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**What Fear Hath Wrought:
Missile Hysteria and
The Writing of "America"**

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have linked the perpetuation of US militarism to ideological constructions of the Soviet Union as a dangerous "Other." These constructions partly stemmed from the ways in which various discourses-realist scholarship in international relations, strategic studies, nuclear strategy, geopolitics, Sovietology, communism, and so on-were structured. Using recent US national security discourse on missile defence, this study examines the relationship between US national and theatre missile defence policy and discursive constructions of "rogue states" and the "China threat" as potentially dangerous Others which ostensibly threaten the US. More fundamentally, this study argues that such constructions of danger in US security discourse are crucial precisely because they matter to the ways in which the very identity of "America" are known and understood.

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WHAT FEAR HATH WROUGHT: MISSILE HYSTERIA AND THE WRITING OF "AMERICA"[1]

Introduction

Many have maintained that the drive by the Reagan Administration to construct an all-encompassing, anti-ballistic missile system for America in the 1980s – officially called the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and popularly coined "Star Wars" – was supported and, in a sense, legitimated by arguments concerning a massive political and military "Soviet threat" to US national security.[2] More recently, similar propositions have been made in response to the current effort by the Bush Administration to build national and theatre missile defence systems (or NMD and TMD, respectively).[3] In the case of NMD, the grandiosity of Ronald Reagan's Star Wars dream has now given way to a plan for a significantly more modest system for a limited defence.[4] Ostensibly, the threats that concern Bush's national security team centre upon possible missile attacks against the US by certain "rogue states" – among which Iran, Iraq, and North Korea are named, often with little preamble, as the usual suspects – or by way of an accidental or unauthorized

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[1] A slightly modified version of this paper will appear as a chapter in a book on critical perspectives on US national and theatre missile defence, edited by Peter Van Ness and Richard Tanter.

[2] This argument has been pursued using a broad slew of perspectives, including the political, economic, technological, cultural, and ideological: Robert Bowman, *A Defense Insider's Case Against the Strategic Defense Initiative* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986); Frances Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000); Andrew Gordon, "Star Wars: A Myth For Our Time," in Joel W. Martin and Conrad E. Ostwalt, Jr. (eds.), *Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth, and Ideology in Popular American Film* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 73-82; Kerry L. Hunter, *The Reign of Fantasy: The Political Roots of Reagan's Star Wars Policy* (New York: P. Lang, 1992); and Rosy Nimroody, *Star Wars: The Economic Fallout*, forward by Paul C. Warnke (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Co., for Council on Economic Priorities, 1988).

[3] See, among others, Harold A. Feiveson (ed.), *The Nuclear Turning Point: A Blueprint for Deep Cuts and De-alerting of Nuclear Weapons* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999); George Lewis, Lisbeth Gronlund, and David Wright, "National Missile Defense: An Indefensible System," *Foreign Policy*, no. 117 (Winter 1999-2000), pp. 120-37; George N. Lewis, Theodore A. Postol and John Pike, "Why National Missile Defense Won't Work," *Scientific American*, August 1999, pp. 36-41; and Gordon R. Mitchell (ed.), *Strategic Deception: Rhetoric, Science, and Politics in Missile Defense Advocacy* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2000). Not all, of course, agree, as the following arguments in varying degrees of support for missile defence demonstrate: Elliott Abrams, *Security and Sacrifice: Isolation, Intervention, and American Foreign Policy* (Indianapolis, IN: Hudson Institute, 1995); Robert Kagan, "The World and President Bush," *Survival*, vol. 43, no. 1 (Spring 2001), pp. 7-16; and James M. Lindsay and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Defending America: The Case for Limited National Missile Defense* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001).

[4] A limited NMD system, in Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's words, "is not an umbrella or shield, which makes the world 100 percent safe from missiles. But it is a system, which will be able to protect ourselves [America] and our allies from a handful of missiles and, therefore, greatly increase the difficulty for any potential enemy in an attack on us." See, "Armitage in Korea to Discuss 'Strategic Framework'" (May 9, 2001). Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/1051002.htm on June 18, 2001.

launch by Russia or China.[5]   Among prominent proponents of the "missile threat" thesis was the Rumsfeld Commission, a bipartisan commission convened by the US Congress in 1998 to assess the ballistic missile threat to the US,[6] whose work has been lauded, in one instance, as having contributed to a "revolution in thinking."[7] Contradicting official CIA assessments, the commission reported that rogue states had the capacity to develop and deploy ICBMs against the US and its allies with "little or no warning"[8] – a grim appraisal duly reinforced, shortly following the official dissemination of the commission's findings, by North Korea's Taepodong-1 missile test and nuclear tests by India and Pakistan.[9]

That two members of that high-profile commission now hold senior policymaking positions in the Bush Administration[10] implies a likely correlation between the commission's suppositions and conclusions about ballistic missile threats, and the Bush Administration's aggressive drive to construct NMD and TMD systems. Further, there is good reason to suggest that these policy decisions are themselves partly indebted to the language and interpretive traditions germane to the theory and practice of international life, politics, and security. To date, the structuring of various security discourses – realist scholarship in international relations, strategic studies, nuclear strategy, geopolitics, Sovietology, communism, and so on – and its relation to the perpetuation of militarization has been examined in some detail, particularly in terms of the ideological construction of the Soviet Union as a dangerous "Other."[11] However, few comprehensive examinations of the security discourses that conceivably inform and structure contemporary ideological

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[5] Condoleeza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 1 (January/February 2000), pp. 56, 60-2.

[6] See, "Executive Summary of the Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States" (July 15, 1998). Downloaded at http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/bm-threat.htm on September 4, 2001.

[7] John Hollum, Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Director under President Clinton. See, "US Seeks Missile Defense Dialogue with Russia, China, Allies" (March 23, 2000). Downloaded at http://pdq.state.gov/scripts/cqcg on September 3, 2001.

[8] "Executive Summary" of the Rumsfeld Commission report, p. 3. Contra official CIA reports, the commission's report offered a significantly revised assessment that doubtless "benefited" from the North Korean test-launch of a three-stage ballistic missile out over the Pacific in August 1998. See Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, pp. 494-5.

[9] David C. Gompert and Jeffrey A. Issacson, "Planning a Ballistic Missile Defense System of Systems: An Adaptive Strategy" (Rand Corporation, January 25, 1999). Downloaded at http://www.rand.org/publications/IP/IP181 on September 4, 2001.

[10] The chairperson of the commission, Donald H. Rumsfeld, now serves as Secretary of Defense in the Bush Administration, whereas one of the commission's members, Paul D. Wolfowitz, now serves as Deputy Secretary of Defense.

[11] See, Simon Dalby, "Geopolitical Discourse: The Soviet Union as Other," *Alternatives*, vol. XIII (1988), pp. 415-42; Simon Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War* (London: Frances Pinter, 1990); and Bradley S. Klein, *Strategic Studies and World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

constructions of "rogue states" or, say, the "China threat",[12] as potentially dangerous "Others" have been attempted. Indeed, even fewer studies exist on how such constructions of Otherness in contemporary US national security discourse are crucial precisely because they matter to the ways in which the "Self," namely, one's self-identity – that of "America," in this respect – are known and understood.[13]

This study contends that discourses of danger and fear are central to discourses of the sovereign state. How, I want to ask, do discourses of danger, in conjunction with other discourses, make it possible at all for us to know ourselves and others in terms of *national* identities, i.e., as *states*? How, in lieu of the existence of fully or even partially operational NMD and TMD systems, do security discourses – particularly those on (but not exclusive to) missile defence constitute, produce and maintain, always tenuously so, the political identity of "America"? Following the arguments of a growing and diverse corpus of critical writings in international relations,[14] the intimate relationship between danger and the state, I want to suggest, is precisely that between difference and identity, between Other and Self. As such, security is the spatial exclusion of Others and of Otherness; as Ken Booth has put it, "what makes *us* believe we are the same and *them* different is inseparable from security."[15] As difference renders possible identity through delineating what that identity is not or what it must fear, so is it that discourses of danger render possible discourses of the state through delineating what that state is not or what it therefore must fear and confront. As one scholar has put it, "A notion of what 'we' are is intrinsic to an understanding of what 'we' fear."[16] Moreover, what "we" fear can also be found *within* the territorial boundaries that presumably demarcate the sovereign yet contested space of the state. As such, the state is better understood as "a social totality that

[12] See, for example, Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising: Communist China's Military Threat to America* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1999).

