



Beyond good and evil

Almost a year ago, Richard Neville wrote a provocative analysis of the "dark side" of Uncle Sam — a nation, he argued, hell-bent on furthering its own interests at any cost. Now, in the wake of September 11, America has cast itself as a global crusader against terror, above the law, above criticism. But is it really on the side of the angels in a "new kind" of war, Neville asks — and could it have responded to the crisis in a way more in keeping with its own high ideals?

On the morning of September 12 last year, my head still reeling from the previous night's footage of the attacks on New York and the Pentagon, an e-mail burst forth from a US student. "I bet people like you are happy now," it said, "probably smiling inside a little, thinking 'glad it put you in your place' or 'maybe now they won't be so damned arrogant.' I promise you that won't happen, we will be stronger."

This message, like several hundred others of varying tenor, was inspired by the May 19 cover story in *Good Weekend*, "American Psyche." The reader had been "summoned to virtue" after picking up the magazine on one of his frequent visits to Sydney and wanted to establish the story in his homeland. "I think Americans should know what people like you think of us, and ourselves. Tell us, what makes you so right, and us so wrong?"

The soldier's anger that morning was understandable. At that moment I regretted my failure to make clear that my query was his country's imperial state of mind, as seen in its foreign policy and cultural overkill, and not his naive-hearted compatriots, most of whom are oblivious to the deeds done in their name.

George Bush the First had flattered this impetuousness with a glib phrase on the eve of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro: "The American way of life is not negotiable." If that's so, I argued in three pages, then it will eventually cost the rest of an era and a leg and a lung, maybe more. While I would rather live in the shadow of the White House than at the mercy of damn law, the policies of Washington, I came to realize, reflect the selfishness of corporatism in America, which means other leads according to their rating: market, sales, ownership or banker class. Uncle Sam's rapaciousness is

both driven and disguised by a mix of pop culture, mass media, brand fetishism and propaganda so clever and tantalizing that most of us feel the same we're indoctrinated into the American Dream, the better they don't stop the music.

The events since 9/11 have heightened my concern. The rounded Golb is on a campaign — aimed to the teeth, advised by the polls, codified by law, supported by no-one and doomed to kill. Western nations fall in behind the far-left strategy, beguiled by the notion of civilization protecting itself, striking faith with the flame of freedom. One commentator explained: "The 'act of evil' speech is led by The Australian's foreign editor as a 'key defining document of the new era' in which George W. Bush guides us beyond the 'ungodliness.' Cold War strategy of deterrence to the future war magicians of 'pre-emption,' when the US upholds democracy, topples tyrannies

and makes the world a better place.

A better place for whom? Since we Uncle Sam as he sees himself — a Santa Claus for all seasons, dispensing dollars, global justice, gadgets, Cheesies, like-chip stocks and fifty herenowes. Others see him as the school bully in charge of the worldings. Perhaps it's a case of split personality: a good Uncle Sam and a bad Uncle Sam. America provides more freedoms, death and opportunities for its own citizens than can be matched by any other nation. The good Uncle Sam regards this as a just franchise to market for the betterment of all. The bad Uncle Sam wants to possess the cash flow at hand often by any means necessary, even if it destroys the planet and all the vertices who get in the way.

Dad's "new kind" of war in the name of freedom is actually an old kind of imperial expansion to extend America's grip on the wealth of the world. A wealth which belongs to everyone. But instead of a universal breathing space, which includes those who the world needs most, is an ongoing, unconditional human revolution to read into the seats of rage. Such a sweeping global ethic is absent from the

was, mysteriously "the end of the free ride" (sic). Foreigners could no longer "dominate America by day and dominate its benefits by night". One area commentator, adopting the mantle of honorary Americans, raised these sentiments like disheartened parents, chastising the free traders as traitors.

