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The Empire in Our Heads: “The Logic of Rule”

*Take up the White Man's burden –
Send forth the best ye breed –
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild –
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.*

That’s the opening stanza of Rudyard Kipling’s famous poem “The White Man’s Burden,” written in 1899. The full title of the poem was “The White Man’s Burden: The United States and The Philippine Islands.” The United States was at the time attempting to annex the Philippines.

The average person in the U.S. doesn’t think about Empire—the rule of one nation or people by other nations or people—too much, at least not consciously. Still, the constant propaganda reinforcing the rightness of the Imperial Order is so strong that most US-Americans end up sharing a set of ideas that I call The Imperial Mindset. What do I mean by The Imperial Mindset, and how can it be reinforced without thinking about it?

By “Imperial” I simply mean “having to do with Empire.” And here’s the definition of “mindset” according to the Oxford English Dictionary:

Mindset: An established set of attitudes, esp. regarded as typical of a particular group's social or cultural values; the outlook, philosophy, or values of a person; (now also more generally) frame of mind, attitude, disposition.

So is there a “set of attitudes” that is typical of the social or cultural values of the United States in regard to its leadership of a global Empire? I think there is, and it has to do with an acceptance of a certain order of things, and a certain way of relating to the world outside of the

United States.

The core of the Imperial Mindset is an acceptance of a hierarchy in which some people give the orders and some people take them. As you might expect, the people giving the orders usually find that the arrangement suits them just fine. The would-be order-takers often have a different view. The dissonance is typically resolved by force, or the threat of force.

The Logic of Rule

In the opening paragraph of the preface to their book *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri speak of modern Empire as a “new global form of sovereignty...that governs the world.” (Sovereignty, says the dictionary, is “supreme dominion, authority, or rule.”)

This new order, which has emerged in the post-colonial and post-Cold War world, relies on “a new logic and structure of rule” which unites “a series of national and supranational organisms.” These organisms all accept the Logic of Rule and share the power necessary to enforce that logic on leaders or nations who may have other ideas about who is in charge.

But how do the members of the powerful nation come to believe that they *should* give the orders? That is, what makes their right to rule “logical”? Alejandro Colás, in his book *Empire*, says that the “policy and a process” that “today we might call imperialism” is “guided in large measure by an ideologically constructed sense of superiority, which seeks to assimilate foreign regions and populations into an expanding polity.” (A “polity” is an organized society.)

Historian Niall Ferguson, writing in the influential journal “Foreign Affairs” in 2003, spoke of how U.S. power today compares with the power of England when
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Greetings,

You may be reading this issue of the Notes on or around the 20th anniversary of the terror attacks in the United States that took place on September 11th, 2001. If so, let this issue remind you that the vengeful attack on and occupation of Afghanistan was an Imperial project from the outset. And what this means is that it was a failure not because the "mission" was not accomplished, but rather because the mission itself—and the War on Terror of which it was a part—was illegitimate.

Pretty much every word of this issue of Nygaard Notes first appeared in Nygaard Notes #445 back in the year 2010 (this editor's note being the exception). And that's because the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is best understood as a chapter in the long story of the decline of the U.S. Empire. And in order to understand that long story, we need to have an understanding of Empire itself. I began to summarize this point as I was putting together the last issue of the Notes, but quickly realized that I really couldn't say it any better than I said it eleven years ago!

Is it "cheating" to mail out a reprint of something I have previously written? Well, my apologies if you think it is, but subscriptions to Nygaard Notes are free, after all! And, more importantly, many of you were not reading Nygaard Notes in 2010, and those of you who were are unlikely to remember many of the details. So now, as the latest Imperial Project unfolds (unravels?) in Afghanistan, we are offered a wonderful opportunity to think about what Empire means, both to the citizens of the Imperial power and to the victims.

The so-called American Century is over, and we need to begin to imagine a world order without the U.S. calling the shots. Step One in that process is to begin to recognize the power of the Imperial Mindset that resides in the hearts and minds of all of us raised here in the heart of the beast. The future will be different. How different it will be is up to us.

I'm not done with Afghanistan—the next Notes will be a veritable smorgasbord of facts and stories about goings-on in that country while it was under U.S. occupation. So don't go away, #677 will be coming your way soon!

