

## **“*Revolution Is U.S.*” (1999)<sup>1</sup>**

### **Thomas L. Friedman**

Sooner or later McDonald's is in every story: Where did O.J. eat just before the murder of Nicole? McDonald's. What did Commerce Secretary Ron Brown serve U.S. troops just before he died? McDonald's.

*-saying in the press office at McDonald's headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois*

I believe in the five gas stations theory of the world.

That's right: I believe you can reduce the world's economies today to basically five different gas stations. First there is the Japanese gas station. Gas is \$ 5 a gallon. Four men in uniforms and white gloves, with lifetime employment contracts, wait on you. They pump your gas. They change your oil. They wash your windows, and they wave at you with a friendly smile as you drive away in peace. Second is the American gas station. Gas costs only \$1 a gallon, but you pump it yourself. You wash your own windows. You fill your own tires. And when you drive around the corner four homeless people try to steal your hubcaps. Third is the Western European gas station. Gas there also costs \$5 a gallon. There is only one man on duty. He grudgingly pumps your gas and unsmilingly changes your oil, reminding you all the time that his union contract says he only has to pump gas and change oil. He doesn't do windows. He works only thirty-two hours a week, with ninety minutes off each day for lunch, during which time the gas station is closed. He also has six weeks' vacation every summer in the South of France. Across the street, his two brothers and uncle, who have not worked in ten years because their state unemployment insurance pays more than their last job, are playing boccie ball. Fourth is the developing-country gas station. Fifteen people work there and they are all cousins. When you drive in, no one pays any attention to you because they are all too busy talking to each other. Gas is only 35 cents a gallon because it is subsidized by the government, but only one of the six gas pumps actually works. The others are broken and they are waiting for the replacement parts to be flown in from Europe. The gas station is rather run-down because the owner lives in Zurich and takes all the profits out of the country. The owner doesn't know that half his employees actually sleep in the repair shop at night and use the car wash equipment to shower. Most of the customers at the developing-country gas station either drive the latest-model Mercedes or a motor scooter. The place is always busy, though, because so many people stop in to use the air pump to fill their bicycle tires. Lastly there is the communist gas station. Gas there is only 50 cents a gallon but there is none, because the four guys working there have sold it all on the black market for \$5 a gallon. Just one of the four guys who is employed at the communist gas station is actually there. The other three are working at second jobs in the underground economy and only come around once a week to collect their paychecks.

What is going on in the world today, in the very broadest sense, is that through the process of globalization everyone is being forced toward America's gas station. If you are not an American and don't know how to pump your own gas, I suggest you learn. With the end of the Cold War, globalization is globalizing Anglo-American-style capitalism and the Golden Straitjacket. It is globalizing American culture and cultural icons. It is

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux), 1999.

globalizing the best of America and the worst of America. It is globalizing the American Revolution and it is globalizing the American gas station.

Unfortunately, not everyone likes the American gas station and what it stands for. Embedded in the Japanese, Western European and communist gas stations are social contracts very different from the American one and very different attitudes about how markets should operate and be controlled. The Europeans and the Japanese believe in the state exercising power over the people and over markets, while Americans tend to believe more in empowering the people and letting markets be as free as possible to sort out who wins and who loses. Because the Japanese, Western Europeans and communists are uncomfortable with totally unfettered markets and the unequal benefits and punishments they distribute, their gas stations are designed to cushion such inequalities and to equalize rewards. Their gas stations also pay more attention to the distinctive traditions and value preferences of their communities. The Western Europeans do this by employing fewer people, but paying them higher wages and collecting higher taxes to generously support the unemployed and to underwrite a generous goody bag of other welfare-state handouts. The Japanese do it by paying people a little less but guaranteeing them lifetime employment, and then protecting those lifetime jobs and benefits by restricting foreign competitors from entering the Japanese market. The American gas station, by contrast, is a much more efficient place to drive through: the customer is king; the gas station has no social function, and its only purpose is to provide the most gas at the cheapest price. If that can be done with no employees at all—well, all the better. A flexible labor market will find them work somewhere else. Too cruel, you say? Maybe so. But, ready or not, this is the model that the rest of the world is increasingly being asked to emulate.

America is blamed for this because, in so many ways, globalization is us. We are not the tiger. Globalization is the tiger. But we are the people most adept at riding the tiger and we're now telling everyone else to get on or get out of the way. The reason we are so good at riding this tiger is that we raised it from a cub. The three democratizations were mostly nurtured in America. The Golden Straitjacket was mostly made in America. The Electronic Herd is led by American Wall Street bulls, and the most powerful agent pressuring other countries to open their markets for free trade and free investment is Uncle Sam. Our recruiting poster reads: UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU (for the Electronic Herd).

On top of it all, globalization has a distinctly American face: It wears Mickey Mouse ears, it eats Big Macs, it drinks Coke or Pepsi and it does its computing on an IBM or Apple laptop, using Windows 98, with an Intel Pentium II processor and a network link from Cisco Systems. Therefore, while the distinction between what is globalization and what is Americanization may be clear to most Americans, it is not to many others around the world. In most societies people cannot distinguish anymore between American power, American exports, American cultural assaults, American cultural exports and plain vanilla globalization. They are now all wrapped into one.

Martin Indyk, the former U.S. ambassador to Israel, told me a story that illustrates this point perfectly. As ambassador, he was called upon to open the first McDonald's in Jerusalem. I asked him what he said on the occasion of McDonald's opening in that holy city, and he said, "Fast food for a fast nation." But the best part, he told me later, was that McDonald's gave him a colorful baseball hat with the McDonald's logo on it to wear as he was invited to eat the first ceremonial Big Mac in Jerusalem's first f McDonald's-with

Israeli television filming every bite for the evening news. The restaurant was packed with young Israelis eager to be on hand for this historic event. While Ambassador Indyk was preparing to eat Jerusalem's first official Big Mac, a young Israeli teenager worked his way through the crowd and walked up to him. The teenager was carrying his own McDonald's hat and he handed it to Ambassador Indyk with a pen and asked, "Are you the ambassador? Can I have your autograph?"

