alien races, differing from us in religion, customs, laws, methods of taxation and modes of thought, the administration of government and justice, according to Anglo-Saxon principles, may for a time be impossible (182 U.S., 286f, quoted in Perkins 1962:28).

Balanced against destroying the "desirable" American Empire, the court chose to suspend the liberty of alien races instead. Abroad, government could act unconstitutionally because there, the classic threat of arbitrary rule was posed to aliens, not to Anglo-Saxon Americans. At the limits of historical precedent on the question of colonial rule abroad, the court retreated from a universal conception of natural freedom and a Madisonian constitution blind to the qualities of citizens to one closer to the British-Italian, Harringtonian-Machiavellian spirit, which was embodied in constitutions (Harrington 1992) for the growth of large empires as the secure property of a *particular* free people, Anglo-Saxon Americans.[33] While temporary colonialism merely repeats the pattern of continental expansion, how long the temporary lasts hinges on whether the foreigners can be transformed into freeholding Americans—unlikely, in the case of ten million Filipinos in 1902, and a few hundred Taliban prisoners in 2002.

By granting American politicians extra-constitutional power over foreigners, and by re-electing those politicians (such as McKinley's 1900 presidential victory on an imperialist platform), the judiciary and citizenry acquiesce to arbitrary rule abroad by branches of government for reasons they deem desirable. If such branches act abroad without fanfare or visibility, it is a convenience rather than an affront to the other parts of the republic, the judiciary and the citizenry, given their lack of authority and responsibility over external affairs. An invisible empire allows the republic to sustain its anti-colonialist self-regard. Except for small groups of citizens attuned to the classical fear of empire abroad corrupting republic at home, such as the Boston Brahmins of the Anti-Imperialist League, the All-America Anti-Imperialist League of the Workers' (Communist) Party, and Jane Addams's Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, there developed in the twentieth century a "see no evil" attitude toward U.S. actions abroad. In such a domestic context, U.S. administrations developed a penchant for invisibility in foreign affairs when given the opportunity, and there were many.

[33] The precedent here is Louisiana, where the expanding United States came upon a large, settled, non-Anglo-Saxon population. For the first time, no bill of rights was granted initially. Such a bill was a specific possession of English people, who had presented William III of Orange with one before allowing him into England in the 1688 "Glorious Revolution."

REPRESENTING AUTHORITY: INVISIBILITY AS POLICY

KABUL, Afghanistan, July 28—American security guards in T-shirts and jeans, carrying large assault rifles, were prowling the president's office here this weekend. The first half dozen members of an American security force were in place to guard President Hamid Karzai, working alongside their Afghan counterparts (*New York Times*, 29 July 2002).[34]

T-shirts and jeans? The American imperialism which succeeded Britain's was markedly different in character. Features such as military occupation, colonial administration, and the dependent status of local sovereigns were all moved from the open, formal, acknowledged, public sphere to that of covert operations. In the American empire, there are no Indian durbars with Her Majesty's Governors in starched white tunics and feathered hats surrounded by colourful rajas and sultans. The ruling image, rather, is that of remote control—of invisibility, in fact. The passing of the baton is marked by the progress from gunboat diplomacy to aerial bombing. American involvement in another country's politics becomes visible, most often, only when someone 'messes up big time,' and the military is called in for the duration of a crisis, which by definition is thought exceptional and short.

America does not formally recognize the existence of hierarchy in its relations with foreign sovereigns, unlike all previous empires. No durbars, no younger brothers, no tribute gifts, America's friends are free to come and go, being "with us or against us,"[35] as president George W. Bush reiterates. Dominance, intimacy, and consequence that flow from the relationship remain unacknowledged. While previous empires dominated their colonies with pomp and ceremony, the American invention of "extraterritoriality" formalizes the idea that Americans are not really present. Extracted from China at the end of the 1839–1842 Opium War, extraterritoriality demands that U.S. servicemen abroad be not subject to the laws of those lands, sartorial or otherwise (Johnson 2000:43). Their presence is furtive, their absence fictive. Prowling about in their T-shirts and jeans, the Afghan president's American bodyguards could just as well be at home in North Carolina or Florida. As one of Sri Lanka's leaders is supposed to have said of his country's Tamil rebels: how can you conduct business with someone who doesn't have a telephone number? Many peoples around the world feel the same way about America.

