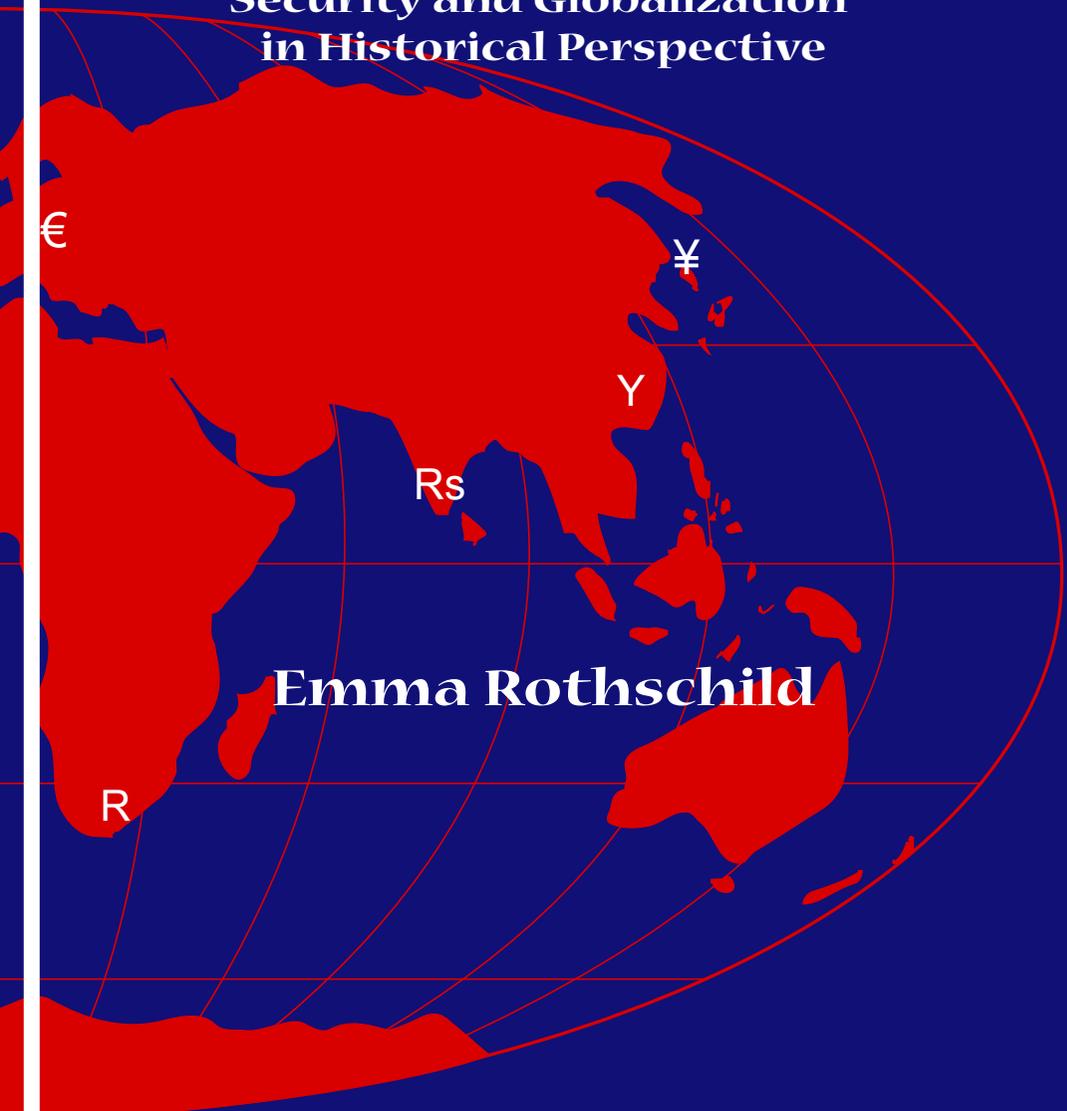


JEROME E. LEVY
OCCASIONAL PAPER

NUMBER 5

**The Last Empire:
Security and Globalization
in Historical Perspective**



Emma Rothschild

The United States Naval War College

Emma Rothschild is Director of the Centre for History and Economics and a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge University. A graduate of Oxford University and former Kennedy Scholar in Economics at MIT, she served as an Associate Professor at MIT in the Department of Humanities and the Program on Science, Technology, and Society. She is chairman of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, and of the United Nations Foundation Board Executive Committee, and has written extensively on economic history and the history of economic thought. Recent work includes *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet and the Enlightenment*. She is now completing a book on the East India Company and the American Revolution.

© 2003 Emma Rothschild

Series edited by
P. H. LIOTTA
Jerome E. Levy Chair
of Economic Geography and National Security

U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

Jerome E. Levy Occasional Papers

- Paper 1 Jeffrey D. Sachs
The Geography of Economic Development
- Paper 2 Robert D. Kaplan
*A Sense of the Tragic:
Developmental Dangers in the Twenty-first Century*
- Paper 3 P. H. Liotta
*Future Talk:
Building the Hybrid Security Community
in the Euro-Mediterranean*
- Paper 4 Girish Luthra
Globalization and Unipolarity: Walking the Tightrope
- Gregory Hermsmeyer
Oil, Security, and the Post-9/11 World
- Eduardo Hartz Oliveira
*...From the South Atlantic
MERCOSUR as a Geopolitical Concept of Regional Sovereignty*
- Paper 5 Emma Rothschild
*The Last Empire:
Security and Globalization in Historical Perspective*

Levy Papers

International Advisory and Editorial Board

Hans Günter Brauch
Director, Peace Research and European Studies Foundation
Mosbach, Germany

William Carpenter
Professor, School of Human Ecology
College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, Maine

Bechír Chourou
Professor of Political Science
University of Tunis, Tunisia

Naresh Dadhich
Professor of Political Science, University of Rajasthan
Director, Jaipur Peace Foundation, India

Mark A. Heller
Principal Research Associate
Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies
Tel Aviv University, Israel

Oleg Ivanov
Professor, Diplomatic Academy
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Guillermo Pattillo
Professor of Economics, University of Santiago
Professor de la Cátedra José Ignacio Zenteno de Estudios
de Defensa del Instituto de Ciencia Política de la Pontificia
Universidad Católica de Chile