[13] An excellent exception is that by David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

[14] The heterogeneity of scholarly opinions – and quite formidable ones too – that inhabit this intellectual space is impressive. An excellent introduction to such writings is James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro (eds.), *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics* (New York: Lexington, 1989).

[15] Ken Booth, "Security and Self: Reflections of a Fallen Realist," in Keith Krause and Michael Williams (eds.), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (London: UCL Press, 1997), p. 6.

[16] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 85.

is never really present, that always contains traces of the outside within, and that is never more than an effect of the practices by which…dangers are inscribed."[17]

Conceivably, the identity at issue here – "America" – *is* under threat, but not necessarily from (as received wisdom has long taught us) dangers "outside" as much as from myriad contingencies and contradictions that reside "inside" a purportedly settled American identity. Mainstream commentators of American culture and society are not unaware of such conflicting tensions. As historian Arthur Schlesinger noted nearly a decade ago, "The historic idea of a unifying American identity is now in peril in many arenas – in our politics, our voluntary organizations, our churches, our language…"[18] The notion that state identity was once unitary but is now in crisis has, of late, garnered some attention in mainstream international relations analysis, with rejoinders ranging the gamut from "celebration of difference," cautious approval, spirited denials, to outright despair.[19] Nonetheless, many of these responses stem from an insistent fidelity to either of two things, or a combination of both: on one hand, the positivist premise that social totalities can be authentically represented by the right theory and/or method; on the other, the phenomenological premise that there is always a subject prior to all construction.[20] The specific direction in which this study will proceed begins with a quite different assumption, however: that a discourse of danger is neither a faithful representation of external threats "out there," nor a singular or deliberate "act" that fabricates threats where none exist. Rather, discourse is a reiterative and referential practice by which it – and the subjects who engage in and are constituted by it – produces the effects that it names. And

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[17] Richard K. Ashley, "Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War," in James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (eds.), *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics* (New York: Lexington, 1989), p. 304. Judith Butler phrases it this way: "the subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside, which is, after all, 'inside' the subject as its own founding repudiation." See, Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 3.

[18] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America – Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), p. 17. Cited in Roxanne Lynn Doty, "Sovereignty and the nation: constructing the boundaries of national identity," in Thomas J. Beirsteker and Cynthia Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 121.

[19] Various responses to the so-called "Third Debate" in international relations are discussed in Yosef Lapid, "The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 33 (1989), pp. 235-54.

[20] These are some of the fundamental concerns raised by poststructuralist contributions to international relations study. Various examples can be cited; one of the better ones that delineate those concerns in something of a "programmatic" fashion – although its authors would probably cringe at my choice of terms – is, Richard K. Ashley and R. B. J. Walker, "Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 34 (1990), pp. 367-416.

if so, then "America" can be understood as a contested identity that must continually preserve the self-imposed limits (or boundaries) by which it affirms itself – limits that are conscientiously patrolled and enforced, in mutually reinforcing ways, by discursive practices and their practitioners.

The push by the Bush Administration to develop and deploy missile defence systems to shield against potential missile attacks partly finds its support and legitimation in precisely the sorts of discursive constructions about what "America" is by virtue of what "it" fears. Such ideological conclusions can be pervasive to the extent that they inform the views of a wide swathe of people who may not necessarily concur on all national security matters: notably, key members of the Bush Administration, the bipartisan Rumsfeld Commission, and (at least according to a former UN ambassador), many if not most Republicans.[21] In a sense, the notion today of a ballistic missile threat almost seems incongruous in the light of the horrific and rather unconventional terrorist strikes of September 11 on New York and the Pentagon.[22] "National security issues are not on people's screens at all. When you do finally scratch around for a threat, people see terrorism, not ballistic missiles as the problem," one pundit presciently observed in 1996.[23] To be sure, the apparent lack of public consensus does not automatically imply that all claims regarding missile threats therefore lack any existential or material basis. Ambivalent public support does suggest strongly, however, that the interrelatedness between discourses of danger revolving around missile threats, and those on American political and social identity, are efficacious to the extent they have thus far effectively

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[21] Commenting in 1996 on Senator Bob Dole's focus on the issue of national missile defences during his run for the presidency, Jean Kirkpatrick, the *Washington Post* reports, said: "It's not so much a matter of [Dole's] choosing the issue. He's really reflecting a widespread, deeply felt concern in the Republican community. It's the defence issue on which there is the greatest conviction among those who think about national security matters." Cited in Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 493.

[22] Referring to the missile defence policy as "a new way of thinking" that properly reflects post-Cold War security conditions, Bush's Press Secretary Ari Fleischer, in a press briefing given last April, insisted that "the threat to peace comes mostly from rogue nation missile launches or accidental launches" – which doubtless raises the question of whether such inordinate attention placed on missile defence may have "blinded" US policymakers and national security managers to other kinds of security threats, as the September 11 attacks would seem to imply. See, "Bush to Make Major Speech on Missile Defense" (April 30, 2001). Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01043008.htm on June 18, 2001.

[23] Cited in Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 494. However, three analysts recently insisted that: "a political consensus now exists in America that [NMD] provides a necessary answer to the emerging ballistic-missile threat from the so-called rogue states of North Korea, Iran and Iraq." See, Ivo H. Daalder, James M. Goldgeier, and James M. Lindsay, "Deploying NMD: Not Whether, But How," *Survival*, vol. 42, no. 1 (Spring 2000), p. 6.

sustained and legitimated missile defence and, in turn, a particular representation of the US.

Fear, Foreign Policy, and Otherness

Money apparently is not the only thing that makes the world go round; hysteria or fear would do just as well if not better. As social critic Jean Baudrillard once mused, "The world of objects and of needs would thus be a world of *general hysteria*."[24] In a very broad sense – and quite different than what Baudrillard probably had in mind when penning those words – the notion of collective hysteria is not novel to mainstream international relations study. For example, the late doyen of Southeast Asian security Michael Leifer, in describing what he has termed the "cult of vulnerability" in Singapore's political and social life, writes of Singapore as "a state whose foreign policy is rooted in a culture of siege and insecurity."[25] Leifer, of course, is absolutely right, but what is of acute interest to our concerns regarding his astute explanation of Singaporean foreign policy is his presupposition that there exists, prior to any notion of a foreign policy, a "Singapore." That Leifer or others can speak learnedly if at all about the foreign policy of state A or state B is to presume that the state in question, in ontological terms, comes *before* the policy. Foreign policy thus understood therefore constitutes the external orientation for a pre-established state. Foreign policy analysis, then, becomes the study of the policies of given states oriented toward a given external environment or a self-evident outside world.

Nonetheless, in view of the growing acknowledgment amongst critical international relations scholars that our understandings of the world are subject to the effects of language and interpretation, the hitherto widely accepted assumption of state identity as pre-established and grounded in an unproblematic logic of explanation has increasingly become untenable. While critical thinkers allow that a pre-discursive world "out there" exists and is therefore independent of language (or discourse), they however argue that it is difficult to *know* that, beyond the mere fact of its assertion, simply because our knowledge of the world is almost always unthinkable outside of discourse and our received traditions of interpretation. Without seeking to eradicate or negate the notion of a

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[24] Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 45, emphasis original.
[25] Michael Leifer, *Singapore Foreign Policy: Coping With Vulnerability* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 4.

pre-discursive materiality – as some linguistic idealists or monists seem bent on doing – it bears highlighting that one's positing, *by way of language*, of a material reality outside of language is precisely that: a "performative" act of *positing*, which serves as the constitutive condition of materiality. Hear Judith Butler, in the context of deconstruction as an oft-misread enterprise, on this matter:

> For there is an "outside" to what is constructed in discourse, but this is not an absolute "outside," an ontological there-ness that exceeds or counters the boundaries of discourse; as a constitutive "outside," it is that which can only be thought – when it can – in relation to that discourse, at and as its most tenuous borders. The debate between constructivism and essentialism thus misses the point of deconstruction altogether, for the point has never been that "everything is discursively constructed…"[26]

