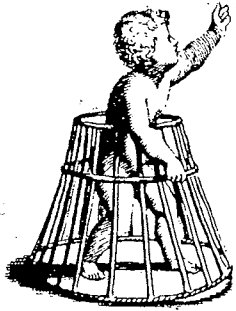


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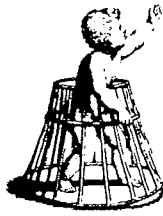
Bush's Need to Use Violence

***Why Males
are More Violent***

Swaddled Nation

Corporal Punishment

Modernity



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Some Antagonisms of Modernity

Josef Joffe, *Ueberpower: The Imperial Temptation of America*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2006.

Taking a look at transnational relationships, several contradictions seem to become clearer after the end of the Cold War, showing structures that are orientation marks for making decisions on the level of international affairs. The following is to be seen as an attempt to contribute on contradicting positions, processes and realities as discussed and described in publications such as Josef Joffe's *Überpower* and the thoughts of the author. Some theses include:

- Increasing and cheaper mobility and communication-technologies have narrowed space, and we can observe differences we have not seen before—confronting, at least emotionally, all people connected to media, such as TV, Internet, Mobile Communication, with the complexity of interrelated nations and cultures. The same paradoxically creates societies of disintegrated people (migration into the cities and increase of single households) among the ones interconnected and exclude the ones not capable of taking part, normally the less privileged and poor. What is meant to be an instrument of bringing people together is at the same time imposing force on those who are not in possession of information.
- The Western model of economy, driven by gains for particular interests, and sometimes disguised in the dressings of a freedom-ideology, sweeps away economically “less effective” systems in a global rush and creates dominating financial centers, which are easily capable of deciding about the rise or the fall of not so strong na-

tions. The same can be seen as the historically most effective development aid for Third World countries, as unprofitable productions give paid work to the endless number of unemployed in the southern hemispheres. There the standard of living can be raised, for the price of the dominance of competition. Politics in Western countries, normally representing the principle of cooperation, see themselves more and more needing to follow competitive demands as a question of their own survival. Growth and progress are seen as the holy cows of modernity, and without demonstrating growth rates, nations and companies are considered to remain in stagnation, which equals going backwards. Growth though is mainly seen in monetary figures, and even then in developed countries growth can only be achieved if at the same time costs are being cut. The cost cutting is preferably implemented on spending for social welfare and education, leading to a decline of progress in child rearing, education, personal freedom and social competence over all. In the competition of the survival of the (economically) fittest the succeeding in enforcing one's way is a much stronger force (exploiting natural and personal resources) than rationally recognized needs for collective cooperation and social development.

- Permanently reformed international institutions try to create international standards to build bridges between societies in different development stages, help the underdeveloped nations and the "so called" developed countries to redesign their societies. Their efforts reveal unbridgeable realities such as differences not only in the development stages of the various nations (the simultaneous inequality), but also in the emotional quality of relationship between the players on the field. Like in a poker game, real interests and scope for actions are being disguised in the fear to face a loss.
- The conquering of the world by the Western democratic model is accompanied by the hope for a better living for everyone in less forceful societies, mobilizing masses to evolve into becoming a part of America, the EU, Japan, or the rising nations as China, India and others. It not only throws nations into development processes, with a speed-handicap impossible to handle, to impose the Western model of freedom—it also sees its homemade limits having been denied too long: the global ecological collapse due to an enormous social metabolism, mainly coming from America and other developed countries.
- In Europe, nations—formerly built to regulate trade—merge into each other, overcoming unjust boundaries to an extent never seen before. Well-fed countries attract immigrants and to what is more,

face a demographic picture attracting immigrants from less developed countries and in this way, minimize the gap between high and low salary countries. But "The Citizen" becomes also less visible in his identity, in his values and potential help or danger. Glasnost is the paradox of making things transparent and at the same time diving into the diffuse. A little profane example: airports, the intercultural turntable of our days, represent the trade-centers of all sorts of undetected viruses, where at the same time everybody nowadays has to carry his/her toilet articles in a transparent plastic bag—a ridiculous measure to fight terrorism.

- Hierarchies are being flattened, giving decentralized organizations more room for creative innovations. They widen the number of individuals and social entities to take responsibility for stability and progress, as we can see in the consensual based experiment of the EU-countries (with their ideology to centrally govern autonomous regions), or in large companies, which ask for entrepreneurship of their employees to combine motivation and performance. The new freedom quickly leads to new recentralization as a response to the fear that things could get out of control, culminating in the phenomenon of modern terrorism, leading to the closing of borders, intensified central surveillance, the creation of new inner and outer enemies and the infliction of force against them.