Somewhat sheepishly, Ambassador Indyk replied, "Sure, I've never been asked for my autograph before."

As Ambassador Indyk took the hat and prepared to sign his name on the bill, the teenager said to him, "Wow, what's it like to be the ambassador from McDonald's, going around the world opening McDonald's restaurants everywhere?"

Somewhat stunned, Ambassador Indyk looked at the Israeli youth and said, "No, no. I'm the American ambassador-not the ambassador from McDonald's!"

The Israeli youth looked totally crestfallen. Ambassador Indyk described what happened next: "I said to him, 'Does this mean you don't want my autograph?' And the kid said, no, I don't want your autograph, and he took his hat back and walked away."

No wonder that the love-hate relationship that has long existed between America and the rest of the world seems to be taking on an even sharper edge these days. For some people Americanization-globalization feels more than ever like a highly attractive, empowering, incredibly tempting pathway to rising living standards. For many others, though, this Americanization-globalization can breed a deep sense of envy and resentment toward the United States-envy because America seems so much better at riding this tiger and resentment because Americanization-globalization so often feels like the United States whipping everyone else to speed up, Web up, downsize, standardize and march to America's cultural tunes into the Fast World. While I am sure there are still more lovers of America than haters out there, this chapter is about the haters. It is about the other backlash against globalization-the rising resentment of the United States that has been triggered as we move into a globalization system that is so heavily influenced today by American icons, markets and military might.

As the historian Ronald Steel once pointed out: "It was never the Soviet Union but the United States itself that is the true revolutionary power. We believe that our institutions must confine all others to the ash heap of history. We lead an economic system that has effectively buried every other form of production and distribution-leaving great wealth and sometimes great ruin in its wake. The cultural messages we transmit through Hollywood and McDonald's go out across the world to capture and also undermine other societies. Unlike more traditional conquerors, we are not content merely to subdue others: We insist that they be like us. And of course for their own good. We are the world's most relentless proselytizers. The world must be democratic. It must be capitalistic. It must be tied into the subversive messages of the World Wide Web. No wonder many feel threatened by what we represent."

The classic American self-portrait is Grant Wood's "American Gothic," the straitlaced couple, pitchfork in hand, expressions controlled, stoically standing watch outside the barn. But to the rest of the world, American Gothic is actually two twenty-something American software engineers who come into your country wearing long hair, beads and sandals, with rings in their noses and paint on their toes. They kick down your front door, overturn everything in the house, stick a Big Mac in your mouth, fill your

kids' heads with ideas you've never had or can't understand, slam a cable box onto your television, lock the channel to MTV, plug an Internet connection into your computer and tell you: "Download or die."

That's us. We Americans are the apostles of the Fast World, the enemies of tradition, the prophets of the free market and the high priests of high tech. We want "enlargement" of both our values and our Pizza Huts. We want the world to follow our lead and become democratic, capitalistic, with a Web site in every pot, a Pepsi on every lip, Microsoft Windows in every computer, and most of all-most of all-with everyone, everywhere, pumping their own gas.

I saw the sign above the front door as soon as I walked into the lobby of the Homa Hotel in downtown Teheran in September 1996. Written there were the words "Down with USA." It wasn't a banner. It wasn't graffiti. It was *tiled* into the wall.

"Jeez," I thought to myself. "That's tiled into the wall! These people really have a problem with America."

A short time later I noticed that the Iranian mullahs, who have always been more sensitive to the ups and downs of American cultural and military power than anyone else, had started calling the United States something other than just the "Great Satan" and the bastion of "imperialism and Zionism." The Iranians had started to call America "the capital of global arrogance." I found that a subtle but revealing shift. The Iranian leadership seemed to understand that "global arrogance" was different from imperialism. Imperialism is when you physically occupy another people and force your ways upon them. Global arrogance is when your culture and economic clout are so powerful and widely diffused that you know that you don't need to occupy other people to influence their lives. As India's Finance Minister, Shri Yashwant Sinha, once said to me about America's relations with the rest of the world today: "There is no balance, no counterpoise. Whatever you say is law."

And that is what makes today's combination of Americanization and globalization so powerful. What bothers so many people about America today is not that we send our troops everywhere, but that we send our culture, values, economics, technologies and lifestyles everywhere—whether or not we want to or others want them. "America is different," German foreign policy expert Josef Joffe noted in a September 1997 essay in *Foreign Affairs*. "It irks and domineers, but it does not conquer. It tries to call the shots and bend the rules, but it does not go to war for land and glory.... The United States has the most sophisticated, not the largest, military establishment in the world. But it is definitely in a class of its own in the soft-power game. On that table, China, Russia and Japan, and even Western Europe cannot hope to match the pile of chips the United States holds. People are risking death on the high seas to get into the United States, not China. There are not too many who want to go for an M.B.A. at Moscow University, or dress and dance like the Japanese. Sadly, fewer and fewer students want to learn French or German. English, the American-accented version, has become the world's language. This type of power—a culture that radiates outward and a market that draws inward—rests on pull not push; on acceptance not on conquest. Worse, this kind of power cannot be aggregated, nor can it be balanced. In this arena, all of them together—Europe, Japan, China, and Russia—cannot gang up on the United States as in an alliance of yesteryear. All their movie studios together could not break the hold of Hollywood. Nor could a consortium of their universities dethrone Harvard.... This is why the `strategic

partnership' forged by Russia and China appears so anachronistic in 1997. What are they going to do about America? Boris Yeltsin will hardly want to shop for know-how and computers in Beijing. And China will not want to risk its most important export market."

