Success Without Imperialism - “What the US Cannot Understand?”

There is always a conflict between high principle and pragmatism. Embracing both is probably a wise strategy. But whether you can actually have anything both ways, or whether the outcome would mean anything if you did, remains to be seen.

As Geoff Young, political pundit who has run for political office in the US State of Kentucky, so accurately describes:

“China has never tried to conquer Asia or the whole world. Britain, France, Germany and the US have tried, and they think every other country is the same - imperialistic.”

Not all countries are motivated by the same ambitions. For example, few in the US know the real reason for the War of 1812 with what is now the UK - it was that the US attempted to take Canada over.

The result did little to further the imperial ambitions of either the US or UK, but effectively created Canada as a self-defined nation within the British Empire, rather than a colonial possession of foreign powers. It gave the disparate colony a sense of unity and purpose, which evolved into what the US was not and never would be, and in a good way—at least until recently.

Beat Us Nicely
Conquest and Imperialism seem to be in the US’s programming. It remains the international community’s little kid – demanding its own way with loud noises, unable to forge mutually respectful relationships with other nations because it has to be always right, and thinks its own latest ideas are better than anyone else’s.

However much rest of the world is growing sick and tired of being dominated, especially under the flimsy disguise of democracy building and régime change for their own good. Just listen to the recent Biden administration budget requests and you will see that the game continues.

Most certainly some countries are still in lock step with America’s plans and even want to cite a “special relationship” for justification of this. However these “special relationships” are becoming increasingly frayed simply because they are constantly being cited.

The UK is the classic example of this, but many other countries are desperate to cling to US coat tails to cover their own coats. It should be noted that South American countries, even when no longer repressive right wing dictatorships, still run to the US whenever they have a problem, hoping the US has ever heard of them.

The UK is now desperate to believe in a Special Relationship because it has turned its back on the EU and wants to think something else can replace it. The US doesn't see it that way, however, as every US administration sees the UK as a rather strange foreign country it can take advantage of rather than work with.

Both sides also know this is not a new phenomenon. Sixty years ago the classic BBC satirical comedy show That Was The Week That Was broadcast a sketch in which Prime Minister Harold Macmillan phones President John F. Kennedy on his private hotline. You hear one side of the conversation. “Macmillan here” “HAROLD Macmillan!” “M-A-C-M -I …….”.

South American countries believe they share more or less the same continent with the US, so they much be its friends. Many of them try blackmail, saying in effect “you supported the dictators, now you either support our democracies or we turn Communist”.

But the further some leaders go towards adopting leftist rhetoric, the more they are desperate for US support because they want to be seen as little boys themselves, The likes of Correa and Tabare Vasquez may be men of the people, but still expect the Great Satan despised by so many of their compatriots to backstop them in their childish lunacy, as the US would see it.

The British have an aversion to creeping Americanism, which is currently being overshadowed by anti-immigrant and EU rhetoric but is nevertheless there. The US appears to be bent on cultural conquest of the old homeland through music, films, language etcetera, and many Brits quite reasonably ask why, when it was the British who gave them everything now being used against them.

An American empire might be a better prospect than anyone else's, from a British point of view. But the British had their own empire not so long ago, and still white British look down in various subtle, or not so subtle, ways on those who derive from that empire.

The British Empire is something British are either jingoistic or embarrassed about, with nothing in between. So there is no fondness for eternal US conquest either, as it brings bad memories either way.

**Empire or Enduring Partnership?**

Of course empires are seen as things of the past. Partnership is the mode now – even though economics and blackmail make bilateral and multilateral partnerships empires in all but name. Hence the failed US attempts to use proxy forces to further its interests, in Ukraine, Yemen, Syria, and other hotspots around the world, providing it can continue to set the agenda and hold the purse strings.

The idea that Ukraine will ever get its own nuclear weapons or US nuclear weapons will be based in Ukraine is something of wishful thinking on part of the US, as Russia will not allow it. The recent, massive Russian mobilization showed Ukraine, NATO and the world that there are red lines that must not be crossed or Russia will use military force to rid Ukraine of all advanced weapons within a matter of days.

Some alliances are obvious, and there is no radio silence from the Israeli Lobby unless a candidate explicitly rejects AIPAC's propaganda. And I continued to be lobbied by Republican members of CUFI, Christians United for Israel, even after AIPAC had given up on me. Israel could never have any other special friend than the US, given the importance of the Jewish community in every practical aspect of US life, until they come to stand for office.
But as is typical of such relationships, real or perceived, the US-Israel Enduring Partnership (very tight and too cozy for comfort) is collapsing very, very fast, and with it discrediting its allies and erstwhile colonies in the process.