Anti-imperially yours,
Nygaard

Logic *from page 1*

it had its own empire. In that context, he noted the "longevity" of what he called "the ideology of imperialism—the sense of a British mission to rule."

The Logic of Rule, wherein the people of one nation feel that it is their "mission" to give the orders to others, only makes sense if it is accompanied by a "sense of superiority" in the minds of those who reside in the Empire. This is especially the case in an Empire that is a democracy, since the population will be asked to occasionally endorse the expenditures and policies necessary to enforce the Imperial order, or at least to refrain from protesting too loudly.

The late Edward Said stated in 2003 that "Every single empire in its official discourse has said that it is not like all the others, that its circumstances are special, that it has a mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort. And, sadder still, there always is a chorus of willing intellectuals to say calming words about benign or altruistic empires."

Despite claims of its "exceptionalism," the modern United States is no different. Examples are numerous, so I'll just use one story in the New York Times of December 21st to illustrate the pattern.

On that day the Times ran a front-page article on a base in Indiana where "the government trains 

→→ Americans who are part of the most ambitious civilian campaign the United States has mounted in a foreign country in generations—a ‘civilian surge’ intended to improve the lives of Afghans.”

We read that the so-called civilians are trained on an Army base, which is reflective of the essentially military nature of the Afghan campaign. The article begins by describing a role-playing exercise in which the U.S. civilians “visit” a judge in Afghanistan and attempt to address “a backlog of cases.”

The Times tells us that “Nobody here [in Indiana] calls this nation-building—the Obama administration's new strategy for Afghanistan studiously avoids that term—but it is certainly a crash course in helping to rebuild a damaged society. And it supports the ambitious civilian effort laid out in the president's approach.” The U.S. “goal is to have 1,200 to 1,300 [U.S. civilians in Afghanistan] in six months,” up from the current 1,000. “More than 50 advisers are burrowing into Afghan ministries in Kabul,” the article tells us.

The Times quotes Richard C. Holbrooke, the administration's special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, saying “We haven't had anything like this since Vietnam.” And “His deputy, Paul W. Jones, said the civilians would have to resist the impulse to do too much. ‘We are not there to turn Afghanistan into something we would recognize as America,’ he said.”

The “ambitious civilian effort” is to be carried out by 1,300 civilians, or roughly one-half of one percent of the roughly 260,000 troops and private military contractors who will soon be stationed in Afghanistan. Not to mention the CIA station in Afghanistan, which is “among the largest” in CIA history.

Here, then, is a summary of the official story of the U.S. effort in Afghanistan, as decoded from the above article, just one of the innumerable news reports on the situation:

The U.S. is undertaking an “ambitious civilian campaign” which is “intended to improve the lives of Afghans” and “rebuild a damaged society,” but it is plagued by a problem: We might “do too much” in a misguided effort to make Afghanistan into a miniature version of our own country.

My hope is that the above paragraph is laughable due to the transparently self-serving rhetoric. But I suspect that it's not laughable for many people, due to the prevalence of the Imperial Mindset that we're all subject to as recipients of the Propaganda that goes with Empire. The Logic of Rule upon which the Imperial Mindset is based relies on the “ideologically constructed sense of superiority” that tells some people that they have the right and the duty to rule over others. The next article looks at how the daily news reinforces that sense of superiority and, in the process, serves to make what should be laughable seem logical. ◆

The Empire in The Media

In the previous article I spoke about the Logic of Rule (which is what unites all of the different forms of imperialism) and the “sense of superiority” that forms the basis of that logic. As I said, this “sense” is particularly important in an Empire with a democratic form—like the U.S.—as the population in such a nation must assent to the Imperial Order, and maintaining such an order is tremendously costly both in the material and in the moral sense. In this regard I'd like to have a look at how the daily flow of information works to create, maintain, and reinforce a certain interpretation of events that fits with the Logic of Rule.

As usual, I'm not particularly interested in whether there is a conscious or intentional effort to Propagandize the population on the part of the media, or if the Propaganda

comes about for other reasons. The important thing is the effect, which in this case seems to reflect the interests of the Empire quite as well as if it were part of an Imperial Plan.