No wonder then as I traveled around the world at the end of the 1990s, I found that not only the Iranians were calling America "the capital of global arrogance," but, behind our backs, so too were the French, the Malaysians, the Russians, the Canadians, the Chinese, the Indians, the Pakistanis, the Egyptians, the Japanese, the Mexicans, the South Koreans, the Germans-and just about everybody else. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, who, like the Iranians, is ever sensitive to even subtle changes in America's international standing, shrewdly tried to tap into this newfound resentment by changing his propaganda line. In the first Gulf War crisis in the early 1990s, Saddam depicted himself as the Arab Robin Hood, come to steal from the Arab rich to give to the Arab poor. In the second Gulf War crisis, in the late 1990s, Saddam depicted himself as Luke Skywalker, standing up to the American Evil Empire. Every time he was interviewed on television, Saddam's Foreign Minister complained that America behaved like "the last days of the Roman Empire." This became Iraq's new propaganda line, from the top of the regime right down to the street. I was watching CNN one day and heard them do an interview with "a man in the street in Baghdad," who just happened to refer to America as an "international Dracula that sucks the blood of people around the world."

O.K., O.K., so the rest of the world thinks we're obnoxious bullies and is envious of us.. So what? What impact does this really have on relations between the United States and other governments? The short answer is that it makes America's relations with every country a little more complicated today. Some countries now go out of their way just to tweak America's beak; others sit back and enjoy the role of the "free rider"—they let America be the global sheriff, pay all the costs of confronting the Saddam Husseins and other rogues, and enjoy the benefits, while all the time complaining about America; others stew with resentment at American domination; others just quietly fall into line.

In fact, America's relationship to the rest of the world today is a lot like Michael Jordan's relationship was-in his heyday-with the rest of the NBA. Every other player and team wanted to beat Michael Jordan; every other player and team hated him for the way he could expose all their weaknesses; every other player and team measured themselves against Michael Jordan, and to some extent modeled their moves after him; every other player and team constantly complained that the referees let Michael Jordan get away with all sorts of fouls that no one else could. But despite all of that, none of the other teams really wanted to see Michael Jordan injured or retire, because anytime he came into town every seat was sold. He was the straw that stirred the drink for them all.

Consider just a few examples of this phenomenon: When Anatoly Chubais, one of the original architects of Russia's privatization program, was negotiating yet another Russian bailout by the IMF in the summer of 1998, the IMF was demanding more stringent terms than ever, and Chubais had little choice but to give in. At the height of the negotiations, the Russian television show *Kukli*, which features puppets dressed up as various Russian leaders, did a takeoff on "Little Red Riding Hood." Boris Yeltsin was Grandmother and then Prime Minister Kiryenko was Little Red Riding Hood, trying to get to Yeltsin to influence the latest Russian bailout plan before anyone else. When Kiryenko arrived at Grandmother's house, though, he found Chubais already sitting next to Yeltsin. Chubais was dressed in a space suit and moon helmet. On the front of the suit

were the Russian letters for “IMF” and an American flag. Chubais was literally depicted as an agent from planet America, there to tell the Russians what to do. When Kiryenko saw him sitting next to Yeltsin he said to the audience, “I guess I arrived too late.”

At the 1999 Davos World Economic Forum, Minoru Murofushi, chairman of Japan’s giant trading company the Itochu Corporation, was on a panel with Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov. Murofushi was commenting on Primakov’s efforts to negotiate an end to Russia’s economic crisis when, in something of a Freudian slip, the Japanese businessman said, “I know Mr. Primakov is meeting tomorrow with Mr. Fischer from IBM -I mean from the IMF.” Oh well, IBM, IMF, what’s the difference—they’re both controlled by the Americans!

Yuan Ming, a professor of international relations at Beijing University, is one of China’s leading experts on America. She once told me a story that indicated that China thought the only way to react to American global arrogance was with some arrogance of its own: “Our political leaders in their public speeches don’t use the term ‘globalization.’ They use the term ‘modernization: There is a cultural reason for this. The historical lesson is still fresh in Chinese people’s minds that China was forced into the international community in the last century by gunboats-so globalization represents something that China doesn’t pursue but rather something that the West or America is imposing. Modernization, on the other hand, is something we can control. There is an annual New Year’s television program that is shown on the main national television channel. It is one of the biggest TV events of the year in China. Almost a billion people watch it. Usually it is just singers and comedians. Three years ago, though, [in 1995] the show had a skit about two parents in a rural area calling their son who was studying in the United States. They ask him, ‘How are you on this New Year’s Day?’ He says he’s fine and that he plans to return home after finishing his Ph.D. in the United States. The parents are pleased to hear this. The line I remember most, though, is the parents telling the son that China is getting as good as America at many things. They say: ‘You did some dishwashing for the Americans. Now we have to have some Americans come and do some dishwashing for us.’”

I was flying home from Japan on December 14, 1997, and was reading the letters to the editor in that day’s Japan Times. I like to read them in whatever country I am in, because I always find interesting nuggets there. This letter was entitled “American Hubris,” and it spoke for a lot of people. It said: “I am at (another) loss for words over the continuing bullying tactics of the United States. This time, I read that the U.S. refuses to sign any agreement [at the Kyoto Conference on climate change] unless three of its ‘demands’ are met...I would never belittle the U.S. history of ‘helping’ where it can-but the ‘world’s greatest country’ (its claim, not mine) must learn humility. Its recent return to glory has been equally due to the failure of its competitors’ political and economic systems. Pride comes before a fall. The U.S. government would do well to remember that.” Signed: Andrew Ogge. Tokyo.

