ANTI AMERICANISM, RISE OF A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

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Introduction

The term anti Americanism has existed for a while and has become an interesting subject of a global debate. Traditionally small states remain vary of large states, specially the super powers or regional hegemons, however anti Americanism as it exists today has diverse reasons and something peculiar about it as the US enjoys the status of the 'hyper power' and affects the lives of people at the global scale. A clear dichotomy of views on the subject when one compares the stereotype anti Americanism with feelings of people who have visited the US and interacted with the wonderful and even benign people of the American nation. A visit to the US and interaction with its people would simply lead you to the conclusion that the Americans are courteous, kind, humane, caring and above all embodiments of democratic values enshrined in a constitution so carefully formulated and promulgated by their founding forefathers.

Why has anti Americanism become a global phenomenon in recent past and continues to haunt American policy makers and think tanks? This question is the main focus of the paper. Just to highlight the question, one may find a couple of books and a plethora of research articles on the subject as well as feel this general phenomenon as a barber shop gossip in all countries and societies that form the global village. Before discussing the term anti Americanism it is important to define it first, Peter J Katzenstein defines it as,

"We begin with a definition of anti-Americanism since the term is used so broadly (and often loosely) in ordinary language. As our analysis continues in this chapter, we will develop a typology of anti-Americanism. In the broadest sense, we view anti-Americanism as a psychological tendency to hold negative views of the United States and of American society in general. Such views draw on cognitive, emotional, and normative elements. Using the language of psychology, anti-Americanism could be viewed as an attitude".

With this definition of anti Americanism in perspective we move forward to the very aim of this paper. To analyse the rise of anti Americanism as a global phenomenon, (especially in the aftermath of 9/11) with a view to draw pertinent conclusions.

Historical perspective, the rise of America as a 'hyper power'

20th Century witnessed the rise of the United States of America to preeminence as a result of two great wars. It was the first time in history that a non Eurasian state started seriously affecting the global scene including geopolitical landscape of Eurasia. The fall of erstwhile Soviet Union and the inability of any major player from Eurasia to challenge the rising tide of Pax Americana led to the establishment of American hegemony and acknowledgement of America as a hyper power. The American military might followed the force of globalization and started filling power vacuum wherever it existed. Post 9/11, it has rolled back the Russian power from east of Baltic States in the north to the Caspian in the south, established a physical foothold in Iraq and Afghanistan and threatens to strategically suffocate the rising China by American presence in the emerging rim land around China.

Going back to the dawn of 20th Century one finds deliberate efforts put in by leading statesmen of America in shaping her future, Woodrow Wilson and Roosevelt had distinctly different approaches to defining America's role in global politics. This important factor is described by Peter J Katzenstein as,

"Wilson crafted that doctrine out of his own understanding of America's past. Roosevelt had urged Americans to divest themselves of the isolationist delusions that their unique history had unfortunately instilled in them. Wilson, in contrast, excavated from the peculiarities of America's historical record a vein of sentiment and belief and an inventory of images and myths from which he hoped to fashion a tool that would transform the world. He cast himself as the long-awaited agent who would fulfill the Revolutionary generation's promise to create a 'novus ordo secolorum' (new order of the ages), abroad as well as at home. 'It was of this that we dreamed at our birth,' he told the Senate in

July 1919, on presentation of the treaty he had just signed at Versailles. Wilson believed that he was not simply selecting foreign policy from a palette of options or inventing a new American international agenda. He believed, rather, that he was articulating the only such agenda that his countrymen would find consistent with their past, their principles and their own self-image, if they were to have a foreign policy at all"².

While George Bush the Senior promulgated his famous 'New World Order' after the fall of Berlin Wall, it was not the result of a creative policy but resonating trend of the Wilsonian school of thought in America whose contours were laid out by Woodrow Wilson in first half of the 20th Century. The end of WWII had made America as the super power whereas end of Cold War transformed her into the 'Hyper Power'. By natural laws of physics America was bound to fill the power vacuum at global level was inevitable, the only important factor left was how this would be manifested, as a global hegemon or a benign leader, and the American leadership chose the first option and let the American steam roller to role freely, disregarding the kind of resistance it would face. The current feeling of anti Americanism at a global scale is a result of a number of factors which have been beautifully summarized by Keohane in the book referred earlier. It may not be prudent to hold a stereotype view on the subject as it would mislead one to pitfalls of generalization and thus squander the chances of finding an intellectual answer to the problem based on rational thought process. That is where subsequent portions of this paper will focus and crystallize the tangled question of anti Americanism.