All these contradicting processes and how they should be balanced are issue of recent publications, such as Josef Joffe's *Überpower*, Joseph Stieglitz's *Making Globalization Work*, or Jeremy Riffkin's *The European Dream*. Whereas Riffkin focuses on the European model, the experiment to build a union between nations without a strong center (decisions in Brussels require to follow the consensus-principle), Joffe spotlights the history of American expansionism and its equivalent Anti-Americanism up to present developments. He calls the U.S. "the unleashed Gulliver", the only remaining superpower after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, facing increased Anti-Americanism, all the result of an inferiority complex, projecting their own incapability on the U.S. (often using Sigmund Freud as his supporter, although the mechanism of projection out of inferiority goes back to Alfred Adler—but this is only a minor slip). He points out, that while the U.S. is being hated everywhere in the world, American culture has been an export world champion, starting with American English and ending with the things we Europeans buy for our everyday living. And his detailed, often redundant listings cannot be denied: the U.S. is the biggest military, economic and political power in the world, it can carry through its interests in the manner of a hege-

mony, joining international multilateralism only if it serves its own advantages. Out of this dominant role, he concludes, America should be aware of its responsibility for the whole world as the only superpower, and it should not be too excessive in acting for national interests.

For sure, Joffe, former managing editor of the German weekly intellectual newspaper *Die Zeit*, is taking up the cudgels on behalf of America in a time when inner-American protests against foreign policies, especially the war in Iraq, forces the U.S. government to take a turn. Taking a look at the latest issue of *Die Zeit* (20.12.2006, nr. 52) we can find an article written by Jan Ros, warning of the new American real politics after the Iraq disaster. He writes:

Es ist wahr, dass der missionarische Anspruch der Vereinigten Staaten unheimlich wirkt und Widerstand weckt. Aber ebenso wie der blauäugige oder übermütige Idealismus haben die Beispiele zynischer Machtpolitik dem amerikanischen Ansehen geschadet—und besonders der Eindruck, dass Idealismus und Machtpolitik unentwerrbar verbunden sind und die Werte je nach Zweckmäßigkeit mehr oder weniger hervorgekehrt werden können. . . . Was den Amerikanern unterstellt wird, ist weniger Naivität als Heuchelei.

It is true that the missionary approach of the United States appears eerie and provokes resistance. Examples of cynical policies of power have harmed the American reputation in the same way as naïve or high spirited idealism—and in particular the impression, idealism and policies of power are inextricably combined, parading values according their appropriateness It is not so much naivete than hypocrisy that is insinuated on the Americans.

Assuming Ross's thoughts are true, rational reasons for policies seem to represent only the cover, a blanket, like a dress for the right occasion, but the motivation has to be looked at from underneath the surface. Joffe avoids going too deep into explaining why America is practicing its foreign policies the way it does. His explanations of all kinds of strategic considerations and constraints overweigh, although at one point he mentions, that "The most dangerous division that can undermine a society are widening income inequalities and mounting friction between two warring ideological groups, as in 'Enrich yourself' versus 'Leave the driving to us'. It is the age-old war between rising new classes and a static, premodern power structure." (page 199). In his view, modern democratic nations such as America and the EU have overcome such frictions of their societies. Some pages later, in the chapter about the Second Iraq War, he has to state: "So Saddam Hussein had to be transfigured into a mortal foe to justify the most radical option of power politics, which is preemptive war. . . . Hence, the casus belli mutated into the irredeemably evil nature of the Saddamite

regime" (page 230). Now it was spoken out: the well-known dualism always appears in phases of splitting images primary to wars. Good and evil, weak and strong, siblings in inner emotional states of mind projected on an outer, primarily created enemy, in this case Saddam Hussein. So what are the inner-American causes for having to create a war, beside the excuse of fighting a threat or saving the oil reservoirs for the greedy West? Are there hidden new classes splitting the society, as Joffe assumed, for other nations on the leap into modernity?