I visited India following its 1998 nuclear tests, and Indian Lieutenant General (retired) V. R. Raghavan, the former chief of operations of the Indian Army and now an analyst at the Delhi Policy Group, told me he had just taken part in an international seminar on the nuclear issue. The participants included British, American, Chinese and Indian experts, among others. “During one of the breaks we went out to tour a tiny Indian village and I showed them the shops and homes and the cow dung being used as an

energy source,” said General Raghavan. “But most fascinating was a visit we made to a middle school in the village. There were about thirty children in their early teens, and some teachers, and members of our group wanted to talk to them. So they set out some benches and had a chat. There was a lawyer from New York in the group and he asked the kids what they thought of China and the United States. Without any prompting these kids said that China is our biggest neighbor, we had a war with China, but China stands up for weaker nations and we have no problems with China. ‘How about the United States?’ he asked them. They said the United States is ‘a bully, it elbows everybody and thinks only of itself.’ People in the group couldn’t believe it”

In 1997, I attended an academic conference in Morocco entitled “Globalization and the Arab World.” Most of the Arab participants were French-educated Arabs from North Africa and France. (To be a French-educated Arab intellectual is the worst combination possible for understanding globalization. It is like being twice handicapped, since both of these cultures are intuitively hostile to the whole phenomenon.) I was asked to give a brief introductory talk on globalization, which I did. When I was done, a former Algerian Prime Minister, who was living in exile and attending the conference, asked to respond to my remarks. Speaking in French, he denounced everything I had to say. He argued that “this globalization you speak about is just another American conspiracy to keep the Arab world down, just like Zionism and imperialism.”

I listened politely to his remarks, which went on in this vein at great length, and then I decided to respond in a deliberately provocative manner, in hopes of bursting through his fixed mind-set. I said roughly the following (with my profanities edited out): “Mr. Prime Minister, you spoke of globalization as just another American conspiracy to keep you down. Well, I have to tell you something-it’s much worse than you think. Much worse. You see, you think we are back there in Washington thinking about you and plotting how to keep you down, and turning all the dials and pulling all the levers to do just that. I wish we were. God, I wish we were. Because I like you, and I would turn the dials the other way to let you up. But the truth is, we aren’t thinking about you at all! Not for a second. We don’t give a flying petunia about you. And it’s not out of malice. It’s because we’re trapped under the same pressures as you are, and we’re trying to keep one step ahead of the competition just like you are, and we’re worried about what the bond market is going to do next, just like you are. So I wish I could confirm for you that there is a conspiracy to keep you down, but I can’t....Now if you want to build an Islamic bridge to this globalization train, build an Islamic bridge. If you want to build a Maoist bridge to this train, build a Maoist bridge. If you want to build a Jeffersonian bridge to this train, build a Jeffersonian bridge. But promise me one thing-that you will build a bridge. Because this train will leave without you.”

But for every North African who is reacting to Americanization-globalization by shaking his fist at it, another is simply falling into line and trying to get the best out of it. While I was visiting Casablanca in 1997, the guided missile frigate USS Carr pulled into the port for a call. The U.S. consulate in Casablanca held a reception for local officials and guests on the deck of the Carr and invited me to attend. While some young Moroccan girls elbowed each other to get pictures with the U.S. sailors in their dress uniforms and guests dined on chicken fingers and Budweiser on tap from a big steel keg, I fell into conversation with the governor of the Casablanca district. Sporting a tailored suit, the Moroccan official proudly explained to me in perfect French why he was sending his two

children to the American school in Casablanca, and not to the French schools where he was educated.

“Two reasons,” he offered. “First, in the world we are going into, if you don’t speak English, you’re illiterate. Second, the French system teaches you how to be an administrator. The American system teaches you how to survive on your own. That’s what I want my kids to know.”

Although French culture and education have been embedded in Morocco’s major cities since 1912, there are now three American schools there, and they are in such demand they each have waiting lists for the waiting list. In fact, there is a real cultural competition now between America and France for the hearts and minds of the new generation in traditionally French-dominated North and West Africa, and it is a competition that America is increasingly winning-without even trying. It’s all demand-driven. “The French higher education system has not adapted to this revolutionary period,” remarked Dominique Moisi, who used to teach at France’s renowned ENA, the National School of Administration, and is one of his country’s leading experts on international affairs. “The French system rewards people for their capacity to follow the path that is open to them. It does not encourage people to rebel or to develop their character. The mood out there is that if things are changing now in the 1990s, it is not because of France. America has become a mirror of our own doubts. We look at you and see what’s missing.”

Another popular reaction to Americanization-globalization today is the tendency of some countries to complain bitterly about America throwing its weight around, while they sit back and reap the fruits of American power. The Japanese will tell us privately that we are “dead right” in demanding that China live up to international copyright laws. And they will tell us that Japanese companies, such as Sony and Nintendo, suffer every bit as much from Chinese pirates as Disney and Microsoft. But Japan is not going to butt heads with Beijing on this issue. It will let Washington, the world’s only superpower, do this while Japan holds America’s coat and goes on doing as much business with China as it can—even taking advantage of whatever markets the United States loses in its confrontation with Beijing. At the end of the day, if the Americans are successful at winning new copyright concessions from China, Japan will enjoy this as well. How do you say “free rider” in Japanese?