“Empire Doesn't Sound So Heinous”

A Chicago Tribune article in 2003 claimed that, in the wake of September 11th 2001, “empire doesn't sound quite so heinous to American ears.” They found a history professor from Rutgers who said that since “The civilian population of America suddenly saw itself at risk... It was, ‘Yes, we're willing to give up domestic rights; yes, we must use force overseas. Yes, we must build an empire—an empire of pre-emptive military strikes.’” Yet Walter La Feber, a professor of →→→

Media from page 3 → American foreign relations at Cornell University, issued a warning to refrain from too clearly naming the not-quite-so-heinous phenomenon, as he told the Tribune, quite accurately, that “Americans don't like the word ‘empire.’ We like the word ‘democracy.’”

So “democracy” it is, or at least not “Empire,” when it comes to reporting on U.S. relations with the other nations of the world.

La Feber's comment was an unusual echo in the mass media of the thinking on this subject that is fairly common in academic and foreign policy circles, where it has long been understood that the public would best be kept in the dark when speaking of Empire. Back in 2002, after the U.S. attack on Afghanistan but before the U.S. attack on Iraq, neo-conservative scholar Thomas Donnelly wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that “it is still inflammatory to speak openly of empire—hence the prevalence of euphemisms such as hegemony, preeminence, primacy, sole superpower” and so forth.

The need for “euphemisms” is widely acknowledged, and even talked about. For instance, in 2003 one of my local papers, the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, ran an article headlined “To Some, ‘Empire’ Has Nice Ring; but Critics Warn U.S. Should Avoid History-laden Label.” This appeared on April 28, 2003, in the midst of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

“Not quite so heinous.” “A nice ring.” Welcome to the Empire.

Avoid the Term, Embrace the Practice

At about the same time as the “Nice Ring” article (May

of 2003) USA Today ran a lengthy opinion piece by Max Boot, a scholar at the influential Council on Foreign Relations. The headline itself says a lot: “American Imperialism? No Need to Run Away from Label.” But beyond the headline, it's worth noting some of the ideas that Boot expresses, as he is no doubt speaking for some unknown number of those on the inside of U.S. foreign policy circles. “The history of American imperialism is hardly one of unadorned good doing,” says Boot, “But, on the whole, U.S. imperialism has been the greatest force for good in the world during the past century.” Still, there's a lot of “historical baggage that ‘imperialism’ carries,” Boot admits, so “there's no need for the U.S. government to embrace the term. But it should definitely embrace the practice.”

What we've seen in recent years—and continue to see—in the U.S. media has been a utilization of euphemism that fits very neatly with Boot's prescription. That is, a near-universal avoidance of “the term,” and frequent references to “the practice.”

The phrase “American Imperialism,” for instance, appeared in a headline in the major U.S. media just once in the past year. (And that was the headline in USA Today that I am talking about right now.) The phrase “American Empire” never appeared. Nor did we ever witness the appearance of the phrases “U.S. Imperialism” or “U.S. Empire.” No need to embrace the term, after all.

The references to “the practice” of imperialism, on the other hand, while frequent, are typically encoded in ways that require a little practice to understand. The next article consists of a small collection of examples of encoded “Empire-Speak,” accompanied by a few tips on how to spot and decipher the code. ♦

The Practice of Imperialism: Cracking the Code

Back in April of 2009 the New York Times reported on an attack in Pakistan by U.S. unmanned vehicles (“drones”) that killed “at least 10” people. The final paragraph read as follows: “Pakistani authorities frequently criticize the drone attacks as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty, and the Pakistani public resents the strikes. But the United States says they form a central part of its tactics to oppose the Taliban in the border area.” Since the U.S. “says” it's OK, the article appears on page 10 and generates little discussion in this

country beyond the public relations problem presented by the wanton killing of innocents by forces of The Empire. That's because of the Logic of Rule that underlies the Imperial Mindset.

Another story appeared two days after that one, reporting on another drone attack. This one killed 13 people including “women and children.” The article—this time from the Associated Press—repeats the party line using almost the same 

→→ words: “Pakistan says the drone strikes violate the country's sovereignty, kill innocent civilians and generate sympathy for the militants. But the U.S. believes the attacks are an effective tool to combat militants in the region.” There’s the Logic of Rule again.