Post 9/11 dispensation and its catalytic role in rise of anti Americanism

9/11 is a global household term and needs no explanation; however post 9/11 dispensation of American political and foreign policy is the key factor which has created a steady and almost alarming trend of anti Americanism. While avoiding pitfalls of conspiracy theories, it may be prudent to analyse happenings in pre 9/11 decade. American think tanks, policy makers and political philosophers had started preparing grounds for post Cold War strategy before the fall of Berlin Wall. The New World Order or Pax

Americana needed a formidable foe that would be created by the intellectuals and turned into a monster by an orchestrated media blitz. Whether it was Huntington's Clash of Civilization theory urging the West to become pro active or Francis Fukuyama's End of History which addressed the sensitivities of West and particularly American public opinion, the contours of the New World Order heavily relied on creation of that formidable foe, the Political Islam. The New World Order unfolded as under:-

- > The Cause (on the face of it). The world was divided into forces of integration and disintegration. Principles of democracy (as per Western definition), globalization, multinational corporations, NGOs, and West's allies were grouped into forces of integration with an assertion that these will be supported at all cost. Whereas any group or forces which opposed or negatively affected forces of integration were labeled as forces of disintegration. Unfortunately political Islam was projected and made to fall into the second category and thus became the ultimate foe in the New World Order.
- > The Tool to solve the problem. No explanation needed. the tool to be applied was America's hyper power in all its ferocity and fan fare, followed and supported by the West and her allies at a global scale. 9/11 became watershed in full scale implementation of the grand agenda, and war on terror became the ultimate cause. Since war on terror was against an ideology, it transcended conventional boundaries and has been termed as the 'Long War' by none other but the former CENTCOM Chief, General Abizaid. When will this Long War end? General Abizaid described it in an interview with the Washington Post as," the Long War is only in its early stages. Victory will be hard to measure, he says, because the enemy won't wave a white flag and surrender one day. Success will instead be an incremental process of modernization of the Islamic world, which will gradually find its own accommodation with the global economy and open political systems" 3. Unfortunately term Long War is quite misleading and

apparently with foggy objectives. Try translating the notion of victory as described by John Abizaid and you will find that it points to an open ended war with really no objectives per se; however one thing is certain, the term Long War puts the domestic American audience at ease (they should forget about homecoming of the GIs) and allows America to field and use her military instrument whereever desired (without much remorse) and gives the policy makers an opportunity to keep a permanent foothold in the hydrocarbon hub of the Middle East.

- ➤ Interpretation of actual Agenda. My own interpretation of New World Order Agenda is somewhat different and is described as under:-
 - The Global War on Terror is basically an economic war with an ideological façade.
 - The West led by America is seeking an economic lebensraum (energy security by physically controlling the hydrocarbon hub).
 - The Superpower's entry into Middle East and West Asia was not possible without a Pearl Harbor, 9/11 was either created or supported to be labeled as the second Pearl Harbor.
 - American occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan is Operation Barbarossa at a very large scale where first and second prongs have been played and 3rd, 4th and nth prongs are yet to be played.
 - In the larger context of this Long War, Islamic World happens to be the main battle ground and has to be tackled by an indirect strategy of creating divisions in the Islamic society and weakening its moorings to obtain the ultimate breathing space for success of this economic war.
 - Since the next challenge for the West is bound to come from China at the global level, the War on Terror is a two in one strategy where control of hydrocarbon hub will allow the West to squeeze the breathing space for China and humble her before she

can pose any meaningful challenge to the Western hegemony.

Why I divulged from the main subject of effects of post 9/11 dispensation of American policy on the main question of anti Americanism is because it crystallizes the subject to a great extent, especially in the Islamic World where the anti Americanism is at its peak.