This calls to question the conventional rendition of theory as a tool for understanding and explaining international life, which further presumes that what is therefore required are more better theories, hermeneutics, methodologies, and languages that correspond more intimately with "real life." But as Raymond Aron once warned, "Ambiguity in 'international relations' is not to be imputed to the inadequacy of our concepts, but is an integral part of reality itself."[27] Rather, theory can and perhaps should be recast as the stuff of which discourses consist – security discourses in our context – namely, the presuppositions that both constrain as well as constitute that which has come to be accepted as natural and self-evident in international life.[28] Butler's rumination also calls to question the contention of social constructivists, both moderate and radical, that there is always a subject prior to construction who or which, by way of a singular and deliberate "act," effectively constructs. Those who locate powers of construction solely

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[26] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 9. As Laclau and Mouffe have similarly argued, "the fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has *nothing to do* with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition… What is denied is not that … objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside of any discursive condition of emergence." See, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, trans. Winston Moore and Paul Cammack (London: Verso, 1985), p. 108. Also cited in David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 25.
[27] Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*, trans. E. Howard and A. B. Fox (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p. 7.
[28] Marysia Zalewski has provided a useful discussion of at least three different conceptual usages of theory within the international relations discipline: as methodological tools, as critique, and as everyday practice (including discourse). My understanding of the interconnectedness between discourse and social reality more or less comports with Zalewski's notion of theory as "everyday practice." See, Marysia Zalewski, "'All these theories yet the bodies keep piling up': theories, theorists, theorizing," in Steve Smith, Ken Booth, and Marysia Zalewski (eds.), *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 340-53.

within human and/or institutional agents often fail to account for the effects of context or environment, whereas those who privilege language and discourse to the exclusion of everything else – "nothing but the text" – are guilty either of linguistic idealism or monism, or of structural determinism. And then there are the constructivists working within international relations orthodoxy whose emphases on the power of ideas, norms, and culture in international life – issues requiring serious theoretical attention – more often than not end up, disappointingly, as but the handmaidens of a "gentler" structural realism.[29]

What the notion of the "performative" implies for foreign policy is therefore rather astounding. The notion of "foreign," from this vantage point, can no longer be conceived as a neutral category because of its intimate association with discourses of danger and Otherness. As Michael Shapiro has observed:

> The making of the Other as something foreign is thus not an innocent exercise in differentiation. It is clearly linked to how the self is understood. A self construed with a security-related identity leads to the construction of Otherness on the axis of threats or lack of threats to that security, while a self identified as one engaged in "crisis management"…will create modes of Otherness on a ruly versus unruly axis.[30]

Shapiro's observation raises the intriguing plausibility that foreign policy constitutes a particular kind of "boundary-producing political performance"[31] in that what makes the "foreign" in discourse are also the sorts of political performances that make the "domestic" *at the same time*. Neither domestic or foreign, nor inside or outside, are privileged as ontologically prior.[32] From this standpoint, foreign policy is something

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[29] In the face of mounting criticisms from neorealists and neoliberal institutionalists who charge the so-called "reflectivists" – including the constructivists, presumably – for their "unscientific" and "non-rational-behavioural" approaches, constructivists such as Alexander Wendt and Peter Katzenstein have, for the most part, stepped back from the radical implications of constructivism and now proffer much more modest research aims, notably, the use of constructivism principally as a *method* – and not as epistemology – for supplementing the structural realist presuppositions that evidently guide both neorealist and neoliberal scholarship.

[30] Cited in Dalby, "Geopolitical Discourse: The Soviet Union as Other," p. 419.

[31] Richard K. Ashley, "Foreign Policy as Political Practice," *International Studies Notes*, vol. XIII (1987), p. 51.

[32] No charge of linguistic or interpretive "free play" is warranted here, since I do not assign ontological priority to difference/outside/Other (or danger) in relation to identity/inside/Self (or the state). Moreover, to assert the efficacy of discourses and texts, as I have done, is not the same as advocating, as transcendental solipsists might do, that language and interpretation necessarily occurs "all the way down," or interpretation "that celebrates the infinitized 'freeplay' of a writing cut off from all the irksome constraints of truth, reference or valid demonstrative argument." See, Christopher Norris, *Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism,*

neither subsequent nor prior to the state or, for that matter, the international system of states, but is nonetheless central to their constitution. Hence, as a foreign policy practice, discourses on missile threats posed by rogue states and accidental or unauthorized launches from nuclear powers serve to domesticate the contested identity of "America" by excluding the contradictions and contingencies that contribute to that contestation.

If state identity can be understood as the effect of boundary-producing, exclusionary performances in which things inimical to a secure identity are constructed as dangerous and threatening to the state, then it becomes apparent that "America," as but the effect of just such practices, is a tenuously preserved identity always in danger of falling apart as a discursively fixed identity.[33] Conceptually, many international relations scholars in the main do not find it terribly difficult to acknowledge that the state is a social construction, or that state identity is ambiguous and "essentially contested," and whose realization, if at all possible, has been deferred. Not unlike students of "development," "nation-building," and other evolutionary and/or emancipatory concepts,[34] they cling to the hope that what is at present an abstract ideal would someday be realized, would materialize. Nonetheless, it is precisely the indefinite deferral of that final realization – the inherent eschatological desire notwithstanding – that makes "America," as imagined community par excellence, possible at all. Indeed, that this "effecting" of "America" is dependent upon the reiteration of highly regulated discursive practices implies the incompleteness of its materialization and – to the extent we can speak of such – the non-comportment of the pre-discursive materiality of land and people with the ideals and norms by which their materialization *as a state* is impelled. Individuals that inhabit or institutions that sit upon the landed territory called "America" may well be – at least in positivist, social scientific terms – irrefutable brute facts. However, their irrefutability in no way implies that there are therefore no constructions without which it would be

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Intellectuals, and the Gulf War (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1992), p. 32. Stated in another way, to claim – like structuration theorists – that agency/practice and structure are "mutually constitutive" is appropriate if and only if we accept that – *un*like structuration theorists – the agent-structure problematique *cannot* be resolved precisely because they constitute an *aporia*, i.e., irresolvable alternatives. See, Roxanne Lynn Doty, "*Aporia*: A Critical Exploration of the Agent-Structure Problematique in International Relations Theory," *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 3, no. 3 (September 1997), pp. 365-92.

[33] Cynthia Weber likely had this in mind when she noted: "That the formalization and legitimation of boundaries are the effects of coordinated state practices is most evident when...coordinated practices break down." See, Cynthia Weber, "Writing Sovereign Identities: Wilson Administration Intervention in the Mexican Revolution," *Alternatives* vol. 17 (1992), p. 318.

[34] To the extent that such concepts involve a certain teleology and final destination – "end of history" or "end of idealism" or "death of philosophy" are all apropos appellations here – we may include Hegelian dialectical idealism and Marxian dialectical materialism as well.

impossible for those individuals to think, live, function, and make sense at all of life *as "Americans."*

This, then, is the modern dilemma as well as its perceived resolution for those who hold resolutely to metaphysical explications of international relations: the recourse to discourses of danger for grounding representations (signs or significations) in lieu of the real (the signified).[35] As social theorist Zygmunt Bauman has put it:

> The promise has not been fulfilled, but it was precisely its unfulfilment that kept it alive and effective… Paradoxically, the key to keeping the promise alive is to invent more fears (provided these are nice, little, manageable fears – ghosts that appear only together with foolproof recipes for exorcism), to make life busier, more difficult, until the whole life-space is filled with worries.[36]

It is at such junctures, I suggest, where one might find the confluence of discourses of the state and discourses of danger and vulnerability regarding foreign missile threats and, where NMD and TMD systems are concerned, the much talked about, but in a sense (as yet) nonexistent, prophylactics for deterring danger. As Frances Fitzgerald has observed of Reagan's Star Wars programme, just this sort of an unfulfilled promise that nonetheless proved extremely effective was in circulation:

> A perfect anti-ballistic missile defense was beyond the reach of technology. It was just a story, and yet to trust the polls, the idea had great popular appeal in the mid-eighties, and many Americans believed such a thing could be built….The fact that the program did not produce a single weapon only helped Reagan, for had it produced some sort of ABM system, the story with all of its mythic overtones would have given place to a piece of

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[35] We may recall Nietzsche's oft-cited proclamation concerning the "death of God" as an ironic commentary on (for Nietzsche at least) modernity's insistence, by way of reason and scientific rationality, that Christendom no longer serves as the unequivocal foundation for securing the identity of man and that of the historically "emerging" state. However, the forcefulness of such a totalising claim creates an ambiguous situation wherein the incessant demand for "external guarantees" – the Archimedean point, so to speak – takes place within a culture of reason and rationalism that has erased the ontological conditions for just such external guarantees. Thus conceived, the modern dilemma is, on the one hand, the attempt to ground identity – be it that of man, the state, or some other modern subject – while, on the other hand, emphasizing the world as essentially incomplete and endangered. See, William E. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 11. As such, to highlight the centrality of discourses of danger to discourses of the state, as I have done above, is to highlight knowledgeable practices that are fundamental to modernity.