When the train arrives, on a level, so-called America's sense of inevitability. Perhaps this is why the giddy cheer in Manhattan seemed so much more shocking and outrageous than the deaths of hundreds of thousands of terror victims elsewhere in the world. The such wanted vengeance. "The response to this unimaginable 21st-century Pearl Harbor," raved Australian expatriate Steve Dunaway, a columnist for Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post*, "should be as simple as it is swift — kill the bastards. A gambit between the eyes, like those to southwestern, police them if you have it. As the cities or countries that host these weapons, locate them into hundred counts." And so it came to pass.

When the world's mightiest air force unleashed itself on the world's poorest nation, the result was worse in doubt.

Was the Taliban really destroyed for harbouring terrorists? Or was it for failing to further the ambitions of Texan millionaires?

perities of the millennium swept havoc into Washington, but it was briefly glum period at state level in the stillbirth-strewn aftermath of the twin towers.

New Yorkers responded to the attack with courage and compassion, refusing their cynicism by not of being a bunch of hard-won money-grubbers bent on ripping off their best friends. A brave-spirited band of agents dove to the rescue, finding the airplanes, so they could flag off the high-tech. "That is a New Yorker," noted a reporter, "and there are millions of us." This surge of solidarity was matched by a spell of self-examination which offered hope for later the White House might deal with the attacks, since the President could be located. "Let us take time to deliberate," suggested a foreign relations expert, who argued that military force would be less effective in understanding terrorism than a deconstruction of motives. Others, too, urged the US to hold its fire, and avoid further suffering. The UN or World Court could put Osama bin Laden on trial, "even in absentia," standing along him and his network as criminals. So-called for a period of their activities.

These voices were submerged in a sea of flags as the headquarters-based Civil Liberties Network launched *Democracy Now*. Nevertheless, the *News* for military strikes, covert attacks, combination of wars, aerial assets, closure of safe houses, the bombing of state prisons, regardless of the "prevention of civil liberties". For the rest of the world it

Courage, and lots of it. Among my reasons for opposing the action in Afghanistan was the unspoken fact that the Taliban, however headbitch, did not plan or execute the attacks on the US. But why let the match get in the way of a sitting duck? The Taliban was a vile desecration which subjugated women, mutilated criminals and dishonored few speech. It deserved to be crushed. Maybe so. In which case, so does our coalition ally Saudi Arabia.

Last month, the Taliban was seen as a commercial ally. In 1987, its officials were flown to George Bush's home state of Texas, where they harbored 7 hours inside a continuing party with the vice-president of the oil giant Unocal. With less than 500 per cent of the world's population, the US consumes over a quarter of the world's oil. For which it relies heavily on imports. On the United agenda was upping that to at least 80 billion barrels of oil (roughly up to 270 billion) from Turkmenistan, part of the last great resource frontier. The plan was to pump black gold across the landlocked states of Afghanistan, through Pakistan to a terminal in the Arabian Sea. Until recently, these talks were thought to have collapsed in December 1998, when Unocal pulled out, citing civil war. In fact, once after its election, the Bush Administration renewed the talks, believing the Taliban could be trained to support the pipeline, as it supported the War on Drugs. (Washington funded the Taliban \$1.5-2 million to support the production of opium poppies, now back in bloom.)

Another party to the pipeline negotiations was Enron, the famously bankrupt energy trader which, with Washington's backing, managed to dominate private and volatile around developing nations. Enron's disgraced chairman, Ken Lay, a former Pentagon economist, was the biggest single investor in George W. Bush's campaign for president. In return, Lay was able to appoint White House regulators, shape energy policies and block the regulation of offshore tax havens. Enron had "intimate contact with Taliban officials" according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*. *Albion* Ministry, and the energy giant's much-revered Dutch project in India was set to benefit from a link-up with the pipeline.