From Caracas to Tehran to Beijing the regional view of America

In order to look at various causes of rise of anti Americanism, the paper would deal with the issue from the perspective of different regions:-

Red Storm Rising' in South America. South America seems to be breaking the shackles of Monroe Doctrine after a lapse of two centuries. The left led by social democrats is taking over one state after the other. Whether it be the vocal Hugo Chavez of Venezuela or the Bolivian leadership or even the rising Brazil, anti Americanism in the garb of anti imperialism has steadily established a foo hold in Latin America. As a case study I have chosen the rise of left in Venezuela. Hugo Chavez has transformed Venezuela into a thriving economy and has openly sided with the so called Axis of Evil states like Iran, Syria and Cuba. A BBC report of 20th April 2007 described Hugo Chavez's Venezuela as,

"Why Caracas? Because at the moment it is the heartthe very epicenter - of Latin anti-Americanism. Venezuela is unusual, indeed unique. It is a Latin American nation which in recent years has become rich enough to have the power to tell the US to take a hike. And Hugo Chavez, the democratically elected leader, loses no opportunity to do just that. In the early part of this century, he became one of the ringleaders of the worldwide anti-American movement. Hugo said this recently about George: 'The imperialist, mass murdering, fascist attitude of the President of the United States doesn't have limits. I think Hitler could be a nursery baby next to George W Bush" ⁴.

Barring the rhetoric there are some major reasons for rise of anti Americanism in South America. Firstly the people, wary of corrupt governance and exploitation of multinationals, have gradually shifted their mandate to the leftist political parties who promise better governance and poverty alleviation and a decent piece of bread for every body. Secondly South American states have overcome the hegemonic dispensations of Monroe Doctrine (which allowed America to check any interference from colonial powers of that particular time in Americas especially South America). Thirdly, leading South American states like Brazil, Venezuela and Bolivia have started consolidating a block under MERCOSUR with lot of independence and confidence to guard the geopolitical interests of Latin American countries. Some of these have displayed independence from Monroe Doctrine by forging geopolitical relations with outcast states like Fidel Castro's Cuba (much to the annoyance of America). Another view substantiating the argument of anti Americanism is visible in deliberations by Gamal Nkrumah as,

"Although the current level of anti-Americanism in South America presents no immanent threat to the Pax-Americana, the trend poses two challenges to the region's stability. It has emboldened South American countries into taking an independent stand vis-à-vis the US, and nowhere is this more obviously the case than in the relatively well-developed and economically buoyant countries of the MERCOSUR; an economic grouping that brings together the largest South American economies --Argentina and Brazil, and Uruguay and Paraguay. Indeed, centre-left governments dominate the region politically... There are some in Washington who warn that the current wave of anti-Americanism in South America will eventually undermine the political stability critical to future prosperity of the region. Naturally, many South Americans refute such notions, predicting instead that the

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The rise of the left in South America has negatively affected American interests in this part of the world and she has been forced to forge ties with Mexico to address this psychological vulnerability from the south.

Voices from Europe, Anti Americanism in the West. Anti Americanism in the West; Strange, but it is there with a different form and attitude. Washington Post in it analysis describes it as a mixed feeling of love and hate relationship, It writes,

"Why has U.S. stature in the world eroded? Opinion polls cite widespread dismay with the Iraq war, our dog-eat-dog social model and the arrogance of an imperial superpower that places itself above international law. But behind the surveys about 'why they hate us' lies a reservoir of goodwill waiting to be tapped among foreigners who would prefer to see the United States succeed rather than fail. This love-hate mélange has perpetuated four modern myths about transatlantic relations that deserve to be debunked" 6."

This appears to be a simplified view, a more elaborate description of anti Americanism in Europe and its different manifestation has been described by Peter j Katzenstein as.