[36] Zygmunt Bauman, "The Sweet Scent of Decomposition," in Chris Rojek and Bryan S. Turner (eds.), *Forget Baudrillard?* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 29.

technology with a lot of practical difficulties attached. Politically at least, anti-missile defenses were better air than metal.[37]

Moreover, where faith (if only a cynical one at that) in the simulacrum or sign actually supersedes or supplants the desire for the real – in other words, when missile defence discourses become so seductive that they no longer mimic but constitute reality – then a condition of "hyperreality" obtains. Reflecting on the radical modernity of contemporary America, semiologist Umberto Eco and (again) Baudrillard both arrived separately at the conclusion that the US is quintessentially hyperrealist.[38] After all, America gave the world Disneyland, Hollywood and Madonna, all of which have parlayed the art of simulation into an exacting science. In this sense, the historical experience with Reagan-era SDI is rather telling: that the largely unproven and unrealized missile defence concept remains nonetheless fairly popular within the Beltway today – despite its formidable price tag[39] and testing-stage flops[40] - reflects that hyperrealist quality so closely associated with what "America" represents.

Missile Hysteria and the Writing of "America"

On May 1, 2001, President Bush gave a long-anticipated speech on missile defence. He began by emphasizing the "vastly different world" of today in perceived opposition to the alleged certainty of yesterday's Cold War era, describing our contemporary milieu as "still a dangerous world, a less certain, a less predictable one," and the existence and ongoing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (including

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[37] Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 38.
[38] See, Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1983); Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality* (London: Picador, 1987).
[39] See, Nimroody, *Star Wars: The Economic Fallout*. Similarly, House Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt has questioned the costliness of missile defence, estimated at more than US $100 billion. See, "Gephardt Concerned about Missile Defense Policy" (May 2, 2001). Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01050203.htm on June 18, 2001.
[40] Daalder et al, "Deploying NMD: Not Whether, But How," p. 27 fn. In early 1999, General Henry Shelton, US Joint Chiefs Chairman, hinted at the evident relentlessness to rapidly establish, to the exclusion of other possibilities, NMD as the principal defence against the "growing missile threat," even though the technology proved elusive: "Beyond the tremendous technological challenges associated with the development of an NMD system, we have also been striving to develop a system that could potentially be fielded sooner than is typically required for such an effort… A threat is clearly emerging; however, the technology to 'hit a bullet with a bullet' remains elusive. We will continue to press hard to develop an effective NMD system, very mindful that the growing threat is placing a deployment decision in clearer context." See, "Joint Chiefs Chairman Flags Emerging Threats to the US" (February 2, 1999). Downloaded at http://pdq.state.gov/scripts/cqcgi.exe/@pdqtest1.env on September 4, 2001.

biological and chemical weapons), as well as ballistic missile technology. Further, the president intimated at length:

> Most troubling of all, the list of these countries includes some of the world's least-responsible states. Unlike the Cold War, today's most urgent threat stems not from the thousands of ballistic missiles in the Soviet hands, but from a small number of missiles in the hands of these states, states for whom terror and blackmail are a way of life. They seek weapons of mass destruction to intimidate their neighbours, and to keep the United States and other responsible nations from helping allies and friends in strategic parts of the world…. Like Saddam Hussein, some of today's tyrants are gripped by an implacable hatred of the United States of America. They hate our friends, they hate our values, they hate democracy and freedom and individual liberty. Many care little for the lives of their own people. In such a world, Cold War deterrence is not enough…. To maintain peace, to protect our own citizens and our own allies and friends, we must seek security based on more than the grim premise that we can destroy those who seek to destroy us. This is an important opportunity for the world to re-think the unthinkable, and to find new ways to keep the peace.[41]

One may, of course, explain away these forebodings as either a mere rhetorical ploy or ideological device on the part of the Bush administration in order to justify the building of a missile defence system. One can point to the silences in the discourse that can be potentially self-incriminating where US international history is concerned.[42] For our purposes, the differentiation in discourse of identity and difference, of Self and Other, as mentioned earlier, is no innocent exercise but, in effect, is a practice of statecraft fundamental to the constitution of the state in discourse. Differentiation occurs on multiple dimensions or (as Shapiro has put it) *axes*: the "security" axis, with the key element here being threats; or, the "ethical" axis, the element here being responsibility or right behaviour, and so on.[43]

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[41] President George W. Bush, missile defence speech given at the US's National Defense University (May 1, 2001). Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01050177.htm on June 18, 2001.

[42] The only nation thus far to actually use nuclear (or atomic) weapons is in fact the US over Japan in 1945. The US's use of terror and blackmail were not unheard of during the Cold War and on other occasions, including the CIA-sponsored assassination of Salvador Allende, the democratically-elected socialist president of Chile in 1969, or the enthusiastic support of just the kinds of tyrants now decried over as an integral part of containment policy. More recently, the US's evident penchant for unilateralism and the seeming lack of what John Ikenberry has called "strategic restraint" – say, in the view of residents of Tripoli or Baghdad or the Chinese embassy at Belgrade – might have made America an extremely trigger-happy sheriff, if not the biggest rogue state of them all. See, Chong Guan Kwa and See Seng Tan, "The Keystone of World Order," *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 3 (Summer 2001), pp. 95-103.

[43] In his seminal study of the constructions of the Other by European explorers which paved the way for the subsequent conquest and domination of the indigenous civilizations of the Americas, Tzvetan Todorov, for example, has suggested the existence of at least three interconnected axes or levels: "First of all, there is the value judgment (an axiological level): the other is good or bad, I love or do not love him, or as was more

From this standpoint we can see the effects, in discourse, of presupposition in the president's missile defence statement: the "world" in which we live is fundamentally flawed – a "dangerous," uncertain and unpredictable world in which weapons of mass destruction (or WMD) abound. It is a world comprised of states. But this is not all. Particular predicates – say, on the responsible versus irresponsible axis – are uncritically attached to certain identities: there is apparently a blacklist of "the world's least responsible states…for whom terror and blackmail are a way of life" – unnamed, of course, but linked as that notion is to the discourse on rogue states, "we" already know exactly who "they" are. These "bad" nations use WMD "to intimidate their neighbours, and to keep the United States and other responsible nations from helping allies and friends in strategic parts of the world." Further, these "tyrants," just like Saddam, share "an implacable hatred" for the US and its citizens. The verb "hate" is liberally used here: "they" *hate* "our" friends, *hate* "our" values, *hate* democracy, freedom and individual liberty, and so on. Finally, these Others "care little for the lives of their own people," and they "seek to destroy us."[44]

Positioned against the preceding litany of textual vitriol is the self-identity of America as a "responsible" international subject, an America that seeks to help its allies and friends, an America that is everything those irresponsible nations are not. Instead, America is friend to one-and-all; an America that espouses universally accepted values such as democracy, freedom and individual liberty; an America that cares deeply for its own people, and so on – all cast in opposition to rogue states and, inferable in some cases, China and Russia as well. And it is precisely *this* America that is being threatened and