The next month, on May 19th, the NY Times broke a story that began this way: “Zalmay Khalilzad, who was President George W. Bush’s ambassador to Afghanistan, could assume a powerful, unelected position inside the Afghan government under a plan he is discussing with Hamid Karzai, the Afghan president, according to senior American and Afghan officials.” The Times explains that “The position would allow Mr. Khalilzad to serve as ‘a prime minister, except not prime minister because he wouldn’t be responsible to a parliamentary system,’ a senior Obama administration official said.” So Khalilzad would be, as news reports put it, the “CEO” of Afghanistan, and he would be unelected and free of responsibility to anyone who might be accountable to the population. We are to understand that this is a good thing because having Khalilzad there “would provide the Obama administration with a strong conduit to push American interests in Afghanistan.” Note that we are speaking about the Obama administration, for those who thought that the Imperial Mindset was a disease confined to the Bush years.

The month after that, on June 8th, the Times ran a story headlined “Erratic Afghan Security Units Pose Challenge to U.S. Goals.” The article discusses at length U.S. “plans” for Afghanistan. Exactly what will happen is “now under review,” but “The Pentagon plans to expand the training” of the Afghan troops.

After pointing out that “The Americans started rebuilding Afghanistan even before a similar effort in Iraq,” the Times says that what is happening is that “the lessons learned from Iraq are distilled into plans for Afghanistan.” We are then told that “Those plans are ambitious. In Afghanistan, the Pentagon wants to make Afghanistan's military able to direct artillery and airstrikes, and to develop an air corps with attack aircraft. And Western trainers are emphasizing supervisory skills required for a professional force: personnel and payroll management, logistics and maintenance.”

Nowhere in the article is there any mention of the desires or wishes of the people of Afghanistan in regard

to these “plans,” which are, in any case, “The Pentagon's plans.” This absence likely remains unnoticed for those who are subject to The Logic of Rule.

Moving ahead to more recent news, the New York Times of November 19th headlined a front-page story “Obama Demands Afghan Reforms Produce Results.” The fourth paragraph states that “The White House is developing ‘clear targets’ for both the Afghan and Pakistani governments, possibly with specific timelines... It is not yet clear what the administration is willing to do if the targets are not met.”

Two days later Mr. Obama’s Secretary of “Defense,” Robert Gates, was pretty clear about one thing the U.S. is willing to do. The headline said it all: “Gates Says U.S. Could Cut Aid if Afghans Fail to Curb Corruption.” Said the Secretary, “the place to start is the place where we have the greatest leverage, and that’s where we’re writing the checks.”

Orders from the U.S. hardly stop at “fighting corruption,” of course. The Times reports that “the administration will insist that Afghanistan... speed up troop training and retention, and funnel development assistance to areas the Taliban dominate. As for Pakistan... officials said [that] the White House plan would press Islamabad to keep up pressure on its insurgents as well as on Al Qaeda and, most important, go after militant groups that until now it has not taken on aggressively.” Regardless of the wishes of the citizens of Afghanistan, which are never mentioned by the Times or anyone else. The superior people reserve for themselves the right to make the plans and “demand” compliance from their subjects.

The examples so far have all been from the news pages. But the lead editorial in the New York Times of November 19th, headlined, “Mr. Obama's Task,” included these words:

“Mr. Obama must make clear to both Mr. Karzai and the American people the sweeping changes required to build a credible Afghan government. If there are other, better partners, competent cabinet members or provincial officials, then Americans need to hear how Mr. Obama plans to empower them.” The Times doesn’t bother to make the case for who should be “empowered” to empower anyone, or to decide who is a “better partner,” or what “competent” means. No need to explain; the Logic of Rule should make it obvious.

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Code *from page 5*

My final example of Empire-Speak comes from Europe. Italy, in fact, where a judge on November 5th “convicted 23 Americans of kidnaping an Egyptian cleric off the streets of Milan in 2003, a sweeping verdict against one of the CIA’s most valued anti-terrorism tools—the practice known as extraordinary rendition.” That’s the Los Angeles Times speaking.

Two responses were heard to the verdict. One comes from Armando Spataro, the deputy public prosecutor in Milan who, according to the Washington Post, “said in his closing argument Wednesday that it was ‘unthinkable’ that the U.S. policy of extraordinary rendition should trump Italian law, which forbids kidnaping. ‘Here, Italian law rules, not American law or any other law,’ he said.”

On the same day, National Public Radio chose to interview one John Radsan who served as the CIA’s assistant general counsel from 2002 to 2004 and now teaches at the William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul (about five miles from Nygaard Notes World Headquarters in Minneapolis.) Radsan told NPR that “When we [in the CIA] do espionage in covert action we accept, as an unfortunate consequence, that in many situations we’re going to be violating international law and we may in many situations be violating the laws of other countries.” How unfortunate!