Paolo Giandomenico Tripodi
Donald Bren Chair of Ethics and Leadership
Marine Corps University

THE LAST EMPIRE: SECURITY AND GLOBALIZATION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

EMMA ROTHSCILD

One of the vocations of the late 20th century, in political and strategic thought, was the partitioning of security. There was security and extended security, “hard” security and “soft” security, conventional security and economic security, the security of states and the security of individuals, international security and human security. I described all this, some years ago, as a geometry of dizzying complexity; using a nautical metaphor, as *tous azimuts*, or all over the compass. I also suggested that a preoccupation with principles of security was characteristic, as in 1815, 1919, and 1945, of the periods of reconstruction which follow large international wars.¹

The world is no longer living in a postwar period. The post–Cold War epoch of the 1990s was always a time of new wars, in Bosnia, Rwanda, and elsewhere.² It came to an end, eventually, in the very large conflict of which President George W. Bush said, in September 2001, that “We’re at war,” and which he described a year later as “a new kind of war. . . We are now in the first war of the twenty-first century.”³ But the geometry of security is no less complex, now, than it was before 2001. War is encompassed in peace. The security of the “homeland” is encompassed in the security of the world. Individuals are cynosures of security policy, and sources of insecurity. The connections of the world economy—communications, transport, investment, non-governmental organizations, television news, immigration, financial flows—are a theater of war.

My objective here is to consider a very old question, about the relationship between military and non-military or extended security in an interconnected world. Military security is the condition

This is the extended and revised text of the Jerome E. Levy lecture delivered at the Naval War College on 17 September 2002. I am grateful to Professor P. H. Liotta and other members of the faculty and students of the College, and to Amartya Sen and Justine Crump, for helpful comments.

that the armed forces are trained to provide on behalf of everyone else; it is the absence of war, if possible, and the capacity, if needed, to be victorious in war. It has an objective and a subjective aspect; one constituent of security is the confidence that one is not, at all times, under threat of war. Extended security is a more indefinite objective. But it, too, is a condition of being confident about the future, of being able to form expectations and make choices. It is the absence of such threats as sudden, calamitous declines in one's income, or one's access to information or medicine or education, or in one's civil and political rights.

These conditions, and the connections between them, have been the subject of intense discussion for more than 250 years. Both military and non-military security have been transformed in multiple respects by the new circumstances of the world economy: by "globalization." But there is also a history of security—there is even a history of globalization—and it is this history with which I will mainly be concerned. I will look first at some of the preoccupations of an earlier epoch of globalization, in the period of the American Revolution: in particular, about why security was a condition for the extension of global commerce; about the circumstances under which commercial connections can lead to political and even military insecurity; and about the limits of military power in a connected world. I will then say something about the recent history of debates over different kinds of security and different kinds of power, especially in the United States. I will conclude with some observations about present choices.

I will be concerned, in general, with how individuals have thought about security, and not with how secure they have been. One of the great dangers for historians is of what the philosopher R. G. Collingwood called substantialism, according to which events are important "for the light they throw on eternal and substantial entities."⁴ I certainly do not wish, in this spirit (which was the spirit of Thucydides, in Collingwood's disobliging description), to explore the history of an entity called "security," or to suggest causal laws of security and globalization. But I do believe that one of the ways to think about difficult questions is to "think with history," including by thinking about how individuals have thought in the past about similar questions.⁵ Alfred Thayer Mahan warned at the

beginning of *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* against the attitude in which “a vague feeling of contempt for the past, supposed to be obsolete, combines with natural indolence to blind men even to those permanent strategic lessons which lie close to the surface of naval history.”⁶ It is a reasonable admonition, even in relation to other sorts of history.

The Inestimable Good

The epoch of the American and the French Revolutions was a period of intense interest in principles of security. For Montesquieu, in 1748, “political freedom consists in security, or at least in the opinion which one has of one’s security.”⁷ Adam Smith, writing in 1776 in the *Wealth of Nations*, identified “the liberty of every individual, the sense which he has of his own security,” as the most effective encouragement to industry, and the most important source of British economic success.⁸ The object of the people in throwing off the government of the British king, in the American Declaration of Independence, was to “provide new Guards for their future Security.”⁹

For the political and legal philosopher Jeremy Bentham, at the end of the century, security was the “inestimable good, the distinctive index of civilization.” It was difficult to define: it “admits as many distinctions as there are kinds of actions which may be hostile to it.” It was also difficult to achieve. Governments were faced, often, with the “sacrifice of security to security,” and “society, attacked by enemies, whether foreign or domestic, can only maintain itself at the expense of security.” But security, for Bentham, was the “principal object of law” because it “is the only one which necessarily embraces the future.” It was a condition, above all, of “*expectation*,” and expectation was the condition which links the present to the future.¹⁰

There was intense interest, over the same period, in the political consequences of new relationships between individuals in different and distant countries; in “globalization.” The mid-eighteenth century was an epoch of expansion in long-distance commerce, communications, and investment. It was also a time of tremendous expansion in information about events in other countries, and of quite self-conscious reflection on the political importance of this

information. “The industry of the north is transported to the south; the materials of the east clothe the west, and everywhere men have communicated to each other their opinions, their laws, their habits, their remedies, their illnesses, their virtues and their vices,” the abbé Raynal wrote in 1770, in one of the best selling works of economic commentary of the eighteenth century, the *Histoire philosophique et politique des deux Indes*. This new world of global connectedness, for Raynal, constituted a “revolution in commerce, in the power of nations, in the customs, the industry and the government of all peoples.”¹¹

The Declaration of Independence connected the future security of the American states explicitly to global relationships. The depredations of the British king included “cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World,” and “Usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence.”¹² Bentham associated the increased security of modern times with increases in commerce and communication, or with the “infinitely complicated system of economical connections,” foreign and domestic. The two opposing destinies of political society, which he described as “the two empires of good and evil,” were determined by a choice between security and insecurity. The once flourishing eastern provinces of the Roman Empire had thus been destroyed by “the slow but fatal despair of long insecurity.” In North America, by contrast, fear and isolation had given way to confidence, prosperity, and international commerce. “It is security which has wrought this great metamorphosis:” the “beneficent genius is *Security*.”¹³