These negotiations collapsed in August 2001, when the Taliban asked the US to help reconstruct Afghanistan's infrastructure and provide a portion of

Pill Pat's Casablanca have been recruited in addition security, far from their former killing fields. Florida especially suffers with a multitude of lost-blooded anti-Castro subversives and hijackers. The former supply of cocaine cartels is guaranteed by the US Army's training center at Fort Benning, Georgia. Enron's journey occurred at the School of the Americas, which makes the all-Queda camp even like a Taliban-style police.

When George Bush departs his Miller citizen as "good" and his quarry as "evil", it restores the mischief of his enemy, the holy warriors against Great Satan. And it means anything is permitted. In Washington, the nature of suspected terrorism by the FBI and other agencies — either with "a truth serum or



the oil supply for local needs. The US response was reportedly succinct: "He will either carpet you in gold to carpet you in bombs." The notes of this meeting, which took place only weeks before the strikes on America, are now the subject of a lawsuit between Congress and the White House. Was the Taliban really destroyed for harbouring terrorists? Or was it for failing to further the ambitions of Texan millionaires?



Shooter says: Iraq premier when the Muslim fundamentalist, America's future party are not the best to receive the US money. (Olemed) Afghan minister leader Rashed Karzai with George W. Bush.

heritage" — was presented at the highest level. The supports at Guantanamo Bay, located, beyond, head-shaved and split, are deemed the "sons of the nation", and denied the protection of the Geneva Convention. Those taken with al-Qaeda convictions have been secretly sent to health-care facilities in Egypt, according to a Sydney *Morning Herald* report which cites the CIA's internal opinion of Egypt and Jordan. One diplomat revealed: "It allows us to get information from terrorists in a way we can't do on US soil." The possibility of extradition is bypassed.

Take note: last time Robert Neville's essay on US invasion of former times helped draw a huge response from readers including one who from some better Americans.



America was congratulated for the speedy assembling of its "coalition," quickly up on stage of the study, empty. One morning, Haddad, with Tony Blair's backing up and down to give his knee the best. America defined the goal, but the choice and dictated the strategy. It seemed puzzling, back in October, that so little time was spent in trying to get a deal with the Taliban. (Nothing was known then of the all-IndoChina) Instead, a deadline was promulgated to lead one Osama ... or the. Not such an easy task, as it turned out. Who does any other way? Perhaps, with time, studies, pressure from Pakistan and the realization of some Islamic clerics, the Taliban may well have been content to join the host.

The case the true cause behind the, the strategy before the start. So much so, I felt I was suffering a spontaneous and feedback, one of the few central events a grateful hope awaits with delight. The former boss of the EGB, lately the leader of Chechnya (and now implicated in the Moscow apartment bombing),

It may have surprised Americans to learn that the only nation ever condemned by the World Court for perpetrating terrorism was their own.

Madame Justice was no longer the good in America, but an American-led coalition fighter for the coalition. The Chinese leaders, their editors asking from expelling the and resumed constitution of Fudan Gong, and let's not mention Tibetan monks, were suddenly champions of peace, let's not a global Woodstock. Perhaps the most amazing sight of the ensuing months was Israel's Ariel Sharon leaving the world on the horns of terrorism as his coalition raised down on the Palestinians, his tank flattening their houses, his assassin no double bluff. As a Belgian tribunal considered Sharon's indictment for war crimes committed in Lebanon in 1982, the war crimes against him, the Taliban, was blown up by a car bomb in Beirut, along with his three bodyguards.

Such was the overwhelming support for the "War Against Terror," that the Madison media became its close squad. Early White House briefings had the air of a lecture room. Quipped about the lack of targets in Kabul, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld asserted, "First, we're going to set targets, and second, we're not coming out of targets, Afghanistan is ...". The press corps exploded with riddles. Meanwhile, the body count mounted, although no one was actually counting. The Pentagon presented assault teams and the atrocities of civilian deaths. What we got was 600 civilian bodies (each containing 200 headshots) and reported shots of half-ton children in dirt flow bins, without access to mortuaries or even autopsy. Never mind. Uncle Sam launched a tub on drop of photo-op food parcels presented as "ethically sound," containing

cookies, jam, peanut butter and meat sandwiches. They yellow packaging, by their color, resembled that of child's biscuits. Images appeared of hand-dug child's graves but contained the text, though not an CNN.