So, which opinion prevails here? The CIA opinion that we do what we want, ignoring the “unfortunate” laws of

the world or of the countries in which we operate? Or the Italian prosecutor’s opinion that it is “unthinkable” to ignore the laws of his country? Rule of law? Or The Logic of Rule? The Associated Press reported on November 4th that “The Obama administration ... has opted to continue the practice of extraordinary renditions.” There you have it: Empire prevails.

We are in dangerous territory when a news story is based on a set of premises that are never stated but merely assumed. For the Logic of Rule to seem logical, one must carry within oneself a “sense of superiority,” a “sense of a mission to rule,” that is in turn tied to even deeper beliefs about racial and ethnic hierarchies. These degrading beliefs are difficult to advocate using forthright argument, as they conflict with the national mythology of the U.S. as a Nation of Laws, a Shining City on a Hill, and a color-blind meritocracy. But when put into use as hidden premises, they become the tools required to make sense of Empire-Speak. When we are forced to use these tools every day, week in and week out, the effect is to train the mind to accept these ideas without ever bringing them to consciousness. As I said, this is dangerous territory.

The 21st-Century United States lacks a poet of the stature of Kipling to tell us that the “white man” must “serve his captives’ need” because the poor subjects of the Empire are “sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child.” But it is just such ideas that get reinforced by their use as a subtext for our daily news. It’s the job of moral people to learn how to identify them and argue against them. This essay is intended to help us do that job. ♦

Reversing The Roles, Revealing the Empire: Ecuador

I first explained what I call the “Reversing The Headline Trick” in Nygaard Notes Number 243, ‘way back in February of 2003. It’s particularly useful in decoding Empire-Speak when we encounter it in the media.

Here’s how the basic trick operates: When you see a headline or news report about U.S. behavior in another country and it doesn’t sound right to you but you can’t figure out why, try reversing the names and see if the story still makes sense.

It goes beyond headlines, actually. We can take any news report that involves two actors (individuals,

countries, parties to a conflict, whatever) and reconstruct the story with the roles reversed. If the logic that guides the story is consistent—consistent with itself or consistent with things we already know—then the mirror version will still make sense. But if it doesn’t make sense when it’s switched around, then we’ve learned something about the assumptions of the reporter, or of the PR person, or of whoever is telling the story. And, most likely, about our own assumptions.

A great example from a couple of years ago illustrates that reversing the headline is a trick used not only by obscure public intellectuals in Minnesota, ↗↗↗

→→ but is a technique sometimes employed to good effect by heads of state.

Ecuador/Florida, Florida/Ecuador

There is an air base in Manta, Ecuador, called the Eloy Alfaro base. It was leased to the United States in 1999 (right around the time the U.S. was forced to vacate its bases in Panama) for a period of 10 years and since then, by its own count, the U.S. Air Force has flown more than 5,500 “anti-drug” missions from the base. The U.S. State Department said last month that the American presence in Ecuador was “a relatively small U.S. footprint,” and claimed that the base had been “a good neighbor” to residents near Manta. A State Department spokesman was quoted as saying that “The polling of the communities around Manta consistently showed high support” for the U.S. military presence.

Yet somehow, mysteriously, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa was elected “emphatically” in 2006, and one of his campaign pledges was to close down the US military base at Manta. Given that the Manta base has been the only official U.S. military base in South America, the U.S. was quite keen on renewing the lease.

A year after his election, on a trip to Italy, Correa used an interview with Reuters to raise some significant questions about power relations, sovereignty, and the role of military forces in the hemisphere. Here’s what he told the Reuters reporter, as reported in a story on October 22, 2007:

“We’ll renew the [U.S.] base on one condition: that they let us put a base in Miami—an Ecuadorian base. If there’s no problem having foreign soldiers on a country’s soil, surely they’ll let us have an Ecuadorian base in the United States.”

Reuters headlined their story “Ecuador Wants Military Base in Miami,” indicating that they missed the point entirely. Back in January of 2007 ISN Security Watch ran a story headlined “US Faces Eviction from Ecuadorian Base,” which explained the issue from the Ecuadorian point of view. ISN quoted Fredy Rivera, professor and researcher with the Ecuadorian branch of the Latin American University for Social Sciences, who said, “The nationwide position not to involve Ecuador in Plan Colombia is the first reason why Ecuadorians do not want the US military to remain in Manta.”