These eighteenth century discussions are familiar, and at the same time disconcertingly unfamiliar. The language of the great revolutionary declarations, which echoes in contemporary political prose (the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), was the outcome of legal worlds which were substantially unlike our own.¹⁴ “Their” words and ours mean different things. “Our” words, too, were not theirs: “globalization,” of course, but also the word “international,” which was invented by Jeremy Bentham in 1789. (Bentham distinguished between “internal” and “international” law or jurisprudence; as he added in a footnote, “the word *international*, it must be acknowledged, is a new one; though, it is hoped, sufficiently analogous and intelligible.”¹⁵)

But the philosophical and political writers of the revolutionary period believed, at least from time to time, that they were describing relationships which were true of all epochs and in all societies (self-evident truths, in the language of the Declaration of Independence), and it is these relationships (or these descriptions) with which I will be concerned. They also believed that they lived in an epoch of unprecedented change; “a new world of commerce in a manner created,” in Edmund Burke’s description of 1769, on a system “wholly new in the world.”¹⁶ In this respect, too, their preoccupations are of interest for our own new worlds.

A New Form of Power

The extension of individual security, in the first place, was at the heart of the imposing narratives of economic progress of the middle decades of the eighteenth century. “Order and good government, and along with them the liberty and security of individuals,” in Adam Smith’s description, were the initial conditions for the rise of commerce in early medieval Europe. They were the conditions, too, for the progress of the sciences and the mechanical arts. (In David Hume’s epitome, “From law arises security: From security curiosity: And from curiosity knowledge.”) But the expansion of commerce over very long distances, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, imposed requirements for a new kind of security. Individuals were now in a position to draw upon commodities “from the most remote corners of the world,” and to expose their fortunes “not only to the winds and the waves, but to the more uncertain elements of human folly and injustice” in distant countries.¹⁷

The commercial revolution was made possible, in the abbé Raynal’s account, by naval power. The navy, Raynal wrote in 1774, was “a new form of power, which must change the face of the earth.” It was the English, above all, who had recognized this transformation; “the English nation regard their Navy as the rampart of their security, as the source of their wealth.” A single, maritime nation had “constituted a new system, and by its industry submitted the land to the sea.” Countries had lost their “national and individual independence.” The “image of commerce,” in this new system, was one in which the industrious peoples of Europe

“circulate unceasingly around the globe,” connecting continents and hemispheres, as though by “flying bridges of communication.” The Tower of London was like an eagle’s nest, from which the English could observe their “innumerable vessels,” which “form a sort of bridge on the ocean to communicate, without interruption, from one world to the other.”¹⁸

The eighteenth century was a period of continuing military conflict, especially between England and France, and neither of the two powers attained lasting supremacy, either military or commercial. But the conflicts were more distant, for most of the population of the Atlantic world, than the wars of the seventeenth century. The people of great cities, in Adam Smith’s description, were able to “enjoy, at their ease, the amusement of reading in the newspapers the exploits of their own fleets and armies.”¹⁹ The military conflicts were also more regulated, in the sense that they lasted for relatively well-defined periods. As another French (or French-Neapolitan) abbé, the abbé Galiani, wrote in 1770, the vast plains of the ocean were no longer a frontier but a means of communication between England and distant markets. “She envelopes the earth, and covers the sea with her vessels”; a flourishing navy “facilitates the transport of manufactured goods, reduces the price of freight to almost nothing, extends the debit to almost the entire surface of the globe.”²⁰

The commercial expansion of the mid-eighteenth century has been described as an enigma in economic history, in that it was not associated with single and substantial technological advances, such as the increased use of inorganic energy sources and the consequent increase in the speed of travel, which were of such momentous importance in the nineteenth century. It was a matter, rather, of undramatic changes, including improvements in packaging, reduced inventory costs, the development of storage facilities, increased information about tides, prices, credit histories and distant markets, and, in Atlantic shipping, a decline in crew sizes, insurance rates, and piracy and privateering. These were the sorts of improvements which were made possible by the relative security of eighteenth century global communications.

Outlandish Tea

The second set of discussions was about the circumstances under which commercial connections could lead to political and even military insecurity. The 1760s and early 1770s were a period of extraordinary economic expansion in the North American colonies. “Their seas are covered with ships, and their rivers floating with commerce,” one English pamphleteer wrote in 1768; “This is true. But it is with *our* ships that these seas are covered; and their rivers float with British commerce,” Edmund Burke responded. Exports from England and Scotland to the thirteen colonies increased almost 300 percent between 1769 and 1771. The commercial connections between Britain and the American colonies were never more lucrative than they were in the period immediately preceding the revolutionary crisis of 1774. But these connections were not, as it turned out, a source of military security. They were indeed virtually the opposite, or a source of political conflict.

One of the continuing oddities of the American Revolution, which was much discussed at the time, including by John Adams and Alexander Hamilton, was that its ostensible causes were extremely trivial. Threepence a pound on the cost of tea; this was the issue at dispute in the destruction of the tea in Boston harbor in December 1773 (the event which was known, later, as the Boston Tea Party).²¹ It was not the threepence but the principle that was important, as many of the revolutionary leaders explained: there should be no taxation without representation. But as Gordon Wood has written, it was a “strange revolution:” “a series of trade acts and tax levies do not seem to add up to a justification for independence.”²²

The crisis over the tea provides an interesting illustration.²³ The taxation of tea became the object of frenzied apprehension, and so too did the tea itself. British naval and customs officers were execrated: “pimping tide-waiters and colony officers of the customs,” in Benjamin Franklin’s words; or “customs house locusts, caterpillars, flies and lice,” in the words of a local newspaper, the *Newport Mercury*, in June 1773. But the obloquy extended to the commodity, described variously as a poisonous weed, or accursed trash, or, for Jefferson, “that obnoxious commodity.” The tea was said to have been poisoned by the English Ministry, with political

and perhaps also with physical corruption. The “herb sent o’er the sea,” or the “outlandish tea” with its “noxious effluvia,” was said, in a popular song published in New Hampshire, to be “tinctured with a filth/of carcasses embalmed.”