From the time of its formation in 1948 until the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel had a number of countries it depended on for military and diplomatic support: France, Britain, the US and possibly a few others. After Israel's 1967 military victory against Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the US became Israel's main supporter and benefactor. This was not only due to cultural connections but because US was in the process of losing the Vietnam War, and wanted an ally which could win on the battlefield.

The US had got into that war due to thinking it could pick up where the French had left off – the US empire succeeding where the French had failed. Geoff Young, who shares his own coming of age, as an American Jew born in 1956, describes his take from a personal perspective.

“I was about to turn 11 when Israel won the Six-Day War and took East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria. I remember watching UN debates on TV and thinking, "Hmm, the Soviet and Egyptian ambassadors are making some interesting points about which country started the war." My family and the local Jewish community, however, adamantly insisted that Israel was the underdog and had to attack first because Egypt has committed an act of war and was about to wipe Israel out”.

In the early 1970s, two books by Noam Chomsky provided evidence that Israel was the aggressor, "At War With Asia: Essays on Indochina" and “American Power and the New Mandarins" and that international law required Israel to return all of the territories it had conquered in 1967. However the US government did everything it could to prevent the international community from forcing Israel to give back any territory at all.

By 1975 or so, almost every country in the world, including the Arab countries and the PLO, had accepted the Two-State Solution whereby Israel would remove all of its troops from the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, and the Palestinians would form a country in those previously-occupied territories with its capital in East Jerusalem. That is still the position of the large majority of the world's countries, but the US has vetoed it year after year.

In 2003, the Cheney-Bush Regime invaded and conquered Iraq, a country with the 5th largest oil reserves in the world. The US thus cemented its reputation as the worst aggressor in the world, a distinction it has held since about 1950 when it nearly destroyed North and South Korea, [naturally] “in order to save South Korea from Communism.”

But no one was fooled. All this was all about keeping Israel onside, because the US has to, despite it being allegedly the senior partner, because it cannot cope with being anything other than the senior partner, whose words and actions are never questioned.

With the steady rise in power of China and Russia after 2000, and the steady decline of US hard and soft power, the world has become multipolar. The US and Israel are unable to dictate outcomes in the Middle East or anywhere else, and the Western Alliance (symbolised by NATO) is showing fissures that may never be repaired.

One recent example is the inability of the US to stop the Nordstream natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany. Another is the ambition of Ukraine to acquire nuclear weapons if left out of NATO – if it isn't part of the club, it won't play by anybody’s rules, and will get away with it

Worldwide anger against Israel increased in 2021 when it launched another of its periodic military offensives against the Gaza Strip, a nearly defenseless Palestinian population centre that has accurately been called the world’s largest open-air prison.

Israeli and US mainstream media propaganda has lost much of its effectiveness - except in the US Congress, where almost all members of the House and Senate are strongly influenced by the Israeli Lobby and the campaign contributions the Lobby can use during elections to keep US politicians in line.

Geoff Young can tell you that when he gave some hardline Zionists answers that they didn’t like, the Israeli Lobby stopped even trying to talk with him. Radio silence from AIPAC and CUFI (Christians United for Israel) is now the norm in US campaigns.

Perhaps it is justice, and the sooner the better, that the US Empire will disappear. Hopefully this will mean that what remains of the US founding principles can be recreated without the Empire and centralised top down government, the very things these founding principles were established to combat.  

Blame Game
But naturally, the name of the game is the blame game, and China is going to be blamed for COVID as this may provide some sort of a flimsy cover for many American ills, and for the US to go on the attack to try and defend its own dismal track record and involvement in nefarious activities, not only in terms of science and technology policy but wholesale meddling in the affairs of others.

It will not go down without a fight, by trying to deflect its own faults onto others. It will not simply implode, but will like try to take others down with it, and become even more violent as it struggles to maintain the remnants of Western hegemony by advancing more insidious and complicated ways to exploit and control the rest of the world as much as possible.

If the US wants to see what its future is, it could do worse than look at Portugal. The Portuguese Empire collapsed in 1974, as a result of the Carnation Revolution. But even though Portugal was thriving economically prior to this, despite increasing expenditure of wars against its own colonies, its European partners and domestic population have never allowed it to forget its days of Empire.

Portugal’s crimes in its African colonies are an unhealed wound in that nation, simply because those colonies existed as much as what was done by the Portuguese within them. The rest of Europe is still determined to integrate Portugal on their terms, which the Portuguese have to accept, to keep the former colonist in its place.

Portugal deals with this by celebrating the revolution which ended its empire on every street corner. The US won’t have that option, or it will cease to exist. Like Richard Nixon, it has to do things its own way or not at all, and always ultimately for its own glory. Americans do not need to be told what happened to Nixon, and his reputation, for being a typical American.

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