Bernard Cohn has written that public representation of authority is key to the maintenance of rule. Why and how Indians should listen to Englishmen needs

[34] "U.S. Bodyguards Buy Time for Afghan Leader."

[35] A thinly-veiled threat in Bush's rendition, the same turn of phrase, "with us or against us," had been used more delicately by Ronald Storrs, Britain's "Oriental Counsellor . . . a man of exquisite sensibilities" to inquire if the Grand Sharif of Mecca would stand with Britain if Turkey entered World War I on the German side. "The British message was couched in Arabic of ornate and pious temper, and Abdullah, reading it appreciatively, remarked that Storrs must be a Moslem, he was so free with his Koranic quotations" (Morris 1959:33).

to be expressed in a language comprehensible to and usable by all parties. The British settled on a satisfactory language only after the Mutiny of 1857–1858, which shook colonial rule to its foundations. That violently traumatic event brought clarity of vision and representation. Henceforth, Indians were subjects of the British Queen, and in 1877, the Imperial Assemblage announced her to be Empress of India as well. In this durbar of durbars, all categories of Indians recognized by the British—rajas, landlords, editors, native gentlemen—participated in making Victoria their Empress, and in making themselves the kinds of public men the British recognized them to be (Bayly 1999:346–51). Cohn writes that "the goal of the assemblage was to make manifest and compelling the sociology of India" (Cohn 1987:658), a disambiguated ruling hierarchy for an unruly jumble of castes and claims.[36]

In comparison, one is tempted to say that by not representing their rule, power, or influence, the Americans are misrepresenting their role, or practicing dissimulation, or hiding unpleasant things. We have discussed invisibility as a glaring feature of American imperialism abroad. But invisibility goes along with a host of related features that shrink the space and time of coercive action without sacrificing impact: the notion of a quick entry and exit in military adventures; surgical air strikes; occupation as temporary measure; the lack of hierarchy in relations with other nations; even the U.S. secretary of state's zip tour of Southeast Asia, barely passing a few hours in each capital despite the prime importance of signing them up for a major anti-terrorism pact.[37] Seen together, these add up to a ruling sociology of international society, which affirms that nations are free to choose their destinies and friends (and face the consequences thereof), colonialism is illegitimate, and that American military action can be omniscient, devastating, and healing all at once, liberating nations hijacked by despotic states. T-shirts and jeans, in their now wholesome association with the sexual liberation of 1960s U.S. counterculture world-wide, metonymically signify and announce, rather than hide, the religious, political, social, and possibly sexual liberation of Afghanistan (Hirschkind and Mahmood 2002). We can only conclude that invisibility is a form which the United States chooses as policy, to represent its authority in the world.

TERRORISM AS SPECTACLE: HISTORY LESSONS

Spectacle is one response to invisibility, and the filmic quality of the attack on New York in September 2001 has been much noted. While there has been no legally conclusive evidence so far that bin Ladin was behind the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, the bombing of Afghanistan and bin Ladin's television appearances constitute an elaborate public dialogue (with wide audi-

[36] David Cannadine has taken this argument further, tying the ritual performance of hierarchy in empire abroad to the class hierarchies of metropolitan Britain, rendering "imperialism as ornamentalism," a "remarkable transoceanic construct of substance and sentiment" (2001:122).

[37] "In Powell's Tour, Brevity as the Soul of Diplomacy," *New York Times*, 1 Aug. 2002.

ence response) open to interpretation. So what does bin Ladin want? Or want to say?

First, he has a longstanding request, since the Gulf War, that American troops leave Saudi soil.[38] He has since extended that to Palestine, by proxy. This demand takes American anti-colonial ideology at face value, and puts the United States on the horns of an ideological dilemma. If the United States is indeed anti-colonial, what are its troops doing there? The U.S. reply is that they are there by invitation of the legitimately constituted government.[39] Local governments are thus everywhere forced to make appalling choices. This brings us to the second point.

In the videotape issued at the onset of the bombing of Afghanistan, bin Ladin said: "What America tasted today is something of what we have tasted for decades. For eighty-some years, our community has tasted this humiliation and tasted this degradation . . . no one heard and no one answered . . . But when the sword came after eighty years to America, hypocrisy appeared and raised its head."[40] What is he referring to, "eighty years"?