The connection of the tea with the empire of global commerce was particularly disturbing. The fact that the tea had come from China, and was the property of the East India Company, was invoked countless times. The early revolutionary leader John Dickinson compared the oppression of the East India Company in America to being “devoured by Rats.” The watchmen on their rounds, he said, should be instructed to “call out every night, *past Twelve o’Clock, beware of the East-India Company.*”²⁴ The new commercial security of the British Empire, with its exchange of tastes and news and commodities, was very far, in this instance, from being conducive to security in a military or a political sense. Consumption was a provocation; a source of insecurity.

A free people, John Dickinson wrote in 1768, “can never be too quick in observing, nor too firm in opposing the beginnings of *alteration* either in *form* or *reality*, respecting institutions formed for their security.” The apparently trifling encroachments of British power were evidence, in this sense, of impending despotism, and of insidious intentions. They were also evidence of a more profound or philosophical insecurity, namely that the security in which the Americans existed was not itself secure. Who are a free people?, asked Dickinson. They are not individuals over whom government is exercised reasonably and equitably, but individuals who live under a government which is itself “constitutionally checked and controlled.” It was “this constitutional security” which had been destroyed by the British policies of the 1760s.²⁵

Injury and Information

The third set of disputes was over the limits of military security, and it can be illustrated by events which took place later in the course of the American Revolution. The British Navy was in 1773 by far the most imposing military force in the world. The words of the naval anthem “Heart of Oak” of the *annus mirabilis* of 1759, which was adapted as John Dickinson’s “Song for American Freedom,” were uncompromising: “We’ll still make them fear, and

we'll still make them flee, / And drub 'em on shore, as we've drubb'd 'em at sea." But naval power proved to be quite unhelpful at several stages in the nearly decade-long war of independence. The British possessed what Mahan described as the "powers to injure an enemy from a great distance," which are "common to the sailing vessel and the steamer."²⁶ These powers, in a civil war within a distant empire, turned out to be only intermittently usable.

One reason was that the British Navy's "enemy"—the American provincials—were able to change the terms of the military conflict, to ones in which power was less unequally divided. They were able, in particular, to move the conflict inland in the American continent; to fight neither on sea nor on "shore." General John Burgoyne's journey to Fort Ticonderoga in 1777, with a baggage train over three miles long, and at a speed of sometimes not more than one mile per day, is a vivid illustration.²⁷ So is the Americans' use of information. The British had the power to injure at a great distance, but their power to understand was diminished by distance. As Burgoyne himself wrote, "We are destitute. . . of the most important of all circumstances in war or negotiation—*intelligence*. We are ignorant not only of what passes in congresses, but want spies for the hill half a mile off."²⁸

The British failure was associated, above all, with the multiplicity of their objectives. They were constantly threatening to use terrifying force. "I have but to give stretch to the Indian forces under my direction," Burgoyne proclaimed in June 1777, and "devastation, famine, and every concomitant horror" will await the King's enemies. But they were concerned, at the same time, with the world after the war. They were interested, as Gordon Wood has suggested, in the eventual restoration of political relations and imperial harmony. They had objectives of military security and other objectives of economic reconciliation. The war was far more unpopular in English domestic public opinion than the earlier, less distant and more frightening wars with France. The Americans, unlike the French, posed no threat of invasion; the security to be won in a victorious war with the Americans would have been commercial, political, psychological. "Warriors, you are free!" Burgoyne said in his speech of 1777 to the native Americans assembled at the River Bouquet. But he also conveyed the multiple and slightly bathetic

objectives of the British forces; go forth, he said, and strike at the “destroyers of commerce, parricides of the State.”²⁹

The French philosopher Denis Diderot, in June 1776, wrote to John Wilkes, in London, to congratulate him about his recent speeches criticising the American War (“the affair of the provincials,” as it was called in France). He reported on various rumours circulating in Paris, including that the “secret project of the mother country” was to cut the throats of half the colonists, and reduce the rest to slavery. He also provided Wilkes with a suggestion for a new speech. Gentlemen, he imagined Wilkes saying to his fellow members of Parliament

I am not going to speak to you at all about the justice or injustice of your conduct. I know very well that this word is nothing but noise, when it is a question of the general interest. I could speak to you about the means by which you could succeed, and ask you whether you are strong enough to play the role of oppressors; this would be closer to the heart of the matter. However I will not even do that, but I will confine myself to imploring you to cast your eyes on the nations who hate you: ask them; see what they think of you, and tell me to what extent you have resolved to make your enemies laugh at you.³⁰

The British were not “strong” enough, as it turned out, to play the role of oppressors, or at least to play the role of devastation and horror that the Americans anticipated. They were unable to fight the kind of war they could have been certain of winning. They were unwilling, in the end, to be hated, and even less willing to be laughed at.

Great Marble Columns

Let me turn, now, to the contemporary scene, and to contemporary objectives of security. The relationship between military and other kinds of security, as I said at the outset, has been the subject of intense interest for several decades. In one set of assumptions, which was much discussed in the 1990s, military security and extended security were said to be related in the temporal sense that one follows the other. Military security, it was suggested, was the preoccupation of the Cold War world which preceded the fall of the Soviet Union (and of the earlier world wars of the twentieth century). In the new world of economic interdependence, military security would be increasingly irrelevant; Security Councils, both nationally and internationally, would increasingly be councils for economic (or environmental or political or health or “human”) security.