The US media complied with the Pentagon's move to "sanitize" reports of civilian casualties. Not a problem, responded Michael Ruman, a Fox News pundit. "Civilian casualties are not news. The fact is that they accompany wars." The fact is, this war was triggered by a slaughter of innocents and that became its ultimate justification. Fox News, owned by Rupert Murdoch, put a pink-pinked reporter into Afghanistan who vowed to kill on sight "that fucking" Osama bin Laden. Fox encouraged its correspondents to "step into their anger and let it play". Murdoch never apologized. "Mostly neutral news is not inappropriate." As directed, the tapes of bin Laden's ravings were deleted.

In Australia, the media covered a little

years, the anti-Saudi strategy turned deadly. Washington's proxy army of violence set about colonizing the country's infrastructure, including schools, ports and health clinics. During this time, in which tens of thousands of people reportedly lost their lives, the campaign spread, localized and toward. Ninanaga initiated proceedings in the World Court, which in 1994 ruled in its favor. The US was condemned for the "unlawful use of force" and ordered to pay reparations. Instead, the US reinstated the CIA's creation of a "secret army" to destroy "soft targets" in Nicaragua, including agricultural co-operatives. A UN General Assembly resolution passed two years in a row, with the US and Israel opposing, called for the US to observe international law. This was ignored.

Another fact-packed anti-war Web site is that of William Blum, founding editor of the Web underground newspaper Washington Free Press. Today, Blum is still looking for trouble. "Assuming this

filled five crashlanders and injured 48. In Beirut, the targeted civilian was blown. None of the victims was compensated.

1980, Panama. After sustained Operation "Justus" campaign against former US ally and puppet president Manuel Noriega, along the lines of those previously directed at Fidel Castro, Colonel Gadhafi and Saddam Hussein, an aerial assault is launched on Panama City. The official reason is Noriega's drug trafficking, long known to Washington. Another motive is maintaining control of the Panama Canal, in the face of populist strategies.



site automatically opens a file for you at Bill's headquarters," is the printing of his home page. "This meaning, of course, comes too late."

According to Blum, from the end of World War II to the beginning of this century, the United States has "attempted to overthrow more than 40 foreign governments and to crush more than 30 populist nationalist movements struggling against intolerable regimes."

In the process, the US has caused the loss of life for several million people, and condemned many million more to a life of agony and despair." Blum makes the point that Americans are taught it's wrong to murder, rob, rape and kidnap, but that it's okay to topple foreign governments, spark socialist movements or drop powerful bombs on foreigners, as long as it serves the national interest. From plenty of mass-plas which prove, despite the current rhetoric from the White House, that the West is not always on the side of the angels, these show capture the essence of much US foreign policy:

1985, Lebanon. The CIA plants a truck bomb outside a mosque in Beirut, aiming to kill a Muslim cleric. As the faithful leave the mosque, the blast kills 80 and wounds 250, mostly women and children. By comparison, the March attack on a Protestant church in Birmingham

From a great height (top) the target yellow packaging of US food parcels, at right, already mentioned that of unaccompanied civilian bomb-laden (bottom) the containers "Army crates" bomb

An activist investment bank is located in rubble, a complaint government is installed. Various independent inquiries put the deaths between 2,000 and 4,000, most of the corpses still sitting in pits on US bases, off limits to investigation. American news outlets did not report the UN's overwhelming condemnation of the attack to be north broadcasting.