As a European intellectual, having visited the U.S. many times, and who has also stayed there for many months, it is always fascinating how a nation, which seems to be torn up in such extremes, can be held together. Allow me to give some personal impressions: Hedonism and Stoicism in exaggerated forms live next to each other just like the bum without shoes in the cold New York winter walks next to people in oversized limousines. With more than 80 percent of the American people going to one of its numerous churches every Sunday (in Europe only 40 percent and becoming less), you would suppose they are a humble people with moderate needs. But not for nothing the American entertainment business is called an industry, legally or in the underground, and this as well does not fit to the fact that so many Americans have a shooting weapon at home. Another observation irritating a European, not because this as all other described phenomena cannot be seen in Europe as well, but never in this extent: In public you see people being very polite and friendly to each other, highly aware not to offend anybody, always smiling and giving compliments, hugging each other and saying they love them without even knowing this person very well. Once in "private", the picture changes rapidly. Children in American families are often at the same time neglected and undergone harsh protestant disciplining, physical education in high schools remind on military drill rather than doing sports for the reason to stay healthy, mutual sadism and terror reign among students and other groups. The land of freedom with the oldest democratic constitution turns into a horror cabinet once in the millstones of a legal system orienting on precedence cases, warning men never to use an elevator alone with a woman, because she could sue you for sexual harassment. Or getting in trouble with police forces for even small reasons, ending up in one of the prisons, where a good percentage of the population of the U.S. is now making their living. A "Just Do It!" or in older American language, "Go West!" mentality shows on the other side a nation of couch potatoes, working hard on their frustration in becoming heavily overweight. I could continue with examples out of the social welfare system, the education policy or the environmental laws, but

of course Josef Joffe is right when saying that double morals can be found in Europe as well, for example when restricting immigration and at the same time being a market demanding for illegal prostitutes from former Soviet countries. Following the U.S. practice, EU governments are privatizing whole sections of public responsibility (social welfare, education, management of basic resources like water, etc.), claiming to increase their effectiveness, but in many cases to achieve short time gains. Europe and the U.S. are more similar than Joffe may want to believe. He points out the overwhelming military and economic power of the "First among Nonequals" (page 161)—what is an easily explainable fact, as the U.S. was never split up into single nations, something that the EU has to overcome now, and the U.S. never fought a war on its territory (except the Civil War), throwing Europe back to Middle Ages in the 20th century.

EMOTIONS IN TENSE SITUATIONS

Normally one would suggest that our political system works in a rational and analytical way, not letting it be swept away by emotional feelings. But emotions cannot just be turned off. In my work with large and small groups, certain patterns can be observed as how they deal with inner conflicts or antagonism once they reach a certain state of emotional charging. They all seem to have consequences not really ending in wishful solutions but are deeply engraved in our cultural tradition:

1. *Denial* or ignorance can be found in every culture. Although all indications show a rising problem, the effort is to make it appear "not so bad", "will be resolved by itself", "is not my problem", etc. The way from the appearance of a conflict and its acceptance is always a long one. Denial functions so well that obvious and foreseeable danger is kept out of focus. Especially in phases of success and progress the resistance to focus on problems seems to be extraordinary strong. Examples: since decades we know that the demographic structure of our societies is creating a problem in financing pensions and medical aid for people reaching always-higher ages, but we finally take action only just as the problem has changed into a crisis. Or: scientists warn since decades that homemade global warming will lead to severe consequences not only in nature but effecting all levels of societies and demand a reduction of greenhouse-gas, but the by far biggest emission comes from the U.S., ignoring the problem until it is too late, as a recent study of the U.N. points out. Or: 9/11 could have been avoided, say some, if the government would have seriously considered all signals. The negative effect of denial can maybe be seen in an unconscious wish, the ignored should happen and catch us by surprise.

2. *Actionism* or having the feeling of being in control. The answer to a state of insecurity is hectic action without or insufficient analysis of the situation. The motto could be: "We do not know where we are going, but at least we reach the goal faster." It gives us the feeling of mastering reality, actually following a flight-impulse, full of anxieties our cognitive capabilities are being narrowed. In the state of actionism Serotonin-showers give the feeling of being invulnerable, what makes the mix so dangerously effective. Actionism is usually accompanied by phases of paralysis and perplexity, as the actions do not really show lasting relief, immediately followed by the next phase of action. This pattern is so common in all cultures that there are numerous examples to be found. Most prominent maybe the second Iraq War, where, against all warnings of middle east experts that trying to install a democracy in Iraq will lead to a civil war, were ignored and actionism has not stopped since then.
3. *Scapegoating* or making out inner and outer enemies, who are to be blamed for the own bad feelings, and by killing them, the group will experience relief and satisfaction. This mode is as old as mankind. Bad parts of the inner self are separated and identified in evil figures, shaping a picture of the one to fight. Present scapegoats can be enriched by traumatic historical events as shown in Vamik Volkan's works, and give the force more legitimism. Slobodan Milosevic for instance excavated the hero of the Amselfeld-Battle and toured with it through Serbia, ritually burying the bones at every location he stopped, reminding the Serbs who the enemy was. In the present war between the Western democratic world with Islamite countries, the mutual scapegoating can be heard in the news daily. Both sides blame each other to be personification of the Evil and consequently unify the ones they represent. The phenomenon of creating scapegoats can be found in the individual after traumatic experiences, in small groups when put under pressure and as pointed out in large groups where the emotional instructions are given the representatives, who then act out the task.
4. *Fate* or the pill that calms down. "Things have always been this way" one can hear, or "It is God's will that it happens", or "Suffering is part of our life", etc. The circumstances are too complicated and one cannot see clear anymore, loosing the feeling of orientation, so one might just give in and be washed away by the suction of occurrences. The handle is the belief a "higher", transcendent being, principal or law will be powerful enough to save me and I just do what has to be done or let things happen with me. The cause for one's aggression is seen in the responsibility of someone else, we