These schemes, about the dwindling importance of military security, have a long and changeable history, especially in the United States. In July 1971, President Richard M. Nixon inaugurated the bicentenary celebrations of the American Revolution, in the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. Three days later, he found himself in a reflective mood. The Archives Building was, he said, the most impressive monument in the capital, with its “feeling of the past and also of what the Nation stands for.” But its “great marble columns” also inspired melancholy thoughts. He liked to walk there at night, and he was reminded of the “great, stark pillars” of earlier world powers, which “have become subject to the decadence which eventually destroys a civilization.” “The United States is now reaching that period,” he said; “I think of what happened to Greece and Rome and, as you see, what is left—only the pillars.”³¹

Thirty years later, the American prospect was strikingly different. The position of the United States in the world, which Mr. Nixon described as no longer one of complete economic preeminence, was thought to be supremely secure. The United States, in 2000, was thought to be a society whose power was based on unprecedentedly solid foundations. Its power was the power of ideas, and of commodities. In a world of unprecedented communication and consumption—of globalization without end—the United States had become the example of all contemporary civilization. “It is understood: under the effect of globalization, the world is becoming Americanized at the speed of the wind,” as one French commentator wrote in 2000.³² The “power of example is America’s greatest power in the world,” Vice President Gore said in the U.S. presidential debate of 11 October 2000, and people in “every part of this earth” look to the United States “as a kind of model of what their future could be”; they seek a “blueprint that will help them to be like us more.”³³

Less than a year later, conceptions of American power had changed yet again. It was economic power, now, which seemed to be increasingly irrelevant; it was environmental and economic and health security which was relegated to unimportant councils, and unread reports. I do not want to say very much, for these reasons, about the conception that military security has simply been

succeeded in time, or superseded by extended security. Military power is indeed now more prominent, in discussions of international relationships, than it has been at any period since the end of World War II. But what I do want to emphasize is that ideas about security (like ideas about power) change very frequently, and in unexpected respects.

The most recent presumption about the relationship between military and extended security in U.S. strategy, as I understand it, is that the two conditions are interdependent. “As various regions and environments become increasingly interconnected, netted, or linked—the distinction between national and human security will be blurred,” in P. H. Liotta’s account, and the imperative for U.S. strategy is to focus on both.³⁴ The September 2002 “National Security Strategy” discerns similar connections. The unchallengeable military power of the U.S. is expected to persist, in this strategy. But the U.S. is described as vulnerable, nonetheless, to new kinds of attack. It should therefore concern itself with the causes of terrorism, and in particular with the political conditions under which terrorism is likely to arise. In John Lewis Gaddis’s summary of the strategy, “the persistence of authoritarianism anywhere can breed resentments that can provoke terrorism that can do us grievous harm.” The sort of political insecurity which is characteristic of tyrannical regimes, and which is everywhere feared—“the midnight knock of the secret police”—is considered to be conducive to terrorism. Certain U.S. values, according to the strategy, are “true for every person, in every society,” and a world of universal democracy (or universal “modernity”) would be a world with at least some prospect of universal security.³⁵

The multiple connections which constitute globalization are central, on this view, even to military security. Military power was widely assumed, in the epoch of the Cold War, to be relatively little affected by the globalization of commodities, investments, and movements of people; less so, in any case, than the extended security in which livelihoods could be subjected to calamitous changes, as a consequence of distant decisions. But in the new wars of the early twenty-first century, the routine movements of individuals, freight and funds are of quite new significance. They constitute the theater or medium of conflict. One of the oldest strategic choices is

over the choice of what sort of war to fight, or in which “medium.” This was the opportunity presented by Pericles to the Athenians, that they should choose to fight the sort of war against the Spartans in which they were themselves well-endowed (a war, for the Athenians, in which the sea, and not the land, constituted the medium of conflict).³⁶ The air was the new medium of conflict of the early twentieth century. Space, or the atmosphere, was the new medium in the epoch of Cold War deterrence. It is the global economy, now, with its myriads of civil or civilian exchanges, which is identified as the medium of new wars.

The global, open, and civil economy is expected, at the same time, to offer the promise of a different and more secure future. The causes of violence are identified as political oppression and insecurity, and the authoritarian states in which violence thrives are also, it is suggested, in a position to provide support to terrorism. The idyll of future security is thus one of universal political security, as democratic states of different sizes (and with different military endowments) compete in commerce, culture, and civil society. The prospect for the United States, as the richest and powerful state, would be compatible, still, with the eternity described by George Washington in 1793: to “exchange commodities and live in peace and amity with all the inhabitants of the Earth.”³⁷

Constitutional Security

George Washington’s prospect of security was similar to Adam Smith’s, and to Bentham’s. But eighteenth century discussions suggest a number of reasons for apprehension. It is reasonable to assume, as has been seen, that security, in both the military sense of freedom from violent conflict and the civil sense of freedom from violations of one’s person and one’s property, is a condition for economic prosperity; this was widely considered to be the case in the philosophical writings of the eighteenth century epoch of globalization. But the economic consequences of even temporary interruptions to security are correspondingly serious; security of information, as in the eighteenth century commercial revolution, is essential to the global economy of the early twenty-first century.

The consequences of global economic connections for military security were much more complex, in the eighteenth century

discussions. The extensive community of economic and social relationships between Britain and North America in the 1760s and 1770s—the flood of commodities and ideas—did very little to prevent the descent into political conflict, and into war. The destruction of the East India Company’s tea indeed suggests that consumption can itself become the occasion, in a frenzied sort of way, for political apprehension. The circumstance that the British had multiple objectives in the conflict with the American colonies—the extent to which they were concerned with public opinion, at home and in America, and with the prospects for the future imperial and commercial order—suggests that military power is very difficult to distinguish from the diverse political, economic, and diplomatic relationships within which it is embedded. Distance was a strategic advantage, and a strategic danger. The British were not prepared, in the end, for the imperial strategy which the British rebel Calgacus described in the *Agricola* of Tacitus, one of the favoured classical texts of the American revolutionaries: “They make a desolation, and they call it peace.”³⁸

The prospect of universal security, in recent strategic thought, is founded on at least one of two encouraging propositions. The first is that individuals in circumstances of (democratic) political security are unlikely to wish to become terrorists, or to fight in offensive wars. The second is that individuals who are reasonably secure in their lives and livelihoods (their “human security”) are unlikely to become terrorists or to fight offensive wars. There is relatively little evidence for either of these propositions (and the historian, according to Collingwood, cannot in any case search for the causes or laws of events, “without ceasing to be a historian”³⁹). But here, too, the eighteenth century discussions with which I have been concerned are not entirely reassuring.