Finally, there is a trend of countries looking for opportunities to complicate American diplomacy and check American power, both for traditional geopolitical reasons and for the sheer feel-good sport of it. Take Russia or France, for example: the more they are unable to achieve honor and dignity in the Fast World, the more they look to achieve it in all the wrong places instead—by challenging American diplomacy in Bosnia, Kosovo, the UN or Iraq. In fact, the weaker Russia gets, the more it is tempted to magnify even its small differences with the United States and the more some Russians try to stick a finger in America’s eye to feel better about themselves—to feel that somehow they are still America’s equal.

As Russian commentator Aleksei Pushkov once said to me: “The prevailing attitude here now is that Russia should be a balancing force to correct situations where America gets infatuated with its own power.” I would put it a little differently. The unspoken motto of Russia and many others today is: “If you can’t have a good war

anymore to change the subject from your domestic troubles, at least have a good argument with the Americans.”

Being the world’s sole superpower doesn’t guarantee that America will get its way everywhere, but it does guarantee that America will be criticized everywhere. Again, think of the NBA. Gary Payton is the all-star guard for the Seattle SuperSonics. He’s a great player, but he’s not Michael Jordan and he makes up for some of his shortage in skills by talking trash to his opponents, particularly to Michael Jordan before he retired. To my mind, France and Russia today are the Gary Paytons of geopolitics—the biggest trash talkers in the world, always trying to make up for their weaknesses by giving everybody a lot of lip—especially Washington.

In the Marx Brothers’ classic movie *Duck Soup*, there is a scene in which Chico and Harpo are talking to the evil, calculating European statesman Trentino, Groucho’s political rival, who has hired Chico and Harpo as spies. When Chico and Harpo come to Trentino’s office to report on the progress of their spying, his secretary walks in with a telegram. Harpo grabs it out of her hands, examines it closely and then rips it into shreds, tosses it on the floor and shakes his head. Stunned and surprised, Trentino turns to Chico with a quizzical look, as if to ask: “Why did he do that?” And Chico answers: “He gets mad because he can’t read.”

That scene reminds me of yet another trend in reaction to Americanization-globalization—the one that is actually dangerous. It is the reaction of those who either are not up to Americanization-globalization or don’t want to be up for it for cultural, economic or political reasons, and want to rip it up every time it is shoved in their face. These are the Harpos—angry men and women who, unlike their leaders, don’t want to have it both ways. They don’t just want to bow to America and then criticize it behind its back. They want to have it one way, the old way, their way.

To paraphrase something Ronald Steel once said to me, the angry men see Americanization-globalization as an uninvited guest: You try to shut the door and it comes in through the window. You try to shut the window and it comes in on the cable. You cut the cable, and it comes in on the Internet over the phone line. When you cut the phone line, it comes in over the satellite. When you throw away the cell phone, it’s out there on the billboard. When you take down the billboard, it comes in through the workplace and the factory floor. And it’s not only in the room with you, this Americanization-globalization. You eat it. It gets inside you. And when it comes in it often blows open a huge gap between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, grandparents and grandchildren. It creates a situation where one generation sees the world radically different from their parents, and it’s all America’s fault. The constant theme, for instance, of the Saudi millionaire terrorist Osama bin Laden is that America has to get out of the Arabian Peninsula, and out of the Islamic world at large, because its way of life is “defiling the Islamic home.”

Former Indian Prime Minister I. K. Gujral is no Osama bin Laden, not at all. But I had a conversation with him in New Delhi once in which he articulated the distress that some people feel at the way Americanization-globalization gets inside their family and home. “I see the same thing happening now in India—the changes in our dress, eating habits,” said Gujral. “My granddaughter is four. She is always talking about bubble gum, not Indian food, or she says, ‘I don’t like Pepsi, I like Coke: She even speaks English more often than Hindi. I asked her one day why she doesn’t speak to me in Hindi, and

then she went to her mother and asked: ‘Doesn’t Grandfather speak English?’ I keep on observing my grandchildren because it is an insight. The other day my granddaughter said she wanted pizza. So her grandmother said that she would make a pizza for her the next day. My granddaughter said, ‘No, no, I want Pizza Hut.’”

In Shanghai, I interviewed Wang Guoliang, a top official at the Bank of Communications, one of China’s big four state banks. Just for fun I asked him where he got his news about the world. He said every morning his secretary prepared a summary for him from the Internet and Reuters, but he also got a lot from his son.

Then, out of the blue, he launched into a lecture about fathers and sons that lapsed into a tirade against the Internet.

“My son is an expert at the Internet. Whenever he comes across something interesting on the Internet he shows it to me,” said the Chinese banker. “But fathers should not be guided by sons. My son also makes suggestions to me, but I don’t like most of what he suggests. The father should not listen to the son. It undermines authority. I told my son to read the Internet less and to study more.”

I. K. Gujral and Wang Guoliang are too cultured and sophisticated to get violent about this, but not so the other angry men. The angry men don’t have a full-blown alternative ideology to Americanization-globalization. They are like Harpo. They just prefer to rip up the message and stomp on it. And unlike their wimpy governments, who complain about Uncle Sam but toe his line, the angry men are ready to cross that line and pull the trigger.

Now we get to what is really scary. Americanization-globalization not only gives these angry men a much greater incentive to hate America; it also gives them much greater power, as individuals, to pull that trigger. Globalization super-empowers them in two very important ways.