"Americanization and anti-Americanism interact and occur through a variety of venues. Through its distinctive combination of territorial and non-territorial power, the United States and affected most corners of the World since 1945. The Middle East, Latin America, and East and Southeast Asia have experienced U.S. military might firsthand. By contrast, Western Europe has been exposed only to the peaceful, emporium face of American

hegemony, from shopping malls to artistic and intellectual trends. Indeed, European avant-garde and American popular culture often coexists in a complicated symbiosis. On questions of popular culture, for example, crossfertilization of different innovations bypasses most politics as conventionally understood. American popular culture is sometimes viewed as undermining local cultures, a charge that nationalist political entrepreneurs often seek to exploit to create a political backlash against processes of Americanization".

This appears to be a benign view but has lot of merits; however the recent wave of anti Americanism (courtesy 9/11) goes beyond the traditional understanding of the phenomenon in Europe. The practical experience of American tourists visiting Europe in recent years tells a different story as described here,

"Anti-Americanism has been a hazard to US travelers for decades. Ever since the US attack against the Taliban in Afghanistan, anti-American sentiment has increased. Protests, sometimes violent, have taken place all over the world. This hatred of the US has surprised many Americans who had no idea of the depth of some of the world's anti-Americanism".

Anti Americanism could have other reasons in Europe as well, for example,

"The angry reaction in Europe and Japan against the Bush administration's rejection of the 1997 Kyoto agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions holds that the United States is ignoring the general international interest in preventing global warming. This stance is seen as a cynical payback to industry campaign contributors, indifferent to larger human concerns. The Bush administration promises a future, new approach to global warming, but the violently anti-American reaction of the present moment is inescapable" 9.

Whatever the reasons the graph of anti Americanism has gained ascendancy in recent past, American handling of Global War on Terror being the main factor in this regard.

The Middle Kingdom and her Worries on American Behavior. The Chinese experience with colonialism and her rise to power in the later half of 20th Century have placed her at crossroads of history and secured her place in the sun in the 21st Century. Chinese uneasiness with America results because of a typical mindset in Chinese polity, as described by Johnston and Stockmann,

"The Chinese case study, by Johnston and Stockmann, provides the best illustration of the impact of power imbalances. Johnston and Stockmann show that contemporary Chinese discussions of the United States revolve around what they call a 'hegemony discourse,' which implies that the United States is not only powerful but also overbearing, just, hypocritical, and illegitimate. It is supplemented by a 'century of humiliation' discourse, which reflects China's terrible experiences with Western and Japanese imperialism. The combination of these discourses with American power - and support for Taiwan - help to explain both the deep Chinese distrust of the United States that Johnston and Stockman found in the Beijing public and the periodic outbursts of at times violent anti-American demonstrations in response to perceived threats, such as the bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade or the flight of a spy plane over or near Chinese territory" 10

Does anti Americanism's universality auger well for the world and America in a global village and how does a benign China unfold her cards as a super power of the future? This is a pertinent question.

➤ Islam under Siege-West Africa to Indonesia. Most violent and probably justified reaction to American occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan has come from the heartland of Islam. While the US drives its agenda in the

Middle East and West Asia in the garb of 'War against Terror' without even defining terrorism, it had stirred the feeling of every Muslim on this planet in one way or the other. Peter Ustinov has described terrorism in a simple and comprehensive manner, "Terrorism is the war of the poor, and war is the terrorism of the rich"11. This phrase says a lot about American interference in the Islamic World now entering its 18th year. As described earlier in this paper this so called 'long War' has changed the geo strategic realties in Asia especially in the Islamic World. The specter of insecurity and fear created by the West in Muslim lands has ushered in an era of contest between America and Islam at a grand scale with no end in sight. Despite reconciliation effort on part of both sides the phenomenon of anti Americanism has not only gained universal currency in the Islamic world but has also seen a steady rise. From the lands of Islam this phenomenon has gradually found acceptance in Muslim Diaspora residing in the west. The reconciliation effort by scholars from both sides is there, as described by Richard Neu,

"Certainly, not all Muslims wish America ill. Just as certainly, not all of those willing to unleash or to tolerate violence against Americans are Muslims. Nonetheless, distrust, suspicion, misunderstanding, and animosity between America and at least some parts of the Muslim world cannot be ignored. Today's uncomfortable reality is that the most dangerous terrorist threats to Americans seem to arise from societies and groups where Islam is the dominant religion. A good initial focus for thinking about the roots of anti-American violence will be a consideration of the divide that seems to have opened between America and some parts of the Islamic-and especially Arab-world. The challenge understanding and resolving differences between Americans and Muslims is a daunting one. But good works and good luck have won over populations that were once distinctly anti-American to an appreciation, if not a full acceptance, of American values: Japanese and Germans after World War II, Vietnamese after the

Vietnam War, Russians and East Europeans after the cold war. And most recently, perhaps, the Chinese" 12.