just follow orders . . . in bringing the world "democracy and peace", or will "go to heaven" for being a terrorist martyr. The passive form of fate is the sacrifice, "I kill myself (or let myself be killed) to save others" is the belief that calms down my inner stress. Although similar to Scapegoating, fate does not blame anybody but oneself, if you do not give in to what you are being told by, . . . how about by the Invisible Hand" (Adam Smith), or "the Europeans will first have to imitate, then to improve on, the American model" (Joffe, page 107) or "Allah"?

None of these patterns are capable of resolving neither the inner nor the outer conflicts although widely practiced. Even when Joffe criticizes European institutionalism, he, Stieglitz and Riffkin view international institutions such as the IWF, OECD, WTO, WB as the locations, where solutions follow less the above described patterns, but are more and more result of a process of common reflection. Without being in possession of primary sources myself, I tend to believe what they say. As what is being reported (especially by Stieglitz) these transnational institutions are able to learn and adapt, reform and react in a more distinguished way. They learn how to find answers in contradicting situations better than single nations, which rather follow their interest, than trying to find the best solution for all involved, as Stieglitz shows on the example of the duration of patents on medication, before generic products can be made available also for those who normally cannot afford the medication (page 144). A hegemon is never capable of being just, as caught in its own interest in keeping and using the power.

When emotional issues are being tried to handle with rational measures, the plan has to fail. It might be, as an example, wishful and rationally making sense to develop dictatorships towards democracy. But why do imposed democracies such as in Palestine and Iraq turn against the democracy itself? You cannot expect a democracy to function when the people actually ask for a dictator they can follow or fight against. This would be like asking a child that has been always punished and being threatened to suddenly be self-assured, creative and independent. Saddam Hussein for sure was a cruel dictator, but the step from his regime to a parliamentary democracy seems to be a bit of a sudden solution—anyway brought forward by the U.S. government as a reason after weapons of mass destruction could not be found. As in Europe or in South America, dictatorships cannot be wiped out without leaving a vacuum of authority and authoritarian behavior comes back dressed in democratic clothes.

HOW TO DEAL WITH EMOTIONALLY CHARGED SITUATIONS

In our Conflict Management Seminars, when doing case work, or in Conflict Interventions on the spot, we follow certain rules which have turned out to be helpful in bringing conflict partners closer together and achieve sustainable resolutions:

1. Before handling any rational issue, work on the emotional issues (such as feelings of humiliation), otherwise solutions, agreements and results lack the transparency of their motivational background and might fail soon.
2. All parties involved are to participate in the working process—one of the most difficult things to achieve in international politics. The creating of a consciousness of mutual dependence is crucial for further steps to take.
3. Use analytical methods—such as fantasy analysis or many other instruments—to go deeper into emotional patterns. On the one hand this will make it possible to reduce consternation (in imposing analytical distance), but guarantees to stay close in the psychological dimension of the antagonism.

Shady horse-trading, like “we consider you as our friend, but in return you buy our products,” normally do not produce sustainable a change in attitudes or lead to a more developed behavior, as it is more comfortable to stick to traditional prejudices. The only legitimate force to be used in such resolution processes is the one in which all the important key players can participate, and have to find the solution themselves. The hegemon U.S. seems to have lost most of its credits in the international community due to recent political and military actions. Joffe’s demand on the U.S. to take over responsibility (chapter 7) must therefore be understood as the U.S. responsibility to force other nations and their representatives to talk to each other, and at the most negotiate prevailing conditions, but keep in the background otherwise. *Pride goes before a fall* is a saying, maybe to be considered by No. 1.

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