First, with the world wired the way it is—with all of us so much more connected in so many more places so much more of the time—terrorists can now unnerve so many more people at once. Consider my winter vacation in December 1998: I was skiing in the Rocky Mountains and for the first time I noticed that in almost every ski lift in which I was riding up the mountain, someone was speaking to someone else on a cellular phone. A friend of mine was skiing with a handheld pager that gave him a running account of both the Dow Jones Industrial Average and his own stock portfolio. He checked it between runs down the mountain. While I was mailing off several chapters of this book at a Federal Express satellite office, for delivery half a country away by 10:30 a.m. the next day, I ran into NBA Commissioner David Stern walking down the street with a cell phone to his ear, negotiating an end to the NBA lockout. At the end of my day of skiing I would go home and check out one of the forty channels on the local cable television, telephone friends in Cairo and Jerusalem using my AT&T credit card or use my AOL 800 number to check on the news wires and any E-mail I might have received. At dinner on New Year’s Eve, I was getting my coat at our restaurant and the following conversation was going on at the front desk between an angry customer and the maitre d’: “What do you mean you didn’t get my reservation? I sent it to you by E-mail weeks ago! The name is Ashraf, A-s-h-r-a-f.” Before going to bed I picked up a copy of USA Today and it carried the picture shown in chapter 2 of a Hasidic Jew pressing his cell phone up against the stones of the Wailing Wall. Remember the caption: “Shimon Biton places his

cellular phone up to the Western Wall so a relative in France can say a prayer at the holy site.”

All this, *while I was on vacation in the mountains!*

Imagine what it's like when we're home or at the office. We are all just so much more connected now. We know, or can know, everything that happens instantaneously. And in such a world, it takes smaller and smaller amounts of dynamite or germ weapons or highly enriched uranium to create anxiety and havoc that can touch billions of people all at once.

Globalization also gives terrorists more bang for their buck in another way. When microchips and miniaturization make things smaller and lighter, everything becomes smaller and lighter. Sam Cohen, the inventor of the neutron bomb, observed in the *Washington Times* (June 7, 1998) that within ten years after the first plutonium fission test at Alamogordo, U.S. bomb designers were able to reduce warhead weight, for the same yield—20 kilotons—by a factor of approximately 100. The United States has developed a warhead for the NATO battlefield that is launched by two men carrying a bazooka, with a yield below one-tenth of a kiloton. So have the Russians. We found that out when Russia's former national security adviser, Alexander Lebed, claimed that 100 mini-nuclear weapons, known as “suitcase bombs,” were missing from the armory of Russian special forces. That is why Geoff Baehr, chief of network designs for Sun Microsystems, remarked to me once: “My biggest worry, and it cannot be overstated, is that this entire infrastructure is very vulnerable to attack, not just from a computer hacker, but from someone getting into the telephone switches. In this world the attacker can go to the telephone front, go home and have a sandwich, and come back and attack again.”

When you combine the angry men that Americanization-globalization creates with the way in which globalization can super-empower people, you have what I believe is the real, immediate national security threat to the United States today: the Super-Empowered Angry Man. That's right, it's not another superpower that threatens America at the end of the twentieth century. The greatest danger that the United States faces today is from Super-empowered individuals who hate America more than ever because of globalization and who can do something about it on their own, more than ever, thanks to globalization.

In the Cold War system, a Super-Empowered Angry Man—a Hitler or a Stalin—needed to take control of a state in order to wreak havoc on the world. But today's Super-Empowered Angry Man, or Woman, can use the powers embedded in globalization to attack even a superpower. It was said of the far-flung Roman Empire that all roads led to Rome—north, south, east and west. And it was through that road system that Caesar extended his writ far and wide. And they were great roads. But there is a funny thing about roads. They go both ways, and when the Vandals and the Visigoths decided to attack Rome they came right up the roads. So it could be with globalization.

The Super-Empowered Angry Men come in many different forms. They range from the very angry but less violent to the very angry and somewhat violent to the very angry and very violent. A good example of the angry but less violent are the computer hackers who attacked my own newspaper, *The New York Times*, a pillar of the American establishment. On September 13, 1998, these hackers broke into the *Times*'s Web site, the first time hackers have ever broken into the Web site of a major news organization. Martin Nisenholtz, president of the New York Times Electronic Media Company, told

me the story: “We had just put out the Kenneth Starr report on Clinton on a Friday and it was a great day for our Web site. We had the only fully indexed version of the Starr report online, so you could just hit keywords and find what you wanted, and we were breaking all kinds of records for usage. I was so comfortable with where we were that I had accepted an invitation to go to Philadelphia to speak at the Wharton International Forum. So Saturday night I went down to Philadelphia. On Sunday morning at 7:45, I got a call from our Web site editor that we had been hacked. It had happened once before when some group had tried to flood our servers with requests. But this was different. They had actually taken over our Web site and were publishing their own message on our home page under the logo HFG, ‘Hacking for Girlies.’ They had superimposed a picture of a naked woman onto the body of this HFG logo. So we retook the site and published on top of them, and then they came back and retook the site, and published again on top of us. So we came back again and retook the site, and then they came back and retook it back. For two hours we had dueling home pages on our own Web site! They had broken into our system and had taken over our servers—which is where the Web pages are stored—and they had managed to establish access to our Web site. Once they were in there, they had the same access that we did to managing the *New York Times* Web site. We kept asking ourselves, should we bring the site down, and I said no. But finally, it became apparent that we had to. So at 10:20 a.m., we brought down the site and closed off all the hatches [the remote off-site entry points]. The way they got in was by exploiting a bug in the Unix operating system. We took out the servers that were hacked and rebuilt the site on virgin servers, unconnected to any remotes.”