If we convert the years of the Islamic calendar into Gregorian time, eighty years takes us back to 1924. This was the year in which the Ottoman universal Caliphate was abolished by a Turkish parliament, followed in quick succession by Sharif Husayn's declaration of himself as Caliph, then followed by his defeat at the hands of the Saudis, who took over custody of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Within the space of six months, eighty years ago, a modern Islamic empire was finally carved up by its European counterparts, and a tribal chief installed in the stead of the universal Caliph as Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

While the eyes of the world were transfixed on U.S. action in Afghanistan, bin Ladin was pointing toward Saudi Arabia. Once one makes that geographical adjustment, it becomes clear that the conflict is being couched as a historical one, and that bin Ladin is saying: "Historicize!" He is saying that an imperial world is a tough neighbourhood in which Muslims, bereft of an empire of

[38] Bin Ladin ended his video response to the bombing of Afghanistan with this same demand ". . . As for America, I say to her people just a few words: I swear by the Great God who lofted the skies with no pillars, that America—and those who live in it—will not dream of security before Palestinians live it in reality, and before all the armies of the infidel have quitted the land of Muhammad." ("Bin Ladin: No Security for America before Security for Palestine," *al-Ḥayāt*, 9 Oct. 2001, my translation.)

[39] Report on U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's interview on Al Jazeera television: "When asked whether Mr. Bin Laden and his network, Al Qaeda, attacked the United States because Washington has troops based in Saudi Arabia, Mr. Rumsfeld said American troops were present only in nations where they were welcome. 'We're nowhere where we're not wanted,' he said. 'Where we are is where people who live there have decided they would like to have us for their protection.' ("Rumsfeld to Appeal to Arab Public on Mideast TV Network," *New York Times*, 16 Oct. 2001).

[40] "Bin Ladin: No Security for America before Security for Palestine," *al-Ḥayāt*, 9 Oct. 2001, my translation.

their own, are fair game. Their local leaders such as the Saudis cannot protect them, yet cannot be deposed. Their political process is stuck. Bin Ladin's immediate objective is I think Saudi Arabia, not the United States, which is simply a medial obstacle. Yet this view is not enough to comprehend the anger, paranoia, and audacity with which the demands are couched. Strange as it may seem, these sentiments echo revolutionary America after Britain's defeat of France in 1763 discussed earlier, including the millenarian, chiliastic registers—absolute morality inveighing against absolute corruption (Pocock 1975:543). Bin Ladin and the 'Afghan Arabs' returned from helping the Americans defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan only to find the now-unchecked Americans garrisoning their country in the early 1990s. Their militia success against one imperial power and sense of betrayal by the other fuel their guerrilla campaigns against the United States from this time onward.

The dénouement on the larger Arabian peninsula was even more galling. Bin Ladin and his repatriated 'Afghan Arabs' were then playing a frontline role in destroying the ruling socialist party in South Yemen, his homeland, through assassinations. Throughout the Cold War, the Soviet air base at al-ʿAnad near Aden had been the largest on the peninsula, dwarfing U.S. presence there. The final defeat of the socialists in the 1994 Yemen civil war eradicated that threat to U.S. interests in Arabia. For bin Ladin and his associates, to then have the United States profit from their domestic victories in Yemen by boosting aerial presence in Saudi Arabia and naval presence at Aden was too much. The United States was now not simply a colonial occupier or an imperial power, but one newly freed of a restraining counterpart worldwide, as the British seemed to the Americans after 1763. Whether bin Ladin wants to establish a Muslim empire, be Caliph, or simply keep America's imperial reach at bay is secondary. What is clear is that this is a vision for some "third way," deluded or not, between and beyond Soviet-U.S. imperial rivalry. And it has struck a chord across not only the Muslim world but Latin America and France as well.[41]

The abolition of what the South Asians call Khilafat, the universal Caliph, was one of the two main issues which kept British intelligence busy worldwide post-World War I. The other was international communism. Today, web pages have sprung up celebrating the Internet as the authentic means by which a world Muslim Caliph can be democratically elected. Pakistanis in Britain are among the strongest proponents. The first one I saw had two nominations: Mullah ʿUmar and bin Ladin, and called for more, including other attractive characters such as Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, prime minister of Malaysia.