The revolutionary epoch of the late eighteenth century was dissimilar to our own times in that it was nowhere democratic. But the political and constitutional theorists of the period were preoccupied with several of the great questions of democracy and security which overshadow present choices. Some of these questions were concerned with the prospect of democracy within a particular society. What is the recourse, in a democracy, when individuals choose freely to adopt undemocratic procedures and illiberal or

undemocratic values? (Or, as the French philosopher Condorcet asked in 1778, “What? When the people of Athens passed a law which decreed the death penalty for those who broke statues of Mercury, can such a law be just?”⁴⁰) Should democratic procedures (such as elections) be embedded in a constitution which provides some security of democratic values (such as freedom of speech and freedom of movement)? Should there be a “we, the people” of constitutional choice, as in the American deliberations of 1787, distinct from the people of popular politics?

There were other questions which were concerned, explicitly, with democratic procedures in societies which were themselves part of a larger (and more “global”) society. What is the relationship, in particular, between the procedures and policies which individuals can choose, and the other outcomes which are imposed upon them by distant or foreign or global forces? The North American colonies of the British crown, for example, had elaborate and to a substantial extent democratic procedures, before 1776, for choosing their own governments. But the outcomes over which these governments could exercise power were only limited. Were the members of the American assemblies to be like Roman senators, the early revolutionary leader John Dickinson asked ironically in 1768, or like constables? Was the influence of the assemblies to be “permitted to extend *so high*” as to the yoking of hogs and the repairing of roads?⁴¹ The sovereignty of the American colonies was restricted in multiple respects, including by the (unwritten) constitution of the British empire, by the power of the British government, and even, it was surmised in 1774, by the power of the East India Company.

Constitutions, in democratic societies, are a device for ensuring political security. They make it possible to have reasonable expectations about one’s future security; that one’s person and one’s property will not be seized, and that one can sleep without fear of the midnight knock. They also provide some security about the ways in which political choices are made, and about the sorts of the outcomes over which these political procedures are decisive; that the people (or their representatives) will vote on whether to go to war, for example, and that they will not vote on the price of tea, or on whether a particular individual is guilty of a particular crime.

But there are no constitutions which delineate the relationships between political procedures in one society and outcomes in other societies, or between political procedures and outcomes in one society and the events, in other societies, by which these outcomes are determined. It is possible, in these circumstances, that a particular society could be a resilient democracy, in the sense that its citizens vote freely and frequently, and also a weak democracy, in the sense that its choices are over outcomes which are of only limited importance. Its assemblies would have extensive freedom of choice over questions of only local interest (the yoking of hogs, or the regulation of fox hunting). Over the great questions of war and peace, or prosperity and depression, its choices would be determined elsewhere, and in other countries.

The proposition that individuals in democratic societies are unlikely to seek to express their political convictions through terrorism (or through support for unjust and offensive wars) is founded, presumably, on a view of political psychology. But any benign effect of this sort is likely to require that the procedures of electoral democracy be constrained by the protection of individual and minority rights, including the right to express unpopular opinions. The “*tyranny of a nation* is of all tyrannies the most cruel and the most intolerable,” the great French economist Turgot wrote in 1778, in opposition to the early American state constitutions; it was unconstrained either by remorse or by public opinion.⁴² The effect of the “tyranny of the majority,” in Tocqueville’s description of half a century later, was to “trace a formidable circle around thought.” “I know of no country in which there is general less independence of spirit and true freedom of discussion than in America,” Tocqueville wrote; he indeed speculated that if liberty were ever to be lost in America, it would be because the omnipotence of the majority would have driven minorities to despair, and to a recourse to force.⁴³

The benign effect is also likely to require that the choices which individuals make, in the course of democratic electoral procedures, be about reasonably important questions. Individuals can decide and decide and decide, in a weak democracy, while important decisions are made by other and distant instances or institutions. Like the American colonists in 1776, individuals in these

societies would find themselves subject to jurisdictions unacknowledged by their laws, to the interruption of their connections and correspondence, to the cutting off of their trade. They would be subject only to their own laws, but these laws would be subservient, in turn, to other and more powerful forces, whether of international institutions (such as the World Trade Organization) or of global commerce (the “laws of the market”) or of other, more powerful states. A democracy of yoking hogs and repairing roads, like a democracy of elections without security of rights, would offer only modest reassurance, in respect of the political psychology of violence.

The other encouraging proposition of recent strategic thought, that individuals who are reasonably secure in their lives and livelihoods (their extended or “human” security) are unlikely to become terrorists or to fight offensive wars, is subject to similar difficulties. The value of human security (as of political security) is of course in no respect dependent on its instrumental role in promoting military security. It is, or can be, a good in itself. But to the extent that human security is valued for its benign consequences, psychological or economic or political, then it, too, is likely to have different effects under different political circumstances.

It was self-evidently true, for many eighteenth century writers, that the condition of being secure had good psychological effects. The requirement of liberty, for Montesquieu, was a government “such that no citizen should fear another citizen.”⁴⁴ The Americans “cannot be happy without freedom, nor free without security; that is, without the *absence of fear*,” John Dickinson wrote in 1788.⁴⁵ The absence of fear was thought to be a condition, in turn, for the progress of opulence. Contracts and obligations were at the heart of commercial society, and they were rendered void by fear.⁴⁶ To be dependent on chance, it was thought, made individuals frivolous, idle, superstitious. To be secure was to be able to form expectations, in political or economic life. It was to be a man, in Bentham’s account, and “there are no men to be found in those unhappy countries, where the slow but fatal despair of long insecurity has destroyed all the active faculties of the soul.”⁴⁷

One difficulty with this presumption, now as in the eighteenth century, is that the security on which so much depends is itself very difficult to describe. Security, for Montesquieu, was a relatively

limited and juridical condition; it was particularly associated with the quality of the criminal law. For Bentham, too, security was “entirely the work of law.”⁴⁸ But it was also, in part, an economic condition. “Security consists in the protection accorded by society to each citizen, for the conservation of his person, his possessions, and his rights,” Condorcet wrote, in the draft of a declaration of rights that he prepared for the French constitution of 1793.⁴⁹ The definition of security was extensible, on this view. As the rights of individuals were extended, so too were the responsibilities for securing these rights. As the requirements for the conservation of one’s person were extended, so too was the protection to which individuals were entitled. Both Bentham and Condorcet thus concluded, in the course of the 1780s, that one of the principles of legislation should be to assure a minimum of subsistence to all citizens; “a regular contribution for the wants of indigence.” Condorcet in addition proposed a system of publicly supported medical care for the poor, to include medicines (“remedies”) and places of convalescence.⁵⁰