What I found most interesting were the messages that the hackers posted on the *Times*’s Web page. The opening message was: “WE OWN YER DUMB ASS.” Parts of their messages were in code, a sort of hightech olive-tree language of their own. Hacking for Girlies was spelled H4CKING FOR GIRL3Z. Certain vowels were numbers, as in their closing message: “R3ST ASSUR3D, W3 WILL B3 BACK SOON.” The hackers were clearly taking pleasure, almost like Jesse James, in demonstrating that they were smarter than the global power structure, as represented by *The New York Times* and its Web site. Their message was that you may be rich but you cannot compete with the brains of the Internet underground, even though it has much less power. They seemed to be saying that their brains were the equalizer. At one point the hackers wrote: “Just because we type in all caps and don’t use ‘elite’ speak doesn’t mean we are kids, or we don’t own your dumb ass. For everyone who calls us immature kids, it shows one more person has underestimated us. And worse, what does it say about [your] security? That ‘immature kids’ were able to bypass [your] 25,000 dollar firewalls, bypass the security put there by admins with XX years of experience or a XXX degree from some college. Nyah nyah.”

The hackers’ only demand was for the release of Kevin D. Mitnick, the notorious computer hacker who has been in prison since his arrest by the FBI in February 1995. Mitnick, once the most wanted computer hacker in the world, was accused of along crime spree that included the theft of thousands of data files and at least 20,000 credit card numbers from computer systems around the nation. Operating through a computer modem attached to his cellular phone, Mitnick was captured after he penetrated the home computer of a renowned computer security expert, Tsutomu Shimomura, a researcher at the San Diego Supercomputer Center. Shimomura helped a posse of telephone company

technicians and federal investigators use cellular-frequency scanners to hunt down and arrest Mitnick.

These hackers are basically Internet fundamentalists. They have their own tribal customs, their own folk heroes, their own language, their own conspiracy theories, and their own source of truth. But they have no coherent political ideology in the sense of a real alternative system. They are true Harpos. They have an attitude, not an ideology. They just want to bring low the power structure that now exists. They want to demonstrate that the system doesn't control them, but that they can control the system.

Moving up the scale, though, you find those who are a little more angry and a little more violent. Like the super-empowered angry Tamil separatists who attacked the Sri Lankan embassy in Washington in September 1998. *The Washington Times* told the story: "When the Sri Lankan Embassy developed an E-mail address, the Tamil Tiger guerrillas found a new application for terrorism. They immediately began flooding the embassy with bomb threats and so much 'spam'-junk E-mail- that diplomats could not use the address for legitimate business. One diplomat called it 'E-mail terrorism.'" "The story noted that the Sri Lankan embassy last year finally turned to a computer expert to develop a new program to filter out E-mail from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The Tigers' tactic was mentioned as a new threat in the State Department's report on global terrorism. It stated that a group calling itself the Internet Black Tigers had previously struck in August 1997 with E-mail "weapons" that had decommissioned the embassies' electronic-mail systems. "The group claimed in Internet postings to be an elite department of the LTTE, specializing in 'suicide E-mail bombings,'" the State Department said. The group used what it called "E-mail-to-FTP anti-server missiles" that overload a targeted E-mail address and cause such disruption in terms of volume that the recipient is forced to scrap his entire E-mail site.

And finally there are the really angry and really violent Super-Empowered Angry Men who don't use just E-mail. These are Harpos with real guns. They sense that there is a world-ruling system that they are not, and never will be, part of. In their view, the United States, IBM, *The New York Times*, Wall Street and the global economy are all part of one power edifice that needs to be brought down. These violent Super-Empowered Angry Men include the Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth) sect in Japan, the Osama bin Laden gang in Afghanistan, the Unabomber and the Ramzi Yousef group in New York. Aum Shinrikyo preached a crazy cocktail of Hinduism, Buddhism and various worldwide conspiracy theories involving America, Jews, Freemasons and global capitalists. The Japanese sect killed twelve people and injured several thousand in March 1995 when it released Sarin nerve gas in the Tokyo subway. According to *The Economist*, though, Aum Shinrikyo had amassed roughly a billion dollars in assets and had actually purchased an advanced Russian helicopter equipped to spray deadly chemicals. Osama bin Laden, the Saudi millionaire who in August 1998 bankrolled the bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing more than 200 people, communicated regularly around the world with satellite phones through his own Jihad Online (JOL). *The New York Times* reported that the FBI downloaded a captured personal computer from one of Bin Laden's operatives in Kenya, Haroun Fazil, and found an E-mail message inside in which he detailed how he kept tabs on global events through CNN, used the Internet to communicate with others in the Bin Laden underground network and referred to himself as "the media information officer of the East Africa cell."

Ramzi Yousef was the mastermind of the February 26, 1993, World Trade Center bombing in New York, which killed six people and injured more than 1,000. He comes from a generation of angry young men from the Third World who have been longing for their chance to do what their parents could not do. That is to turn their rage against the West, in revenge for all the turmoil it has visited on their societies, but to do it by using Western technology while rejecting the Western value structure behind it. They love the idea that you can just cream off the technological know-how, charge it on your Visa card and still live a fundamentalist lifestyle with the windows closed and a veil on. Where the Internet fundamentalists are only ready to use a mouse and a Unix bug to make their points, Ramzi Yousef & Co. were ready to use dynamite and a Ryder truck. But they basically had the same objective-to spit in the face of Americanization-globalization and stomp on it, by using the system against itself

Ramzi Yousef is really the quintessential Super-Empowered Angry Man. Think about him for a minute. What was his program? What was his ideology? After all, he tried to blow up the two tallest buildings in America. Did he want an Islamic state in Brooklyn? Did he want a Palestinian state in New Jersey? No. He just wanted to blow up two of the tallest buildings in America. He told the Federal District Court in Manhattan that his goal was to set off an explosion that would cause one World Trade Center tower to fall onto the other and kill 250,000 civilians. Ramzi Yousef's message was that he had no message, other than to rip up the message coming from the all-powerful America to his society. *The Economist* once noted that "it used to be said of terrorists that 'they wanted a lot of people watching and not a lot of people dead.'" "But not the Super-Empowered Angry Men. They want a lot of people dead. They are not trying to change the world. They know that they can't, so they just want to destroy as much as they can.