The parallels with the past are striking.[42] Bin Ladin's video response to the

[41] T-shirts sporting bin Ladin next to Che Guevara have been popular in Latin America, and Thierry Meyssan's theory of a U.S. conspiracy elaborated in his book *L'Effroyable Imposture* (2002) has been "a phenomenon," selling 100,000 copies a week in France ("La Grande Délusion," *The Guardian*, 3 Apr. 2002).

[42] Turkey's declaration of war on the German side in November 1914 was also formally pro-

bombing of Afghanistan—"eighty years"—made reference to one historical event: the demise of the universal Muslim Caliphate. His view of the conflict with the United States, in this reading, seems to draw on this history of conflict between European empires and the universalizing Muslim Hadrami diaspora in the Indian Ocean, starting with the Portuguese. The response, suicide as martyrdom in the face of overwhelming odds, has recurred during critical phases and has had theoretical formulation since the 1570s in al-Malibari's text. Oddly enough, al-Malibari had also complained of "countless forms of oppression and viciousness . . . over more than eighty years" (al-Maʿbārī 1987:46–47). A further text, the *Hikayat Prang Sabil*, now celebrating martyrdom in struggle against the Dutch, emerged during the Dutch-Aceh war in the late nineteenth century. Further east, in Muslim Philippines, it inspired similar action against Spanish—and American—suppression of independence struggles (Dale 1980: 59; Majul 1973:356).

In the present, as in the past, a single individual, skilled in navigating the waters shared by diaspora and empire, is able to gain great influence, internationalizing a conflict that was otherwise confined to colonial corners of imperial geography.

The most striking parallel with the past is the geography of it. Though the Ottoman empire never really went past the Red Sea, the idea of a universal Muslim empire fired imaginations in the populous British India (Ozcan 1997) and the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia), among other places. Gandhi aligned it with India's anti-colonial struggle in 1919, and this marked the beginning of the end for the British in India (Minault 1982). It is notable that by and large the attacks on U.S. interests associated with bin Ladin have not taken place in the Middle East but around the Indian Ocean: Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Aden in Yemen, Indonesia.

These geographical parallels mean that, viewed in South and Southeast Asia, the events unfolding on the television screen have deep historical resonances. Huge fireballs and warriors on horses are screen visuals familiar from the epic tales regularly beamed by government television stations on religious and national anniversaries.

History as spectacle. The cycle of bombing fireworks in Afghanistan and replays of the collapsing World Trade Center, interspersed with bin Ladin's al-Jazeera appearances, speaking the romantic, classical Arabic of the epics in measured cadences and gesturing sporadically with a long index finger, had the eerily didactic quality of history lessons, now updated with Americans woven

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mulgated as a jihad by the highest national religious authority, the *Shaykh al-Islām* (Hurgronje 1915). Fatwas were issued, enjoining Muslims to commit life and property against Russia, England, and France. As these were the powers with dominion over large Muslim populations, the move mirrors the fifteenth-century Portuguese search for Prester John, the mythical Christian king in the Indies or Asia who would help them defeat the Muslims from behind enemy lines. Current European and American anxieties over their immigrant Muslim populations echo the earlier Russian, English, and French fears of a fifth column, which the Turkish jihad fatwas sought to exploit.

into the story. The empire which represents its authority in the mode of invisibility unwittingly contributed the spectacle of its massive presence to the programming. Indeed, the spectacle of the September 11 attacks themselves had challenged the invisibility of its authority.

The instances of conflict between diaspora and empire we have noted—Malabar in the 1570s against the Portuguese; 1840s and 1921 against the British; Aceh at the end of the nineteenth century against the Dutch; bin Ladin at the end of the twentieth century against America—have all surfaced when a very mobile, religious, cosmopolitan, and entrepreneurial member of the Hadrami diaspora managed to rouse wider Muslim sentiment against European empire, on the back of local anti-colonial struggles. The logic of this history and this argument forces us to look from the Hadrami diaspora, and its latest figure, Usama bin Ladin, to his opponent, the United States. It forces us to think of the United States as an empire, but one with a completely unique and new form. It is an empire without colonies. We do not yet understand the full ramifications of such a phenomenon, but one can already see that there are aspects of it which are extremely dangerous and need to be seriously thought about.