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likely to be said at the time, he is my equal or my inferior (for there is usually no question that I am good and that I esteem myself). Secondly, there is the action or rapproachment or distancing in relation to the other (a praxeological level): I embrace the other's values, I identify myself with him; or else I identify the other with myself, I impose my own image upon him; between submission to the other and the other's submission, there is also a third term, which is neutrality or indifference. Thirdly, I know or am ignorant of the other's identity (this would be the epistemological level); of course there is no absolute here, but an endless gradation between the lower or higher states of knowledge." For Todorov, what constitutes as reality is a kind of aggregate, interactive effect of multiple levels; by the same token, no single level by itself is sufficient to establish and preserve the metaphysics of presence and identity. See, Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

[44] It was interesting that these same tropes figured prominently in a televised interview given by Karen Hughes, a senior advisor to President Bush, in her condemnation of the terrorists (presumably Osama bin Laden and his associates) who inflicted such horrific devastation to the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The same caricatures of danger and Otherness deployed in Bush's missile defence statement were evident throughout Hughes discourse, with the only visible exception being the substitution of the "missile threat" with terrorism. Interview with Barbara Walters on ABC television (September 19, 2001).

provoked by states and peoples who hold an "implacable hatred" against everything that America purportedly is and for which it stands, and who will do everything in their power to "destroy" the US. Hence, the argument concludes, the dire need for missile defence. Yet, it is, as I hope to show below, precisely such inscriptions of difference – of danger and vulnerability – that are intrinsic to the instantiation of a particular American identity – an instantiation that is only tenuously held together because of the slippage between discursive performance and its appropriated effect.[45] Those differences comprise an Otherness without which it would be impossible to imagine a particular American self that shall always remain, owing to the constitutive failure of the performative, an idealization.

Significantly, my foregoing argument neither maintains that the foreign policies of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea, or those of Russia and China, are therefore benign, nor that the Bush Administration, the Rumsfeld Commission, and other missile defence proponents wilfully fabricated a danger where none could be perceived. Events that ostensibly fuelled the drive for missile defence were "real": nuclear tests in South Asia; missile tests by North Korea; "rogue states" committing sizeable levels of resources to developing their ballistic missile capabilities, and their resort to denial and deception to hide the development and deployment of those capabilities; China's and Russia's gross exportation of enabling technologies (including ballistic missile technology per se) to countries "hostile" to the US;[46] China's defence budget burgeoning by as much as fifty percent in the last decade,[47] or its bellicose rhetoric concerning Taiwan; and so on. The difficulty, however, lies with the claim that such events could have constituted themselves or "emerged" as objects outside of any discursive condition of possibility. That it is precisely these and not other events that have come to be interpreted or figured as threats is dependent upon particular modes of representation that enframe, delimit, and domesticate a certain identity that is, so to speak, "essentially America" – a fictive Self instantiated through the incessant negation of contradiction, contingency, and difference. These representational modes are not exactly new since they have also figured in past articulations of danger cardinal to the repetitive writing of political identity.

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[45] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 122.

[46] For a summary of Chinese transfers of conventional weapons and ballistic missiles and related technology to "rogue states," as well as Chinese cooperation in atomic-energy development in Pakistan, Algeria, and Iran, see, David Shambaugh, "Sino-American Strategic Relations: From Partners to Competitors," *Survival*, vol. 42, no. 1 (Spring 2000), pp. 111-2

[47] Robert Kagan, "The World and President Bush," *Survival*, vol. 43, no. 1 (Spring 2001), p. 12.

What is especially interesting is how the writing of danger is not exclusively dependent upon the perceived expanding missile capabilities of rogue states, salient as this has been and remains.[48] Indeed, those who affirm the notion of a missile threat principally on the basis of power capabilities mostly do so with apparent care, nuance, and lack of gratuitous exaggeration as the following statements – the first from a senior Bush Administration official, the second from an analyst – suggest. Note, however, that no further discussion is provided in either to justify why, in the face of markedly *reduced* power capabilities, the threat of missile attack against the US has instead *intensified*:

> The emerging missile threats from countries like North Korea, Iran and Iraq will not only be fewer in numbers [than the former Soviet ones], but lower in terms of accuracy, yield, survivability, reliability, and range-payload capability. *That said, these new systems will represent a real threat.*[49]

> What has changed in recent years is both the strategic context within which NMD would be deployed and the nature of the threat confronting the United States. The Cold War has ended, easing fears that defensive deployments will inevitably trigger an offensive arms race and raise the risk of war. Instead, with the Soviet Union on the ash heap of history, the threat of a small-scale missile attack from lesser powers *now looms larger than before.*[50]

As the above statements imply, the care taken to eschew gross exaggeration of ballistic missile power capabilities in either the rogue states or in China and Russia in no way impedes the discursive representations of these nations as posing serious threats to the US. So much so, in fact, that a senior CIA official, referring to just such alleged missile threats, proffered this sombre estimation: "The picture I have painted points to one conclusion: the possibility that a missile bearing a weapon of mass destruction will be used against US forces or interests *is higher today than it was during most of the Cold War.*"[51] No option for an alternative interpretation is given. Indeed, no possibility for further reflection on the matter is even entertained in many of these discourses, as Defense

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[48] Among prominent realist theorists today, Stephen Walt is probably the most astute in terms of attention paid to the interpretation of hostile intentions as opposed to the pure calculation of power capabilities. From this Walt theorized that alliance politics, as informed by Middle Eastern dynamics, is principally about the "balance of threats," as opposed to balance of power. See, Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

[49] John E. McLaughlin, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence. See, "CIA Official says Missile Threat is Accelerating" (August 27, 2001), emphasis added. Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01082701.htm on September 4, 2001.

[50] Daalder et al, "Deploying NMD: Not Whether, But How," p. 7, emphasis added.

[51] McLaughlin, "CIA Official says Missile Threat is Accelerating," p. 4, emphasis added.

Secretary Rumsfeld once made clear by unequivocally assuming the ontological high ground with this remark: "The existence of this [missile] threat is not debatable. *It is real*."[52]

The apparent paradox of "decreasing capabilities, increasing threats" is all the more startling in the light of the US Department of Defense's recently released 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which, among other concerns, calls for changes in security planning from a "threat-based" model for defence planning to one based on "capabilities" – a model that, as its progenitors at the Pentagon put it, "focuses more on how an adversary might fight rather than who that adversary might be or where a war might occur."[53]   In other words, the QDR report essentially calls for a return to quantitatively based net assessments of men and *materiel*, and less so qualitatively based readings of elite intentions and motives.   Nonetheless, at a testimony given before the Senate Armed Services Committee on October 4, Deputy Defense Secretary (and Rumsfeld Commission alumnus) Paul Wolfowitz, when presenting the QDR report to Congress, made the following observation:

> [W]e [the US] will also face new adversaries in the decades ahead – with *different motivations* and different capabilities. Some may simply seek regional hegemony, and see the US as a roadblock to their ambitions. Others may be *motivated by hatred of America*, and the traditions of freedom and religious toleration we represent. Our new adversaries may be, in some cases, more dangerous that those we faced in the past.[54]

Granted, Wolfowitz's statement was issued over three weeks past the September 11 terrorist incident, which doubtless colours much of Washington's security outlook these days. But the statement also implies, as the argument here wants to maintain, that there is something else at work that cannot be quantified primarily in terms of power capabilities. This "capabilities-plus-plus" approach is patently obvious in the following evaluation by US intelligence:

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[52] Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of Defense.   See, "Defense Secretary Rumsfeld on 21st Century Deterrence" (June 27, 2001), emphasis added. Downloaded at http://uninfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01062801.htm on September 4, 2001.
[53] US Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (September 30, 2001), p. 14. Downloaded at http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/qdr2001.pdf on October 6, 2001.
[54] See, "Wolfowitz Warns of Further Terrorist Attacks Ahead" (October 4, 2001), emphasis added. Downloaded   at   http://www.usinfo.state.gov/cgi-bin/washfile/display.pl?p=/products/washfile/latest&f=01100403.plt&t=/products/washfile/newsitem.shtml on October 6, 2001.