The extended or human security of recent times is a far more capacious condition, as I suggested earlier. But it is still founded, at least implicitly, on a conception of the principles of law, and the responsibilities of society. Security of everything can scarcely be an objective of policy, and there can be too much security, even in respect of important goods. (There is a “security of the barracks,” in Friedrich Hayek’s phrase.⁵¹) There are also multiple ways in which individuals can be secure, of which one of the most important (in a prosperous society with security of property) is to own property. Condorcet, like Bentham, believed that one of the best sorts of security against indigence consisted in universal savings banks or social insurance establishments; he also believed that even poor people who are ill should be looked after, wherever possible, “in the midst of their families.”⁵²

There is a political choice, therefore, as to which kinds of extended security are especially important, in a particular society and in a particular period. There are some kinds of insecurity which are considered to be especially unjust, whether because of how they are caused, or how they influence people’s lives and expectations, or how they are observed even by people who are not

directly at risk (much as the indigence of the elderly, in Bentham's description, was "the saddest of all").⁵³ There are some ways of providing security which are considered to be especially suited to a liberal and democratic society; especially respectful of individuals' rights, for example, and of their dignity, and of their own resources and recourses.

Security is in this sense a political idea. It is an idea about the kinds of outcomes with which the law should properly be concerned. But it is thereby subject, in the interconnected world of the twenty-first century, to all the difficulties which were discussed earlier, about the relationship between political procedures in one society and outcomes in other societies, or between political procedures and outcomes in one society and the events, in other societies, by which these outcomes are determined. Different societies have strikingly different conceptions of individual rights, and of the requirements of life (or of the conservation of one's person). They provide different answers to the questions which are imposed by policies for human or extended security: about security of what, security against what, security for whom, security by which means. Security is in general, for example, very much less valued in the United States, in an extended sense, than in much of Europe; the sociologist Loic Wacquant has indeed described the U.S. as the "first advanced society of insecurity," in which insecurity is the "principle of organization of collective life."⁵⁴

But the security of lives and livelihoods in one society is at the same time dependent, visibly and evidently, on events in other, distant societies. The political presumption in one society might thus be that security of access to health care and education is particularly important to protect, and that security against fluctuations caused by events beyond one's control, such as major changes in world financial markets, is particularly equitable. (The Japanese government, for example, provided support to Indonesia, under its policy of human security, in order to sustain social entitlements during the East Asian economic crisis of 1999.) The presumption in another society might be that security of access to easily available and widely known but expensive medicines is particularly important. (This has been the view of the government of Brazil, in its policy on HIV treatment and access to retro-viral drugs.) The

presumption in yet another society might be that it is particularly important to provide security against illnesses that are caused by easily avoidable environmental pollution (the “noxious effluvia” of our own times). But in each case, the politics of extended security in one country is influenced by events in other countries: by causal stories about the explanation for fluctuations, and by political stories about global interdependence and global justice.

The End of Empire

There is a great deal that is plausible, it seems to me, about the proposition that individuals who are reasonably secure in their civil and political rights, and in their rights to influence the choice of important policies, including policies for extended security, will be reasonably unlikely to be attracted by political violence. One has to believe something like this, perhaps, if one is in favour of liberal and democratic freedom. But it is not a proposition for which there is an imposing amount of evidence, least of all in respect of the very extended causal relationships, and the very distant political relationships, of the newly interconnected world.

Military security, now, may be similarly elusive. It will never be possible to exclude all threats to individuals or to “homelands,” however improbable and however they arise. There will always be individuals who wish to hurt and kill, there will always be frenzied fears, there will always be goods and services which can be transformed into instruments of mass or very large-scale destruction. The best outcome will be no more than that certain kinds of destruction, with certain kinds of justifications or explanations, will become highly improbable.

The objective of unlimited security, or unlimited power, has always been an illusion. (It became much more illusory, for very large or continental countries, including the United States and the Soviet Union, with the development, in the 1950s, of inter-continental delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction.) But the new theater of conflict in the early twenty-first century—the medium of conflict which is constituted by the myriad transactions of the world economy—is likely to impose a new and even greater tolerance for insecurity. Military security will be far more like human or extended security, far more disparate and

indistinct, than it was in the Cold War or in the “post-Cold War world” of the 1990s.

The effort to arrive at military security is unilateral, or imperial, in a respect in which the effort to arrive at extended security never can be. But even military security, in the new wars of our own times, is multiple, multilateral, concerned with expectations and opinions. The military has been obliged, already, to invent new relationships with domestic and international law enforcement and regulatory authorities; to engage with difficult questions about individual rights in the interstices of national and international, military and civilian law; to identify new alliances in the relatively new “government networks” which have developed in the absence of global political or constitutional procedures, and which themselves confront difficult questions of transparency and accountability, in administrative, international and even military law.⁵⁵

Overwhelming power is likely to be of less than overwhelming usefulness in these new wars, new alliances, and new aspirations to reasonable security. It is likely to be less useful, even, than the old American enterprise, from 1776, of a “decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind.”⁵⁶ But the experience of past empires, here, is not entirely encouraging, as President Nixon observed. The best prospect for the United States is not, perhaps, to be an eternal empire, or even to be an empire of ideas and commodities. It is to be, rather, the last empire.