The issue of imperial power is what links the United States and the Muslim world today. On one side you have an empire not knowing that it is one; on the other you have a non-empire knowing full well that it is not one.

IMPERIAL POLLUTION, A NEW WORLD DISORDER

Empires create messes all over the place. Empires with colonial administrations have the machinery in place to clean up those messes, but the United States, as an empire without colonial administration, does not clean up after itself. As U.S. President Bush says, "We are not into nation building." Thus the debris proliferates. Bin Ladin's growing network feeds off that expanding detritus. But the problem of imperial debris goes beyond the United States. In addition to the Middle East, bin Ladin's recruits and supporters come from southern Philippines, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Xinjiang. These are all Muslim trouble-spots, trouble-spots because they are on the borders between non-Muslim empires present and past: Spanish, British, Chinese, Soviet, American. These are precisely the regions which experienced centuries of imperial violence without the benefits of colonial administration. While Afghanistan used to divide the empires ranged on all sides, after September 11 it united them against itself: Russia, China, and America found common cause against the Taliban. This configuration was an ironic, transient coincidence, but one that generates the feeling among those who identify with them of being universally put upon. In the words of Sufi Muhammad, who organized thousands of armed Pakistanis to enter the fray in Afghanistan: "This is a strange occasion of world history. For the first time, all the anti-Islamic forces are united against Islam."[43]

[43] http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_1623000/1623281.stm (28 Oct. 2001).

The cycle of terrorist attack and imperial response—passenger planes as manually guided missiles vs. remote-control aerial munitions—deepens the well of recruitment from peripheral to mainline Muslim populations. This is explosive beyond Afghanistan.

The only body in the world officially charged to clean up this sort of mess is the United Nations. This Nobel Peace Prize winner seldom delights at the prospect of playing proxy colonial administration. Its bureaucratic hands are full and it does not have a tax base, nor a standing army. What is the United States, as the one effective world power, with the usual trappings of a major state, to make of the cheers for bin Ladin? Are the natives actually ganging up, as the British always feared might happen, or is it just the sound of spectators clapping, never mind what they think? How is the United States to respond?

Is it conceivable for the United States to be neither imperial nor colonial, relinquishing its global military arm, cutting loose all proxy states, trusting in free trade and God to equilibrate all markets and level all inequalities?[44] Or is the opposite—full-scale colonization—the inevitable answer?[45] Ever more attuned to the burdens of domination than the liberals, American conservatives have staked out the poles between which their newspapers editorialize and their government lurches, Pat Buchanan's "America First" isolationism on one side (1999), and Kristol and Kagan's "benevolent global hegemony" on the other (1996).[46]

Damned if you do and damned if you don't, flip-flopping between isolationism and nation-building abroad, two priorities at least are clear for the U.S. government: internal securitization of the U.S. population itself, and an increased investment in methodologies of invisibility abroad. Remote control bombers fly ever higher out of sight,[47] while military advisors disappear into the Filipino jungles (Bacevich 2002), Yemeni mountains (Leupp 2002), and Georgian

[44] Chalmers Johnson (2000) calls for a demobilization of the massive Cold War military structures. His analysis of how political and economic considerations are combined within empire is one of the most convincing.

[45] Lord Cromer, British Consul General to Egypt (1883–1907) and actual ruler of the country, remained keenly aware of the contradictions inherent in indirect rule, which could "be justified (only) if we are able to keep before our eyes the possibility of evacuation . . . If that possibility becomes so remote . . . it would be better for us . . . that we should take over the government of the country, guarantee its debt, etc." (Arendt 1979:213).

[46] Dean Acheson opens his memoirs with precisely such a split in the United States in September 1939, between the isolationist America First Committee and the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (1969:3). Taking a leaf from his book, specialists on the military today have expressed impatience with the question of whether the United States is an empire or not. They see instead an urgent task ahead: to acknowledge the reality of the imperial burden and to move along with the serious business of how to do it best (Bacevich 2002; Donnelly 2002; Rosen 2002). The burdens of hegemony as understood by Richard Perle (chair, Defense Policy Board) and Paul Wolfowitz (deputy secretary of defense) of the current U.S. administration are articulated in their contributions to the volume *Present Dangers* (Kagan and Kristol 2000).