The West has to realize (as suggested by the President of Pakistan in his theory and strategy of Enlightened Moderation) that the Iron curtain now falling between the West and Islam will become a reality in foreseeable future if both sides fail to address the root causes of terrorism at a global scale. Some of the more radical regimes like Iran and Syria have sought support from non Asian states like Venezuela and Cuba to form a grand alliance against America; this could lead to erosion of American power at a global scale and limit American freedom of action to a great extent. The experiment of Greater Middle East has already hit serious snags and time is running out before things get totally out of control of the West led by the US.

Anti Americanism within American Lands

The term American lands here implies the continent of North America. There are two distinct pressure groups operating against the American Establishment within North America, internally it is the American Left and externally (but quietly) it is the American cousin, Canada. With the ban on Communists in America in the blame game of McCarthyism the forces of left found themselves besieged and marginalized. However the freedom of speech and expression in America has allowed the American left to air their feelings with guarded freedom. The American left's is led by charade of respected scholars and media think tanks like Noam Chomsky, Robert Fisk and Peter Ustinov (although a British but mostly writes on the American Establishment) and even New York Times. This group is not only critical of American Establishment's foreign policy but also feels that the Establishment undermines the rights of people within America by one way or the other.

For Canada, the feeling of living with a giant has started affecting the psyche of its people, an interesting description of anti

Americanism in Canada can be gleaned from deliberations by Nora Jacobson.

"Many Canadians have American relatives or travel frequently to the United States, but a large number are pretty naive about their neighbors to the south. A university student confidently told me that there had been "no dissent" in the United States during the run-up to the Iraq war. Toronto boosters argue that American cities lack the ethnic diversity found in Canada's largest metropolis. The author of a popular book on the differences between the Canadian and American characters (a topic of undying interest here) promotes the view that Americans are all authority-loving conformists... Canadians often use metaphors to portray their relationship with the United States. They describe Canada as 'sleeping with an elephant.' Even when the elephant is at rest, they worry that it may suddenly roll over and crush them. They refer to the U.S.-Canadian border as 'the longest one-way mirror in the world' -- Canadians peer closely at Americans, trying to make sense of their every move, while the United States sees only its own reflection. Finally, they liken Canada to a gawky teenage girl with a hopeless crush on the handsome and popular boy next door. You know, the one who doesn't even know she exists" 13.

The Good in America, it's People

As per Jean Francois Revel, ¹⁴ "As the sixties unfolded, I had begun to be invaded by doubts as to the validity of this reflective anti Americanism, which indiscriminately condemned America's 'imperialistic' foreign policy and American Society. When I traveled to America in the early winter of 1969 to research, I was astonished by evidence that everything Europeans were saying about the UŞ was false. Over the course of a few weeks I went from the East Coast to the West Coast with a stay in Chicago along the way. Rather than a conformist society, what I found was one in the throes of political, social and cultural upheaval." I personally endorse his views as a travel to America makes you feel the same way and the good in American people really strikes you the moment you land on this set fort of opportunity.

Robert O Keohane tries to differentiate the point by acknowledging the good in America, its values and people, he writes,

"One way of beginning to think about expressions of negative attitudes is to ask whether they are based on views of 'what the United States is' the fundamental values and attitudes of U.S. society or 'what the United States does' its policies, particularly its foreign policies. Negative views of what the United States is are less likely to change, as U.S. policy changes, than are negative views of what the United States is doing" ¹⁵.

