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military victory was a lost opportunity. They may be right, but note the story told by an American soldier, who, along with several of his colleagues had been captured during the fighting: “The Iraqis had a hard time understanding something. Shoshanna is Panamanian. Edgar is Hispanic. Joe is Philippine, and Patrick is from Kansas. ... One Iraqi said to me, ‘You no fighting each other? Why?’” (p. 441). Perhaps even good planning would not have led to a viable polity.

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The American Era: Power and Strategy for the 21st Century by Robert Lieber. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005. 272 pp. \$28.00.

The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World’s Government in the Twenty-first Century by Michael Mandelbaum. New York, Public Affairs, 2005. 283 pp. \$26.00.

Criticizing U.S. foreign policy is a popular parlor sport, rivaling the World Cup in its global appeal. Iraq embodies U.S. failures: the absence of weapons of mass destruction, a resistant insurgency, and a state at risk of collapse. Largely because of the U.S. presence in Iraq, most of the world thinks the United States is the biggest threat to world peace (Pew Research Centre, 2006). However, as important as it is for America to acknowledge the shortcomings of its foreign policy, it is equally important that analyses be historically grounded and sophisticated, and that these consider alternatives to America’s positions and policies.

Two recent books by leading foreign policy analysts take the more difficult and, indeed, more unpopular route. These books, by Michael Mandelbaum and Robert Lieber, have a common intent: to remind Americans and the world that the exercise of U.S. power has never been altruistic or problem-free. By focusing on cases in which the United States has used its power appropriately to stabilize the world and to help establish global institutions, the books consider what most detractors of U.S. policy forget: where would the world be without the United States to lead?

The Case for Goliath is clearly argued and well supported, accessible to both laymen and undergraduates. Mandelbaum details what the United States has accomplished since the end of World War II, but he is clearly not just a cheerleader for the United States, and he is realistic about what has motivated U.S. behavior. From beginning to end, Mandelbaum’s thesis is that it is more appropriate to think of the United States as a world government rather than an empire. While empires are about inequality, coercion, and control by foreigners, Mandelbaum maintains that the United States does not directly or indirectly control other states, and when it has had the opportunity to dictate

outcomes in a country, as it exemplified in Bosnia after 1995, it willingly shared its power with others. Mandelbaum is correct, and by defining *empire* early in the book, he develops a much better framework for understanding the U.S. role in the world.

In Mandelbaum's view, the United States steers rather than controls, and provides public goods and services for the world community. The meat of the book provides an excellent overview of what the United States built after World War II: policies and institutions that cohered into two international orders, one involving security, and the other economics (p. 18). Adeptly moving between history and current events, the book explains how the American military's reach has been used to provide reassurance and security to parts of Europe and Asia.

At times, however, the patriot in Mandelbaum slips out, and his choice of imagery to illustrate his points speaks volumes. For example, he initially compares the U.S. role in the world to the sun's position in the solar system (p. xvi) and later claims that America's role in the world since World War II has something in common with the theme of the Frank Capra film *It's a Wonderful Life* (p. 194). Thus, although Mandelbaum makes an excellent case for why the United States has, in some respects, acted as a world government, providing global public goods and stabilizing the world, his questionable analogies weaken rather than strengthen his argument.

Robert Lieber's book adopts a similar if not more strident tone about American foreign policy and the need for a strategy of primacy. However, *The American Era* emphasizes what has changed in the post-September 11 world and how the United States needs to confront its unique but inherently difficult position. Lieber claims that "Islamist terrorism and WMD, the inadequacy of international means for confronting this danger, and the unique power of the United States" require that Americans acknowledge the problems in international relations for what they are (p. 37). For Lieber, this means that growing anti-Americanism has more to do with what the United States *is* than what it *does*. Hostility toward the United States thus stems as much, or more, from reactions to globalization, modernity, and American preponderance as it does from U.S. policies themselves (p. 7). As Lieber admits, his argument is not the norm among academics, regardless of their philosophical tradition.

There are many strengths to this book; above all, Lieber is able to clearly link international relations theories to current policy debates. His thorough (although not excessive) reading of relevant literature will probably make this a common text for classes on U.S. foreign policy. In general, Lieber provides not only both sides of an issue but also numerous and conflicting perspectives, as well as concise literature reviews of debates ranging from U.S. grand strategy to threats to American primacy to positions on the role of culture in international politics. One glaring exception to this rule is the chapter on Iraq. Lieber pays scant attention to the numerous criticisms of the administration

of George W. Bush, including that it was intently looking for information that would link Saddam Hussein to both Osama bin Laden and September 11. Given the importance of Iraq to the intensification of anti-American attitudes, this omission is problematic.

Despite their shortcomings, both books provide significant evidence for what we as Americans sometimes hate to admit: we are the superpower, and the world regularly looks to us to assist and to lead but also to blame. These scholars demonstrate that America's unique position has created numerous challenges and burdens, which the books detail in different but often overlapping ways.

Disappointingly, both authors essentially let the Bush administration and the American people off the hook by concluding that foreign policy challenges and anti-Americanism are due largely to the structure of the international system and are not a by-product of how the U.S. government has used its power or flaunted its position in the world. In addition to recalling what the United States has done right and what it must do in a post-September 11 world, it would have been helpful if these books had concluded with policy recommendations as to how the United States could better negotiate its inherently difficult position. Certainly, there must be some way of reversing the global public opinion that it is the United States, rather than Iran or North Korea, that is the greatest threat to world peace. Several years ago, then-candidate Bush seemed to know how the United States could maintain its legitimacy and avoid global resentment. It was, we should not forget, through humility and the judicious use of power.

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Suicide Terrorism by Ami Pedahzur. Cambridge, MA, Polity Press, 2005. 261 pp. \$24.95.

Ami Pedahzur examines the global history of suicide terrorism in his most recent book, *Suicide Terrorism*. He isolates the variables among diverse cases from the Middle East, South Asia, and a more globalized suicide terror campaign perpetrated by al Qaeda and its ideological cohorts.

Pedahzur emphasizes that suicide terrorism is instrumental because terrorist leaders believe it is effective. Suicide terrorism is used not only to destroy a specific target but, more broadly, to translate into political gains for the terrorist organizations that employ it.

According to Pedahzur's comprehensive study, suicide bombing has grown exponentially over the last twenty years. He makes clear, however, that this is not solely an Islamic phenomenon but has been utilized with great efficacy by secular groups as well. "Islam is not the factor that explains suicide terrorism and treating it as such is misleading" (p. 23). Nevertheless, unlike other studies