> We expect the threat to the United States and its interests to increase over the next 15 years. However, projecting political and economic developments that could alter the nature of the missile threat many years into the future is virtually impossible…. Recognizing these uncertainties, we have projected foreign ballistic missile capabilities into the future largely based on technical capabilities and with a general premise that relations with the United States will not change significantly enough to alter the *intentions* of those states pursuing ballistic missile capabilities.[55]

In the last two statements, "intentions" and "motivations" clearly matter. And since all of the assessments examined thus far concur that the power capabilities of the various states of concern are significantly less than what the former Soviet Union possessed, their common conclusion on the vastly increased threat of missile attack therefore necessarily invokes not only elite intentions and motives, but also summons interrelated discourses that allow for certain representations to be naturalized and, in turn, justify that conclusion – a discursive economy of self-referentiality, as it were. Insofar as security discourses serve to enframe, delimit and domesticate a particular identity, a multiplicity of other discourses – individual and national traits or types, forms of domestic order, social relations of production, area studies, geopolitics, and so on – as well as the various subjectivities to which these give rise are deployed in juxtaposition with, are interwoven into, security discourse. The domesticating or disciplinary effect of these "intertextually" linked discourses serve to reproduce the constituting practices that write into being "America" in the face of different, contradictory and, to be sure, threatening interpretations.

Simply put, the writing of danger in the discourse of missile defence effectively relies upon a host of interrelated discourses that pivot on the construction of Otherness by explicit references to how, say, "North Korea" or "Iraq" or "China" differs in contrast to "America." The notion that these national identities are especially threatening to the US thereby "emerges" out of differences, to borrow from the patois of the former Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), in "history and geography, in…economic conditions and structure, and…political system and ideology."[56] As Simon Dalby has shown, the CPD, by unreservedly repudiating détente and appropriating "Team B" intelligence estimates

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[55] See, "New CIA Report Assesses Future Ballistic Missile Threat: North Korea and Iran could pose a threat to US by 2015" (September 10, 1999), emphasis added. Downloaded at http://pdq.state.gov/scripts/cqcg on September 3, 2001.
[56] See, C. Tyroler (ed.), *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984).

during the 1970s, constructed the Soviet Union as a dangerous Other principally through the demarcation of "radical differences" between, on one hand, the Soviet Union and, on the other, the US and other democracies.[57] This intimate nexus between difference, Otherness, and threat is similarly present in the discourse of missile defence advocates. Again, hear Wolfowitz – an academic/practitioner widely praised for his ability to "think out of the box" – distinguish between "democracies" and a certain breed of "leaders":

> Here there seems to be a persistent difference between democracies, which look constantly for pragmatic solutions to resolve concrete problems in isolation, and those more ruthless and avaricious leaders who see every such effort as a sign of weakness and whose real goal is to change power relationships in a fundamental way."[58]

First, no explication is given for why the above statement turns on a reported difference between two distinct levels-of-analysis in international relations: the state/regime-as-actor level (democracies) and the individual-as-actor level (leaders of authoritarian and/or rogue nations). Further, we can see that the creation of Otherness here occurs along several axes; take, for instance, what may be termed the rational/irrational axis. In the former case, the individual-as-actor has been effaced, thereby leaving only a regime-type (democracy) that is purportedly predisposed to technical problem solving, and incessantly in search of "pragmatic solutions to resolve problems." No politics – and with it any attendant irrationality and uncertainty – need apply in a society in which history and/or ideology "have ended,"[59] in which problems are solved "in isolation." Positioned against this rational, democratic institutional subjectivity stands a lesser, rather loathsome subjectivity: a coterie of so-called "ruthless and avaricious leaders," all of whom hail presumably from non-democracies and who purportedly regard rational cum technical problem solving – the ostensible focus of democracies – as "a sign of weakness." This blanket inscription of the authoritarian Other as ill disposed and even hostile toward rational problem solving disregards the writings on the rational technocratic elites of, say, the bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes of Latin

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[57] Dalby, "Geopolitical Discourse: The Soviet Union as Other," p. 425.
[58] Paul Wolfowitz, "Remembering the Future," *The National Interest* (Spring 2000), p. 40.
[59] See, Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Penguin, 1992); and Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960).

America,[60] or those of the *dirigiste* economies of East Asia – many of which used to be (or in some cases still are) of the "soft" authoritarian variety.[61]

Otherness, in Wolfowitz's rendition, is also discursively constituted along a moral/immoral – or, alternatively, responsible/irresponsible – axis. Equally interesting is the notion that authoritarian or rogue-state leaders, besides lacking in rationality and viewing problem solving as a form of weakness, are "ruthless and avaricious" – an intentional, not accidental, choice of predicates. That (and here we are left to infer) "North Korea" or "Iraq" is ruled by such roguish elements can only mean that such states can, indeed they *should*, therefore be properly referred to as rogue states. Against these inscriptions of immorality or amorality stand, in diametric contrast, moral "America." And here the unequal adoption by Wolfowitz's discourse, in the case of "democracies," of the analytical level of state/regime connotes that *all* America, and not only its leaders or certain individuals, is thereby kind, compassionate, altruistic – the polar opposite of all that rogue states, and possibly even China and Russia, represent. To be sure, nowhere in his words does Wolfowitz imply that there are as such no immoral or irresponsible Americans. Nor does he even hint that all citizens of rogue states are therefore roguish; political correctness, after all, is the norm in these enlightened times. But the discursive effect is such that we are left with the impression that leaders of rogue nations – Saddam Hussein, Kim Chong-il, and their ilk – epitomize the darkest of the dark metaphysics of human nature.

And roguish as such are their foreign policies. In his evaluation of the missile threat from North Korea, the deputy CIA director asserted:

> Like everyone else, we knew the [Pyongyang] regime was brutal within its borders and a menace beyond. Its commando raids into South Korea and its assassination attempts against successive South Korean presidents – including the 1983 bombings in Rangoon that killed 21 people – were clear windows into the minds and morals of North Korean leaders.[62]

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[60] See, Guillermo A. O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics*, with a postscript by the author (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1979).
[61] Among innumerable examples, see, James W. Morley (ed.), *Driven by Growth: Political Change in the Asia-Pacific Region*, revised edition (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999).
[62] McLaughlin, "Deputy CIA Director Examines Challenges Posed By North Korea."

Again, it bears reminding that the argument here does not refuse the historical "reality" and tragic consequences either of Pyongyang's oppressive policies at home or its ruinous forays abroad. In terms of exclusionary practices, however, interpretive conclusions concerning the brutality of the Pyongyang regime cannot be separated from the morality axis on which this particular statement turns. What, for instance, is the effect created by the use of the opening phrase, "Like everyone else"? To who exactly does "everyone" refer? That this analysis is intelligible at all depends upon the presupposition that this particular reading – an American reading, to be precise – is universally accepted by one and all. But this is clearly not the case as implied by the vociferous and potentially violent tide of militant Muslims in Pakistan and parts of the Middle East, who hold Washington in contempt for the latter's alleged "brutality" and "menace" toward, say, the Iraqis, (by proxy) the Palestinians, or (most recently) the Afghans. As such, the discursive effect of the preceding constructions is the naturalization of the Pyongyang regime as immoral, irresponsible, or just plain evil given the damning evidence of dastardly deeds that proffer "clear windows into the minds and morals of North Korean leaders." Further, that the enumerated acts above were those perpetrated by Kim Il-song and not by his son, Kim Chong-il, seems not to matter in this analysis, although it is the latter Kim's government with whom the Bush Administration must deal. This is not to imply that this intelligence estimate on Kim was essentially all caricature and thereby shorn of "truth." The CIA official continues in his assessment:

> It is easy to caricature Kim Chong-il – either as a simple tyrant blind to his dilemma or as a technocratic champion of sweeping change. But the extreme views of him tend to be the product of bias, ignorance, or wishful thinking. The reality is more complex… Like his father, he has been shrewd enough to make bad behavior the keystone of his foreign policy. He knows that proliferation is something we want to stop. Thus, Kim Chong-il has tried to drum up outside assistance by trading off international concerns about his missile programs and sales. He has – more subtly, of course – done much the same thing with foreign fears of renewed famine and the chaos that could accompany any unravelling of his regime.[63]