1988, Sudan. The siege of Tall Chertou, the first black sub-Saharan rock 'n' roll pop band President, is once devoted as a base when America went out on revolutionary regimes in period of "ending the other cheek", as one-diplomat Sydney Morning Herald columnist put it. How soft is soft? In August 1988, Bill Clinton met Yasuhiro Nakasone to discuss the Al Shiba pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, claiming it was producing chemical weapons. Actually, this plant had produced pharmaceutical self-sufficiency, and produced 90 per cent of the drugs needed to treat malaria, TB and other diseases. Among its owner, Isah El-Din, of according with terrorist, Washington from his London bank account. The case

was contained and the US backed down.

The Sudan's check toll from this attack "remains quietly to die", notes Chomsky. Using the "tens of thousands of people, many of them children," who have suffered or died from a range of terrible ailments. The chairman of the board of Al Shiba, Dr Idris El-Din, remarked that the destruction of his factory was "just as much an act of terrorism as the twin towers - the only difference is we know who did it."

A perspective at odds with the one reported by Roger Ailes, chairman of Fox News: "What we see in terrorism, terrorism, is evil, and America doesn't engage in it, and these guys do." One is reminded of Bill Clinton's slogan in George W. Bush's beloved mid-western, 1994: "War is peace, love is hate, truth is lies." In this dark vision, the Ministry of Truth manipulates the media to set the political objectives of Bill Clinton. In our world, the media are too loving and selfish, but the new priorities reflect the priorities of people in power. Images of the twin towers' collapse are liability imposed on the planet's collective memory. And as they should be, but other images have vanished from history through the air strike of Baghdad's "air-aid" disaster leaving alive 500 people, mainly women and children. A spokeswoman looking at US foreign policy from an Islamic perspective, Letter

to America, recently assessed an SBS, shows footage of relatives in the ruins of the Baghdad shelter sweeping away stones of charred corpses. For each victim, an unmarked service, no prayer, no justice.

The tapping of the Taliban is portrayed as a triumph, and perhaps it is, for the victors. On the ground, improvements are meagre. An early image of liberation was of Kabul's beggarly widows watching TV, a woman advertisement for Irbidon Soap, whose TV? The last US troops to Kabul hit the studios of Al Jazeera, the independent news of the Middle East. Praying that the Taliban may now need to settle for CNN and Fox, a victory, perhaps, the civilization and US exports, as well as for the pipe dreams of General The Pentagon claims this "smart bomb" test its technology, as another one did over Baghdad in 1999, when it flattened Saddam TV, killing and maiming the staff.

For the Pentagon, multi-media-marketing makes no cut enough. In February, it announced plans to provide news items to Europe journalists, "possibly even film ones", in order to compensate victims.

After three months' bombing of Afghanistan, an estimate of civilian casualties was based to die. It took Marc Hershoff, an economics professor from the University of New Hampshire, to investigate the disparate reports of "collateral damage" and come up with a total. If the evidence confirmed, said

hazardous fire," he told John Woodward of the Washington Post, "I want a statement." Also, it was left largely incomplete, as the opening news slipped out, not for the last time.

On January 24, after the US special forces, and an attitude of "whatever it takes". A small attack on two small compounds in Hama (Chad) reached to the deaths of 27 others. Released two weeks later, the men revealed they had been severely beaten and re-buffed. Hershoff later admitted these Afghan men were not, as first announced, Taliban or al-Qaeda fighters, but troops and local officials loyal to the current government. Photos appeared on the Web showing bodies of those still displaying white plastic vests indicating bearing the words "Made in USA". As pointed out by the US magazine The Nation, Article 23 of the Hague Convention forbids a warring party "to kill or wound an enemy party, having laid down his arms, or having no longer means of defence, his surrender". General Tommy Franks, the head of the US Central Command, described this apparent war crime: "I will not characterize it as a failure of any type."

By mid-February, the banal soundness of George Bush was still intact. The Pentagon and the CIA dispatched a suicide to kill three men near the village of Zharne Kil, close to the Pakistan border. The reason? One was tall,

had a flat top," he told John Woodward of the Washington Post, "I want a statement." Also, it was left largely incomplete, as the opening news slipped out, not for the last time.