[47] For a study of the combined use of unmanned aerial vehicles and special operations forces, see Howard 1995.

gorges.[48] As well, security, military, and colonial functions are farmed out to private companies, removing them from political oversight. While invisibility continues to be the method of choice for dealing with the dominated, the debris piling up will not forever remain in the shadows.

CONCLUSION: WHY A DIASPORIC PERSPECTIVE? MANIFEST DESTINY OCCULTED

The present "war on terrorism" names an expansionist foreign policy, in which the U.S. imperial state proposes to be mobile in ways and places not possible while the USSR was alive. At the end of the nineteenth century, what Turner called the closing of the frontier engendered a breathtaking re-envisioning of U.S. geographical ideology. Writing in popular magazines like the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's* Captain A. T. Mahan (1906) of the U.S. Navy called upon his countrymen to take to the seas again, like their English forebears, and the United States found itself in possession of multiple colonies, in the Caribbean and across the Pacific. At the end of the twentieth century, the vanishing of the Cold War border led to the collapse of another dualistic geographical ideology, and competition to define its successor. A number of issues vied with each other to persuade U.S. public opinion that military action was needed in many places abroad: genocide, human rights, weapons of mass destruction. None was as successful as terrorism in building an overwhelming domestic consensus, after the attacks of September 11, 2001. In the eyes of its citizens, the U.S. state now has a legitimate right to use its overwhelming force against terrorists anywhere in the world, to replace states supporting them, but not to annex countries. In such a view, military contact with other nations is both unequal and impermanent. This is domination, but it is not colonialism. What terms do we have to register such relations between nations? Contemporary post-colonial theory is inadequate here because the geographical dimensions are beyond its ken. A broader perspective is needed, and a diasporic one may be a good starting point.

The weakness of post-colonial theory derives from its roots in post-independence revisions of colonial history. Concerned to write history from the point of view of the colonized native, revisionist history willy-nilly aligned itself with the nationalist agendas of the new states. This locked discussion of colonialism and its consequences into a fundamental dualism, which post-colo-

[48] With the disappearance of empire-sized rivals like the Soviet Union, U.S. instincts for an anti-colonial empire—i.e., for invisible modalities of military power—underwent massive development in the 1990s. A new "Special Operations Command" was created in the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols restructuring of the Department of Defense (Cohen 1998). "Special Operations Forces" (SOF) are "warrior-diplomats capable of influencing, advising, training, and conducting operations with foreign forces, officials, and populations" (Special Operations.com 2002). Through the Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) programme, they operated with their own budget in 101 countries in 1997, linking directly to the militaries there. They are a new, empire-wide channel of direct influence, and their aggrandizement as 'warrior-diplomats' acknowledges their usurpation of civilian functions in the conduct of foreign policy.

nial theories retain: West/East, colonizer/colonized, foreigner/native, other/self, white/black, master/slave. A Hegelian Frantz Fanon serves as touchstone. As the dual was generated on the axis of power inequality between colonizer and colonized, struggle for national self-determination that sought to reverse the inequality revolved around the same axis. Because this dual structure is the nationalist point of view, focused on wresting a piece of land from colonizers who are (by nationalist definition) foreigners, its appreciation of geography is parochial when compared to that of colonizer. For most colonial powers were not just colonial; they were imperial in extent and outlook. The many colonies which fired nationalist dreams and became so many post-colonial states were merely parts of a single empire, when viewed from the imperial centre. Thus while nationalist dreams and strategies were narrowly terrestrial, imperial ones were expansively maritime and aerial.[49] That remains the case today.[50]

Whereas post-colonial theory is predominantly dual, imperialism has always been plural with respect to places and parties involved.[51] An appreciation of its plural nature is crucial to understanding unauthorized ideological cross-currents, such as communism and pan-Islamism, which flowed with alarming speed across empires at the beginning of the twentieth century. The subversives who peopled such movements were mobile cosmopolitans whose agendas were presumably extra-territorial. They were often members of diasporic groups such as Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Arabs, Chinese, and Indians, found across imperial domains in more innocuous dress as "trading minorities" and indentured labour. One could not deal with them as one could provincial nationalist independence fighters, for their geographical mobility often meant crossing imperial and departmental jurisdictions, stretching the capacity of empire for political intelligence. Nor were they imperial equals one could treat with on the customary terms. A phrase common in British official writing from the period is *imperium in imperio* (e.g. Blythe 1969). It pointed to an inferior, subaltern entity which was nevertheless diasporic, cosmopolitan, and sophisticated like empire itself, and enough so to represent a potential threat.