The evident attempt at nuance in the above analysis, however, does not preclude the continued deployment of representational practices along the axis of responsibility. "Like his father," we are told, the "shrewd" Kim makes "bad behavior the keystone of his

[63] John E. McLaughlin, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence. See, "Deputy CIA Director Examines Challenges Posed By North Korea" (April 17, 2001). Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01042301.htm on June 18, 2001.

foreign policy" – an indication of chronic irresponsibility in North Korea's international relations. We may note here the likely intrusive influence of another discourse, particularly that on nineteenth-century European diplomacy as it figures in American intellectual and popular culture. As historian Barbara Tuchman once noted, for most Americans the notion of diplomacy carries with it "all the wicked devices of the Old World, spheres of influence, balances of power, secret treaties, triple alliances"[64] and other such forms of Machiavellian intrigue for which America, idealized as the New World – a seemingly virginal, innocent, and righteous identity – had no place. Indeed, just such a pristine identity is often adduced as the universal ideal to which all nations and peoples are presumed to aspire – a point made forcefully in the earlier cited "end of history" thesis popular in mainstream political debate at the close of the Cold War.[65] In other words, what is good for America is obviously good for the whole world (or, at least those parts that are "rational," "responsible," "moral"). "Missile defense," one congressman averred, "is for Americans, for Europeans, for Russians, and for all peace-loving peoples on the face of the Earth."[66]

Without ignoring or denying North Korean complicity in the light of its sizeable transfers of missile technology to the Middle East, what those exclusionary practices produce is the materializing effect of a Pyongyang regime that, if anything, can be expected to harm the US at the slightest provocation – a representation of danger that finds easy resonance with American policymakers because of its *familiarity* rather than any likelihood of such an eventuation. Further, what is effaced or erased by the above statement are plausible illustrations of bad behaviour in *American* foreign policy: a policy orientation that, even by most orthodox accounts, has been realist – in both its prudential as well as Machiavellian aspects – throughout much of the Cold War period.[67] Indeed,

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[64] Barbara W. Tuchman, "If Mao Had Come to Washington: An Essay in Alternatives," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 51, no. 1 (1972), pp. 44–64.

[65] Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*.

[66] Representative Curt Weldon (Republican-Pennsylvania), founder and co-chairman of the Congressional Missile Defense Caucus, in a speech to the US House of Representatives on supporting the President's missile defence initiative. Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01050302.htm on June 18, 2001.

[67] Framing his argument in quite similar terms, the noted neorealist, John Mearsheimer, recently warned about the imminent danger facing the US if it persists (in Mearsheimer's opinion) in repudiating "straightforward balance-of-power logic": "The United States is a good candidate for behaving that way, because American political culture is deeply liberal and correspondingly hostile to realist ideas. It would be a grave mistake, however, for the country to turn its back on the realist principles that have served it so well since its founding." See, John J. Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 5 (September/October 2001), p. 61.

this effacement stands out starkly in the light of resistant discourses – mostly but not exclusively from European sources – which portray America as a rogue state[68] given the apparent lack of "strategic restraint" in its post-Cold War foreign policy.[69] Hence the tenuousness of such constructions of identity through excluding contradictions and tensions that are as much a part of Self as it is of the Other.

Where Russia or China is concerned, US security discourse on missile defence has rendered it clear as a matter of official policy that neither nuclear power is to be regarded as a rogue state – an appellation not entirely apropos, it would seem, for fellow permanent members of the UN Security Council. Nonetheless, NMD continues to be justified by its proponents as necessary in order to defend the US against accidental and/or unauthorized ballistic missile launches by those regional powers. Again, an examination of rationalizations in US missile defence discourse suggests that the so-called "threat-based" model called into question by the 2001 QDR report, as earlier noted, remains very much in operation. Quite apart from emphasizing rising power capabilities as a near-sufficient condition to merit the justification for missile defence, what Wolfowitz calls the "real goal" of these regional powers – hence connoting intention or motivation – "is to change power relationships in a fundamental way."[70] A Washington-based analyst has made a similar assertion: "States such as China and Russia, if given the chance, would configure the international system quite differently."[71] In short, China and Russia are discursively constituted as *revisionist* powers. Indeed, their reported connivance with rogue states through weapons sales and technology transfers perhaps even forces the impression that some sort of global missile conspiracy is at work. As Senator Jesse Helms affirmed in his riposte to Bush's May 1 missile defence speech: "The threat posed by rogue nations armed

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[68] For example, in May 1999 the Oxford Union debated the proposition, "Resolved, the United States is a rogue state." The resolution was ultimately defeated, but it reflected the growing unease around the world about a global order dominated by American power that is unprecedented, unrestrained, and unpredictable. See, G. John Ikenberry, "Getting Hegemony Right," *The National Interest*, no. 63 (Spring 2001), p. 17. Also see, François Heisbourg, "American Hegemony? Perceptions of the U.S. Abroad," *Survival*, vol. 41, no. 4 (Winter 1999-2000), pp. 5-19

[69] See, G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); and, Stewart Patrick, "America's Retreat from Multilateral Engagement," *Current History*, no. 99 (December 2000), pp. 430-9.

[70] Wolfowitz, "Remembering the Future," p. 40.

[71] Robert Kagan, "The World and President Bush," *Survival*, vol. 43, no. 1 (Spring 2001), p. 7.

with nuclear or biologically-tipped ICBMs is real, and it is growing rapidly – largely because of the support that Russia and China are providing to hostile regimes."[72]

Let us turn briefly to recent statements involving the "China threat." As per usual, without any thoughtful appraisal of the millennia-long and rich histor*ies* of China(s), the specific struggles and tensions faced at different historical moments in ongoing contestations of Chinese identity, or the relatively long Sino-American relationship marked by mutual benefit as well as detriment, Republican Senator Jon Kyle, by no means a Sinologist and citing extensively from just one study on China,[73] recently submitted this "definitive" assessment:

> [T]he former [Clinton] administration believed that China could be reformed solely by the civilizing influence of the West. Unfortunately, this theory hasn't proven out – the embrace of western capitalism has not been accompanied by respect for human rights, the rule of law, the embrace of democracy, or a less belligerent attitude toward its neighbours… China is being led by a communist regime with a deplorable human rights record and a history of irresponsible technology sales to rogue states. Furthermore, Beijing's threatening rhetoric aimed at the United States and Taiwan, as well as its military modernization and buildup of forces opposite Taiwan, should lead us to the conclusion that China potentially poses a growing threat to our national security… We should also be concerned with China's desire to project power in other parts of the Far East.[74]

In Kyle's discourse we encounter, first, the partisan criticism levelled against the previous administration for its evidently erroneous belief that China could be "reformed" by the "civilizing influence of the West." That this statement proceeds immediately from there to demonstrate why "this theory hasn't proven out" is not to imply that the senator from Arizona therefore thinks that the entirety of the Clinton Administration's purported logic is thereby flawed. Indeed, his discourse enacts precisely the same exclusionary practice, present in the logic that he has just criticized, so as to position China as a "lesser subject," so to speak, relative to the US. Again, Butler's thoughts are helpful here: "This exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous

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[72] Senator Jesse Helms (Republican-North Carolina). See, "Senator Helms Backs Bush on Defense" (May 1, 2001). Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01050201.htm on June 18, 2001.
[73] The book in question is Bill *Gertz, The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2000).
[74] Senator Jon Kyle (Republican-Arizona), "China's Military Policy" (March 30, 2001). Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01040202.htm on June 18, 2001.

production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet 'subjects,' but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject."[75] I would suggest that Butler's "abject beings…who are not yet 'subjects'" may possibly be construed as what I have termed "lesser subjects." Hence, in much the same way that colonial or Orientalist discourses produced subaltern subjects in order to be known, domesticated, disciplined, conquered, governed, and of course civilized,[76] the figuration of "China" in Kyle's discourse, evoking a genre of Otherness most moderns prefer to think has disappeared with the passing of colonialism, is that of an uncivilized barbaric nation and people. The previous Democratic administration, according to Kyle, erred in believing that the Chinese can be reformed and civilized, but no such hope – and it is, after all, a *liberal* hope – need be entertained by conservatives who know better than to even attempt to civilize "the natives." This representation allows for the simultaneous production of the properly constituted subject, "America," where human rights, the rule of law, democracy, and a track record of good neighbourliness are fully embraced along with capitalism. Here we may note that although this inventory of criteria has long been associated with how Americans perceive themselves – and, to be sure, how the world perceives America, positively as well as negatively – their own national history, however, is littered with as many spectacular failures as there have been successes in these very areas.