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Heard, he settled for the knife-death threat. The number of injured was not included, not even of those likely to die from their wounds. Let us not say, since resides in this region, "eye against terror", have many innocent Afghans been lost their lives? If the number is unknown to you, what does that say about our media culture? At the very least, according to Marc Hershoff, the death toll is 2,700 - greater than the number slain in the twin towers. In January, Hershoff told ABC Radio that "a much more realistic" estimate of civilian deaths is 5,000. His research covers only the period from October 7 to December 10 last year, since which time the attacks have continued to sink upon Taliban and Afghan allies.

Hershoff's estimate was given with publicity in Europe, and sent to some in America. Surprised that the US "quality press" had been so dishonest, I emailed the roughly sent to a journal editor. The Washington Post, asking, why the blackout? His reply was cool: "I think you would find most people here focused on our own thousands killed intentionally."

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the night Taliban Company, publishers of the Los Angeles Times and Chicago Tribune. He is also a former director of California Aerospace, acquired by General Dynamics in 1999, a deal which cost him a total \$11 million. What is General Dynamics? A major defence contractor. And so it goes. Early meetings to the White House of Sharon's hidden debt must have been timely for the 35 Bank officials holding its stock, including Army Secretary Thomas E. White, whose portfolio had topped 1,550 million.

But there is another, compassionate America, which yearns to share its good fortune and break the psychic gridlock of us/them, good/evil.

But there is another America. A quieting, compassionate America, which yearns to share its good fortune with the rest of the world and break the psychic gridlock of us/them, good/evil. New York on Valentine's Day was the launch of a poignant initiative, "September 11 Foundation for Peaceful Transitions", named from an interview by Maria Luchina King: "What are your ideas for carrying out peaceful transitions." One meeting, a woman whose husband died in the twin towers, and she seemed being used as an excuse to start a war, "a horrific thing, the idea that someone

In December, Marc Hershoff stopped counting and the military action stopped in the Afghan mountains of Tora Bora, focusing on al Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden. How hard could it be, thinking down this tall, sick, emaciated figure attached to a dialysis machine? He was lacking in a core, but which core? It didn't matter. The Pentagon had a plan. It would blast apart every cave in Afghanistan.

Enter the "daisy cutter", a 4WD-styled bomb whose main engine, a jetpack, is a rocket engine, and which packs the punch of a tactical nuclear weapon. It is triggered after ground to clear vast swathes of all structures and life. The blast inflicts vapourous everything within hundreds of metres and produces a mushroom-shaped cloud, smothering in a vacuum of such force that it works out human eyes. A rush of oxygen then re-ignites what's left and sets off another explosion. In a year's time, the daisy cutter would all be blown, right out, it's demolishing everything in its path.

During four national news that track villages near Tora Bora, at least 60,000-80,000 people were killed, according to pro-American local commander Hajj Muhammad Khan, who kept asking: "Why are they killing civilians?" Meanwhile, George Bush handed over his dual towers to the Taliban. He was dead, ready to come out the names of senior al Qaeda officials. "You a

would do this for me to someone else." Peaceful Transitions comes back to help the families of the Afghan dead, the victims now seeking their families in Iraq. Such a spirit may jolt Americans to consider the rest of the world's pain, as it jells us to know that country's ongoing contribution to the resolution and celebration of humanity.

Like the 77 founding families of Peaceful Transitions, it is time to transcend the indigenous imperialism of Old Guard America that is prepared to arrange the vehicle of each in order to

focus, for its spirit, into, a lifestyle of endless optimism.

The promise of globalisation is a shared destiny of nations working together to maintain stability and poverty, ensure occupations, reduce emissions, ban arms trafficking and break out an existing agenda of ethics and fairness to which all can be a party, willingly or the strong. Its deeper meaning is a belated awareness that we are all connected - and connected in a deeper way than the choice of being with America or against America, of being a target market, or a target.