A big part of the U.S. government's conspiracy case against Ramzi Yousef (besides trying to blow up the World Trade Center in 1993, he planned to blow up a dozen American airliners in Asia in January 1995) relied on files found in the off-white Toshiba laptop computer that Philippine police say Yousef abandoned as he fled his Manila apartment in January 1995, shortly before his apprehension. When investigators got hold of Yousef's laptop and broke into its files, they found that his computer contained flight schedules, projected detonation times and sample identification documents bearing photographs of some of his coconspirators. I loved that-Ramzi Yousef kept all his plots on the C-drive of his Toshiba laptop!

What is interesting about Ramzi Yousef and the other Super-Empowered Angry Men coming out of the Arab Islamic world today, notes Middle East expert Stephen P. Cohen, is that "they used to believe that they had to overthrow their own governments and get control of their own states before they could take on America. Now they just do it directly on their own as individuals." Globalization not only makes it possible for them to attack the United States as individuals, it not only gives them the motivation to do it, it also gives them the logic. The logic is that their own states don't represent the real power structure anymore. The relevant power structure is global. It is in the hands of the American superpower and the Supermarkets and they are the ones who tell all other governments what to do. Therefore if you want to bring down the real power structure you have to go after the superpower and the Supermarkets and not bother with the government of Pakistan or Egypt.

What bothers these Super-Empowered Angry Men is not only the notion that the United States is so technologically superior but that it makes a claim that its values are superior as well, when, in the view of the terrorists, these American values are nothing more than soulless consumerism and mindless technology worship. The following exchange took place at the close of Ramzi Yousef's trial, between him and the trial judge, Kevin Thomas Duffy. It is the Super-Empowered Angry Man versus the superpower.

Ramzi Yousef: "You keep talking about collective punishment and killing innocent people. . . . You were the first one who killed innocent people, and you are the first one who introduced this type of terrorism to the history of mankind when you dropped an atomic bomb which killed tens of thousands of women and children in Japan and when you killed over 100,000 people, most of them civilians, in Tokyo with firebombings. You killed them by burning them to death. And you killed civilians in Vietnam with chemicals as with the so-called Orange agent. You killed civilians and innocent people, not soldiers, in every single war you went to. You went to wars more than any other country in this century, and then you have the nerve to talk about killing innocent people. And now you have invented new ways to kill innocent people. You have so-called economic embargo, which kills nobody other than children and elderly people, and which, other than Iraq, you have been placing the economic embargo on Cuba and other countries for over thirty-five years. The government in its summations and opening statement said that I was a 'terrorist.' Yes, I am a terrorist and I am proud of it. And I support terrorism so long as it was against the United States government and against Israel, because you are more than terrorists; you are the one who invented terrorism and [are] using it every day. You are butchers, liars and hypocrites."

Judge Kevin Thomas Duffy then replied—effectively—telling Yousef to take his nihilistic rage and shove it: "Ramzi Yousef, you claim to be an Islamic militant. Of all the persons killed or harmed in some way by the World Trade Center bomb, you cannot name one who was against you or your cause. You did not care, just so long as you left dead bodies and people hurt. Ramzi Yousef, you are not fit to uphold Islam. Your God is death. Your God is not Allah. . . . You weren't seeking conversions. The only thing you wanted to do was to cause death. Your God is not Allah. You worship death and destruction. What you do, you do not for Allah; you do it only to satisfy your own twisted sense of ego. You would have others believe that you are a soldier, but the attacks on civilization for which you stand convicted here were sneak attacks which sought to kill and maim totally innocent people. . . . You, Ramzi Yousef, came to this country pretending to be an Islamic fundamentalist, but you cared little or nothing for Islam or the faith of the Muslims. Rather, you adored not Allah, but the evil that you yourself have become. And I must say that as an apostle of evil, you have been most effective."

My favorite part of the Ramzi Yousef story, though, was the fact that one of his co-conspirators, Mohammed Salameh, went back—after the World Trade Center explosion—to the Ryder truck rental agency where he rented the van that was used in the bombing. Salameh had put down a \$400 deposit to rent the van and he wanted to get his deposit back—even though he had blown up the van. (He told the rental people the van had been stolen.) For Salameh the world was two different realms. In the morning you blow up the World Trade Center to kill Americans for the sake of good over evil; in the afternoon you go get your money back on the basis of American legal principles and contract law. Nothing better captures the ability of the Super-Empowered Angry Men to

exploit the technology of the modern world without imbibing any of its values. When Ramzi Yousef was asked by investigators how in the world Salameh could have gone back to get the deposit—which helped police track down the bombers—he answered in one word: “Stupid.”

Is there any defense against such people? It would be nice to believe that with the right sort of social or economic or cultural programs, societies could eliminate the motivation, the resentment and the rage of all those who feel steamrolled by Americanization-globalization. But we cannot. People like Ramzi Yousef have a very high degree of motivation or depravity. Feeling their pain will not turn them around, and neither will social work. There will always be a hard core of Ramzi Yousefs. The only defense is to isolate that hard core from the much larger society around them. The only way to do that is by making sure that as much of that society as possible has a stake in the globalization system. How one does that is one of the themes of the last chapter of this book.

One should have no illusions, though. The Super-Empowered Angry Men are out there, and they present the most immediate threat today to the United States and the stability of this new system. It’s not because Ramzi Yousef can ever be a superpower. No, no, no. It’s because in today’s world so many people can be Ramzi Yousef