Notes

1. Emma Rothschild, “What is Security?” *Daedalus*, vol. 124, No. 3 (Summer 1995), 53–98, pp. 53–55. I am grateful to Richard Tuck and Melissa Lane for continuing discussions of democracy and security, especially in the setting of the research program on post-democratic politics which we jointly coordinate at Harvard and Cambridge, with the generous support of the Rockefeller Foundation and the John D. and Catherine A. MacArthur Foundation.
2. See Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).
3. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010915-4.html>, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/11/20021112-1.html>.
4. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 43.
5. The phrase “thinking with history” is Carl Schorske’s: Carl E. Schorske, *Thinking with History: Explorations in*

- the Passage to Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).
6. A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1890), p. 11.
 7. Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois* (1748), Book 12, Chapter 2 (Paris: Garnier, 1973), vol. 1, p. 202.
 8. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 610, 722–723.
 9. *The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States*, ed. Pauline Maier (New York: Bantam, 1998), pp. 53–54.
 10. Jeremy Bentham, *The Theory of Legislation*, ed. C. K. Ogden (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931), pp. 96–97, 109–111, 124. The manuscripts on which this work is based were written in the late 1770s, 1780s and 1790s, and were first published in 1802, in French translation, by Étienne Dumont; see Ogden, “Introduction,” in *Theory of Legislation*, pp. xxxi–xxxix.
 11. [Raynal, Abbé], *Histoire philosophique et politique, Des établissemens et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (Amsterdam-The Hague: 1770–1774), vol. 1, pp. 1–2.
 12. *The Declaration of Independence*, pp. 56–57.
 13. Bentham, *Theory of Legislation*, pp. 111, 118–9.
 14. On “distancing oneself from the eighteenth century,” see Hendrik Hartog, ed., *Law in the American Revolution and the Revolution in the Law* (New York: New York University Press, 1981).
 15. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), in *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. John Bowring (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1843), vol. 1, p. 149.
 16. *Observations on a Late State of the Nation* (1769), in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, ed. Paul Langford, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 174–175, 194–195.
 17. Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, pp. 377–378, 405; “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences,” in David Hume, *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1987), p. 118.
 18. Raynal, *Histoire*, vol. 5, p. 191, vol. 7, pp. 60–61, 88–89, 97, 100–102.
 19. Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, p. 920.
 20. Ferdinand Galiani, *Dialogues sur le Commerce des Blés* (1770) (Paris: Fayard, 1984), pp. 74, 196.
 21. On the use of the phrase “Boston Tea Party,” see Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), pp. 155–165.
 22. Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), p. 57.
 23. The following discussion draws on a forthcoming book on the East India Company and the American Revolution, and on Emma Rothschild, “Globalization and the Return of History,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 115 (Summer 1999), 106–116, and “La mondialisation en perspective historique: l'Amérique hyperpuissance,” in *Qu'est-ce que la culture?* ed. Yves Michaud (Paris: Université de tous les savoirs/Odile Jacob, 2001), 57–68.
 24. John Dickinson, *A Letter from the Country, to a Gentleman in Philadelphia*, 4 December 1773, in *The Writings of*

- Dickinson, ed. Paul Leicester Ford, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1895), pp. 461–463.
25. *Letters from a Farmer* (1768), in *The Writings of John Dickinson*, vol. 1, pp. 347, 356.
26. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power*, p. 4.
27. Wood, *History*, p. 81.
28. Edward Barrington de Fonblanque, *Political and Military Episodes in the Latter Half of the Eighteenth Century, Derived from the Life and Correspondence of the Right Hon. Sir John Burgoyne, General, Statesman, Dramatist* (London: Macmillan, 1876), p. 149.
29. De Fonblanque, *Burgoyne*, pp. 256–257, 489, 492; Wood, *History*, p. 78.
30. Letter of June 1776, in Denis Diderot, *Correspondance*, ed. Laurent Versini (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1997), p. 1270.
31. Remarks in Kansas City, Missouri, 6 July 1971, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1971* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1972), p. 812.
32. André Fontaine, “La compassion à la sauce américaine,” *Le Monde*, 11 August 2000, p. 10.
33. Debate of 11 October 2000, available at <http://www.debates.org/transcripts>.
34. P. H. Liotta, “Boomerang Effect: The Convergence of National and Human Security” (Naval War College, 2002), pp. 2, 16.
35. “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002,” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>; John Lewis Gaddis, “A Grand Strategy,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 133 (November/December 2002), 50–57, pp. 52, 56.
36. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, transl. Rex Warner (London: Penguin, 1972), pp. 118–123.
37. Letter of 22 April 1793, in *The Writings of George Washington* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1931–), vol. 32, p. 428.
38. Tacitus, *Agricola*, transl. M. Hutton (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 81.
39. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, p. 214.
40. *Vie de M. Turgot* (1786), in *Oeuvres de Condorcet*, ed. A. Condorcet O’Connor and M. F. Arago (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1847–1849), vol. 5, pp. 181–182.
41. *Letters from a Farmer* (1768), in *The Writings of John Dickinson*, vol. 1, p. 373.
42. “Lettre au Docteur Price sur les constitutions américaines” (1778), in A. R. J. Turgot, *Oeuvres de Turgot et Documents le Concernant*, ed. Gustave Schelle (Paris: Alcan, 1913–1923), vol. 5, p. 534.
43. Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), vol. 1, pp. 381, 384, 388. Like Turgot, Tocqueville was concerned, as he repeated several times, with the constitutions of the states, whose governments “really direct American society” (p. 369, n.1, p. 388, n.6).
44. Montesquieu, *De l’esprit des lois*, vol. 1, pp. 169, 354.
45. *The Letters of Fabius* (1788), in *The Political Writings of John Dickinson* (Wilmington: Bonsal and Niles, 1801), vol. 2, p. 91.
46. See Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 12–15.
47. Bentham, *Theory of Legislation*, p. 118.
48. Bentham, *Theory of Legislation*, p. 109.

49. "Projet de déclaration des droits," *Oeuvres de Condorcet*, vol. 12, pp. 418–419.
50. Bentham, *Theory of Legislation*, p. 132; "Sur les assemblées provinciales" (1788), in *Oeuvres de Condorcet*, vol. 8, pp. 462–463.
51. F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 127.
52. "Sur les assemblées provinciales," *Oeuvres de Condorcet*, vol. 8, p. 462.
53. Bentham, *Theory of Legislation*, p. 127.
54. Loic J. D. Wacquant, "West Side Story à Chicago," *Projet*, No. 238 (Summer 1994), 53–61, p. 53.
55. On cooperation among governments in respect of drugs, crime and finance, see Moisés Naim, "The Five Wars of Globalization," *Foreign Policy*, 2003; on the political role of government networks, see Anne-Marie Slaughter, "The Accountability of Government Networks," *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (Spring 2001), 347–367.
56. *The Declaration of Independence*, p. 53.