Further, what is interesting to note, in terms of the redeployment – or, to paraphrase Foucault, a "re-incitement" – of Orientalist tropes in security discourse, is the shift from the sorts of axiomatic and practical axes that structure interrelated discourses on communism during and prior to the Cold War, to the axes that configure contemporary readings of communism or, more precisely, the latest variant of "socialism with Chinese characteristics." As Campbell has pointed out, one of the dimensions upon which pivoted the construction of Soviet communism as the West's Other was that of the organizing of economic relations: notably, in its most simplistic terms, central planning and collectivisation on the part of the communist bloc; and, laissez faire cum mixed economy and private ownership on the part of the Free World.[77] In the case of Senator Kyle's narrative – which, in a key respect, reiterates and references norms and tropisms already

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[75] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 3.
[76] The definitive study on this remains, notwithstanding certain conceptual and empirical difficulties, Said's seminal work. See, Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).
[77] See, Campbell, *Writing Security*, pp. 153-93. Also, see, Dalby, "Geopolitical Discourse: The Soviet Union as Other," pp. 424-37.

present in security discourses on China during the Clinton presidency – that particular axis has become irrelevant in the wake of China's "embrace of western capitalism" and growing integration with the global economy.[78] For a replacement, contemporary security discourse has mobilized other representational resources that, as we have seen, function within the senator's discourse to domesticate and constitute China as a threat. And although China is described therein as "being led by a *communist* regime," the choice of this particular adjective, deliberately circulated to invoke past articulations of fear, no longer refers to the same thing, however. Hence, much as China has "embraced western capitalism," much as communism in its economic sense is no longer adhered to throughout all of China, the discursive construction of Otherness, to the extent that the figuration of communism is still being employed, now proceeds along the democratic/authoritarian axis, as well as along other axes (elaborated upon earlier) around which rogue states are constituted.

From this fragment of discourse – reliant as it is on other discourses developmental, humanitarian, juridical, ethical, economic, political, ideological, cultural, and of course security in order to be effective – "emerges" a China that can be perceived in no other way other than as a threat to the US. Kyle concludes with a stirring endorsement of what may be for others symptomatic of American hubris and ethnocentricity: "We should hold China up to the same standards of proper behavior we have defined for other nations, and we should work for political change in Beijing, unapologetically standing up for freedom and democracy"[79] – words today that resonate ambivalently as Washington wages its "new war on terrorism" in the name of freedom and democracy while, at the same time, having to infringe upon the civil liberties of some Americans of particular ethno-religious backgrounds in the name of that war. Finally, it is not entirely clear why Chinese "military modernization and buildup of forces opposite Taiwan," much less "Beijing's threatening rhetoric" – as if Chinese leaders, unlike their US counterparts, do not ever employ rhetoric for purposes of domestic consumption –

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[78] The notion of China's integration with – or entry into – the global economy is obviously problematic in the light of the important works of Immanuel Wallerstein on what he has called the "world-capitalist economy" or the "modern world-system," in which he cogently argues that the Second and Third Worlds, contrary to received wisdom in liberal economics, are effectively integrated into the world-capitalist economy, which is hierarchical and organized in terms of a global division of labour, comprising core, semi-periphery, and periphery. Communist China, as a Third World nation, would have been located in the periphery. See, Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).
[79] Kyle, "China's Military Policy."

should automatically lead Americans to "the conclusion that China potentially poses a growing threat to [the US's] national security."

To its credit, the Bush Administration has, for the most part, avoided any forthright labelling of China as a threat, much less a clear and present danger. But the conditions of discursive possibility for such labelling are clear *and* present, so much so that policy options of containment, confrontation, and engagement, in an important sense, do not constitute fundamentally distinct ways of conceptualising China, but rather overlapping approaches to managing an already presumed Other, both dangerous and threatening. As National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice has argued, "China is not a 'status quo' power [because it] resents the role of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region"[80] – an ideological reduction that not only constitutes China as incorrigibly revisionist, but refuses the possibility that China may in fact accept (or, as a retired Chinese diplomat recently put it, "tolerate"[81]) the international status quo owing to the benefits Beijing has accrued and desires to continuing accruing, thanks largely to America's apparent stabilizing influence in the region.[82] Moreover, as one analyst has averred, "Beijing has a history of testing US presidents early to see what they're made of."[83] As in the above illustrations concerning rogue states, exclusionary practices along various axiomatic and practical axes construct a particular China that, in turn, legitimates the view of the Chinese and their missiles as threats. All the while, the contemporaneous production and reproduction of a particular American identity proceeds apace by way of the reiteration and reference of boundary-producing performances that form the constitutive "outside" of danger, threat, and vulnerability.

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[80] Condoleeza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 1 (January/February 2000), p. 56.
[81] Ambassador Chun-lai Shi, outgoing chairperson of China CSCAP, part of the Asia-Pacific-wide CSCAP (Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific) network, the nongovernmental or "track two" parallel to the ASEAN Regional Forum. Shi noted that China could conceivably "tolerate" American strategic dominance in the Asia-Pacific region. Remarks made at a security conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (June 4, 2001).
[82] This argument is raised in Peter Van Ness, "Hegemony, Not Anarchy: Why China and Japan are Not Balancing US Unipolar Power," *The International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* (forthcoming).
[83] Kagan, "The World and President Bush," p. 11.

Conclusion

Few, to be sure, would doubt the sincerity of Secretary Rumsfeld when he averred last June: "I don't think vulnerability is a (viable) policy."[84] Clearly, Washington's preoccupation with missile defence has much to do with the Bush Administration's concern over what it perceives as the strategic vulnerability of America to potential ballistic missile attack. Nonetheless, as important as debates over whether or not the "missile threat" actually exists are to the study and practice of international relations, what is equally if not more fundamental is the question of how discourses of danger figure in the incessant writing of "America" – a particular and quite problematic identity that owes its materiality to textual inscriptions of difference and Otherness. Missile hysteria in US national security discourse cannot be simplistically reduced to the level of an ideological explanation – certainly not according to the classic formulation of Mannheim's.[85] Rather, what this paper has demonstrated is the centrality of difference and deferral in discourse to the identity of America – a discourse of danger, fear, and vulnerability posed by potential missile attacks against the US from "rogue states" and accidental or unauthorized missile launches from a particular "China" or "Russia." The argument maintained here has been that a particular representation of America does not exist apart from the very differences that allegedly threaten that representation, just as the particular America of recent lore did not exist apart from Cold War-related discourses of danger. If missile defence is (as Bauman, cited earlier, has put it) the "foolproof recipe" for exorcising the ghosts or demons of missile hysteria, then Bush's national security advisors are the exorcists and shamans as well as the constructors of national insecurity via missile hysteria.[86] However, the argument has not been that the Administration, the Rumsfeld Commission, and other missile defence enthusiasts fabricated, ex nihilo, a ballistic missile threat against the US by means of a singular, deliberate "act," which is what some constructivists in international relations, conspiracy theorists, and partisan Democrats – an interesting if not motley collectivity – would have us believe. Nor has it been that language and discourse is "everything" as linguistic idealists would have us imagine. Rather, through reiterative and coordinated practices by which discourse produces the effects that it names, a certain

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[84] See, "Rumsfeld and Rice Discuss Policy Threats and Challenges" (June 1, 2001). Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01060433.htm on September 4, 2001.
[85] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1936).
[86] In a speech to the CNN World Report Conference, Washington, DC on June 1, 2001, National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice called herself one of the former "High Priestesses of Arms Control." Downloaded at http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01060401.htm on June 18, 2001.

normative representation of America "emerges" – wrought, as it were, by fear and written into being by missile hysteria.

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