While hinting at the diversity and richness of American culture he write,

"The United States has a vigorous and expressive popular culture, which is enormously appealing both Americans and to many people elsewhere in the world. This popular culture is quite hedonistic, oriented toward material possessions and sensual pleasure. At the same time, however, the United States is today much more religious than most other societies and, in the words of two well-informed observers, 'has a much more traditional value system than any other advanced industrial society'. One important root of America's polyvalence is the tension between these two characteristics. Furthermore, both American popular culture and religious practices are subject to rapid change, expanding further the varieties of expression in the society, and continually opening new options. The dynamism and heterogeneity of American society create a vast set of choices: of values, institutions, and practices" ¹⁶.

The aim of these lengthy references quoted above is to highlight that despite the universality of anti Americanism now prevalent in four corners of the world, the main factor which mitigates this odd feeling also comes from within America in form of American people, their culture and their democratic values. Has the American establishment gone too far in being unjust to her wonderful people by a cowboyish attitude where the good of America has been made to hide behind a thick fog of anti Americanism? Yes, that is what I strongly feel and also present it as the concluding argument of this paper. In the long run this

dichotomy will tilt the balance in favor of anti American forces and the good in America will not only become invisible but also start adversely affecting the morale of American people which in turn would be a bad day for the entire world.

Conclusions

The universal rise of anti Americanism can be summarized as following:-

- The diversity of anti Americanism and its presence in almost all societies and States, points to a 'clear and present danger' for America.
- Whereas anti Americanism is at its peak in certain regions, like the Islamic world, it has psychological underpinnings at global level and has started affecting the morale of American nation as a whole, you cannot feel safe and easy with a blue passport any more, it has become a symbol of uneasiness and may be fear.
- Post Cold War victory celebrations are over and the leftist block is not only emerging in the backyard of America but also gaining currency in Asia, the new alliances between the so called rouge states and the leftist states of South America could pose a serious challenge to American might in the form of 'all the anti imperialist forces' block. This would not only have geopolitical repercussions but seriously affect capitalism in the West.
- ➤ Is America getting entangled in a cobweb of forces of disintegration (so much publicized and prophesized by the West)? Certainly it is happening and the windows of opportunity to get out of this entangled web are closing as the time ticks. American capacity to face these challenges directly has eroded and she is losing logistic stamina as well as strategic space for maneuver.

A word of Advice for the American State

As a saying goes in Urdu language, "Zaban-e-Khalq ko Naqara-e Khuda Samjho" meaning the voice of people should be interpreted as the call of God, this is what is my recommendation to American policy makers representing the American State. Since too many people cannot be wrong all the time (and especially when too many people mean more than half of the globe), it is high time for United States to realize that she is the main catalyst driving the forces of anti Americanism and she must address the issue at priority. Thus America is not only part of the problem but also part of the solution.

The contours of the recommended course of action are listed below:-

- America should review and redefine her policy of Global War on Terror by addressing the sensitivities in the Islamic World. President of Pakistan General Parvaiz Musharraf's strategy of Enlightened Moderation has a lot of merit in helping America, especially the part that deals with the role of the West in mitigating the root causes of terrorism.
- American policy makers must realize that globalization is not one sided and its multidimensional contours have to be acknowledged, where small and medium level states and actors should be given their due share and stake in shaping the geopolitics of the globe. The role of United Nations has to be strengthened to bring an element of justice in geopolitics and geo economics.
- The cost of wars in Middle East and West Asia should be weighed against the suffering of American goodwill and prestige at global level, is it worth the expenditure incurred? if not then it should lead to fundamental changes in American foreign policy. A policy of live and let live (as being applied by China at present) could be followed in the status of real sense.
- The 'hyper power' also demands magnanimity on the part of America, a benign America with soft image could effectively do the damage control and restore American respect in the comity of nations. A continuation on path of destruction and fear will ultimately erode American

- respect to a point of no return and bring an ultimate downfall of American power.
- A simple formula could be the reflection of good in America (as displayed by goodness of her people) in the form of a revised foreign policy where the universality of this good is practically displayed to the entire world. America could regain her global leadership by mitigating the fear factor. Fear can generate uneasy compliance but has never produced an accepted leadership; this is the writing on the wall.

End Notes

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² Ibid

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