ISN continued: “Rivera explained that another reason why Ecuadorians did not want the base to remain was their belief that the base was not only used for counter-drug missions. ‘The surveillance equipment can be used to watch activity in Colombia, Peru, parts of Venezuela and Bolivia, and of course Ecuador,’ Rivera said, concluding that “The final reason why Ecuadorians do not want the base at Manta renewed is due to US and Colombian foreign policy.”

(For more on Plan Colombia see Nygaard Notes #51 and #55. For a recent update, visit Foreign Policy in Focus: www.fpif.org/articles/revamping_plan_colombia)

The Inter Press Service, in its report on the “Manta to Miami” story, claimed that Correa was “joking” when he talked about an Ecuadorian base in Miami, but the original Reuters story said nothing about anyone laughing.

Still, Correa may have been joking, and in any case, most would perceive such a comment as a joke—or as evidence of lunacy on the part of President Correa. And that’s because it is virtually unthinkable for most people that a head of state of a country like Ecuador could be serious when he suggests that the needs and interests of the people in his nation might be the same as those of the people of the colossus to the north. By reversing the roles in such a way, Correa was gracefully, maybe humorously, pointing to the Logic of Rule and, one might guess, attempting to remind his European/U.S. audience that there is another logic that may be employed when considering relations with The World’s Only Superpower.

When the original ten-year lease for the Manta base was signed in 1999, one report bore the headline “Military Bases Close in Panama, New Bases Open in Ecuador.” Now, in the wake of the closing of the Manta base, President Obama is “negotiating an agreement for five military bases in Colombia that would replace . . . the U.S. airbase in Ecuador.”

So it is in Panama, Ecuador, Colombia, and who-knows-where else that the U.S. military has set up shop in the hemisphere. This is what an Empire does, after all. Just don’t ask the U.S. to allow any other country’s military to base itself in Miami, or anywhere else in this country. If that’s how it worked, then we wouldn’t be an Empire, and it wouldn’t be a joke when the Ecuadorian President reverses the roles. ♦

“Quotes” of the Week (the week of January 2 2010, that is)

“It is committed to Empire.”

Here’s Vijay Prashad, writing in Counterpunch in December [2009] about President Obama’s just-announced escalation of the occupation of Afghanistan:

“There is a better alternative to escalation, which is to make the stability of Afghanistan a regional responsibility, and to withdraw in a very timely fashion. The regional partners with the greatest stake in the stability of Afghanistan, such as Iran, India, Pakistan, China and the various Central Asian republics, will not begin a genuine process if the US-NATO Occupation persists. Why would the Chinese or the Iranians get their hands dirty if this means that their work will reward the US with military bases at Bagram and Kabul? A prerequisite for their entry into the process is the withdrawal of the US, and a pledge that no permanent military bases will remain in the region. This is not a marker that the US is willing to put on the table. It is committed to empire. Obama said at West Point, ‘We have no interest in occupying your country.’ That is true if the definition of occupation is a 19th century one. But a 21st-century occupation is conducted via military bases and extra-territorial privileges, by free trade agreements and dispensations for certain corporations. The high walls of the bases and the hum of the drones is enough to distort the fine sentiments in Obama's phrase.”

“Empire, a state of being and of mind”

And, for a view from overseas, here’s a comment from Philip Golub, who is a journalist and lecturer at the University of Paris VIII. He wrote these words in an essay titled “After the End of Empire: The Sun Sets Early on the American Century.” The essay appeared in October of 2007, in *Le Monde Diplomatique*:

“Iraq was a strategic experiment designed to begin the Second American Century. That experiment and US foreign policy now lie in ruins...”

“For the US power elite, being on top of the world has been a habit for 60 years. Hegemony has been a way of life; empire, a state of being and of mind. The institutional realist critics of the Bush administration have no alternative conceptual framework for international relations, based on something other than force, the balance of power or strategic predominance. The present crisis and the deepening impact of global concerns will perhaps generate new impulses for cooperation and interdependence in future. Yet it is just as likely that US policy will be unpredictable: as all post-colonial experiences show, de-imperialisation is likely to be a long and possibly traumatic process.”

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