[49] While Pannikar demonstrated the importance of an imperial framing, he too succumbed to the anti-colonial obsession with land, writing as he did in the first flush of Indian independence and territorial sovereignty: "Ultimately in Asia also, the land masses asserted themselves against the power based on the sea, and the withdrawal of European power from Asia is in effect a reassertion of the power of land empires shaking themselves free from the shackles of maritime mercantilism" (1993:16).

[50] Outside the communist world, the independent nation-state continues the regime of private property widely instituted under colonialism, with new selves now highly and irrevocably invested in the idea of owning de-communalized objects truly liberated to the market under conditions of democratic access. While post-colonial elites now have the land, imperial strategies continue to find value in other parts of a portfolio larger and lighter than real estate and its fruits.

[51] The concept of the plural society, associated with colonialism since Furnivall (1948), is more correctly an imperialist phenomenon. Colonizers move themselves to new land; imperialists move others. The plural society, though experienced as social compartmentalization, was a product of motion—populations shunted about to work within the large internal space of imperial economies.

The internationalization of anti-colonial struggle has hung like a spectre over the Western empires since the end of the nineteenth century. This was the fantasy W. E. B. DuBois savoured in his fictive *Dark Princess* (1995), in which the problem of the colour line becomes embodied in an international conspiracy of colored peoples—Blacks, Indians, Japanese, Arabs—against White domination. It remained a fiction. Race never rose to the challenge of internationalism. Communism and Islamism did. Internationalization of anti-colonialism achieved what a spatially less ambitious push could not: anti-imperialism, a clear view of the beast, the full elephant of empire instead of merely one of its four colony-legs touched by the blind. Geography is key here. Peoples native to old diasporas have geographical sensibilities as large as whole empires; possessed of folklore, ritual and literature, their cultural memories reach back even further. It is an expansive intelligence of this sort, I believe, which has now taken up arms against its geographical equal, the American empire.

The earlier conflicts in Malabar and Aceh that I described were anti-colonial in the sense of being localized. Territory under contention was also the site of violent conflict. The current conflict between bin Ladin and the United States is different. While the territory under contention—Saudi Arabia, most notably—is localized, the site of conflict is not. The territory under contention cannot quite be the site of conflict because it is under the tight control of a proxy state housing U.S. troops.[52] At some point after the Gulf War, a choice was made to enlarge the terrain of struggle from an anti-colonial to an anti-imperial one.[53] That is what makes the strategy terrorist in U.S. eyes.

Since the early 1990s, the worldwide circle has broadened, step by step. It is not haphazard, but deliberate, going from colonial soldiers to world traders. First, U.S. soldiers were targeted, in Somalia, Aden, and Saudi Arabia, then diplomats in Kenya and Tanzania, then planners in Washington, D.C. and traders in New York, then the civilians of allies in Indonesia. Anti-imperialist terror is now potentially everywhere—both where the United States does and does not have presence, both mimicking and mocking imperial omniscience, with its remote-control operatives, surgical strikes, and quick exit strategy up to heaven beyond retaliation. Alternating between invisibility and spectacle, this globalization of the conflict acknowledges the imperial terms of engagement, and takes the true measure of imperial reach in its strategy and its self-representation.

[52] This has changed since the early 1990s. September 11, 2001 has made real and believable the possibility of an internal Saudi collapse. This thought makes it urgent for the United States to now have direct presence in Iraq, to pre-empt its being sealed out of the whole Gulf region in such an eventuality, or its having to fight Iraq, Iran and a post-Saudi Arabia all at once.

[53] In contrast, despite the U.S. media-government obsession with unearthing new links between al-Qa'ida and Islamist movements everywhere, most contemporary movements of political Islam, such as the Algerian FIS, Palestinian Hamas, and Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, have settled into national containers, parting ways with the anti-imperial, nineteenth-century legacy of the perpetual exile, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. A notable exception is the Hizb al-Tahrir, which has long championed the cause of the Caliphate.

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