



PEWS

Section on the Political Economy of the World-System
American Sociological Association

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PEWS News- Summer 2002

Newsletter of the Section on the Political Economy of the World-System, American Sociological Association
[Hard copy of this issue may be obtained from the editor, Thomas D. Hall, thall@depauw.edu]

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OFFICERS FOR 2003:

The By-Laws Passed. They will be posted on PEWS WEB soon.

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A Few Words from the Editor:

Thomas D. Hall

This is a brief edition of **PEWS NEWS**, focusing on the election results, the ASA panels to be held in Chicago, and reports on PEWS XXVI in Riverside.

Also PEWS WEB has been updated. Check it out!

If your stuff is not there, send it in and it will be!

I will put another edition out in late Fall, after ASA, so send in commentary, announcements, etc. Thanks to all who have helped!

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PEWS XXVI: at IROWS in Riverside

By all accounts PEWS XXVII in Riverside was a success.

A highlight of the reception at Chris Chase-Dunn's place, was Al Bergesen's the PEWS Academy Awards. Impossible to summarize or repeat. Those of you who know Al, aka MR. GLOBALONEY, know it was inimitable!

For more see the [IROWS REPORT on PEWS](#).

[Papers and abstracts](#) are also on line.

As usual volume[s] are in the planning stage.

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IROWS WORKING PAPERS

IROWS has begun a working papers series. They are available on line at: <http://www.irows.ucr.edu/workpaptoc.htm>

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Whose Power? Whose Weakness?

By Steve Sherman

[Steve maintains a website with interesting news articles at:
<http://threehegemons.tripod.com/threehegemonsblog/id5.html>]

Robert Kagan's article "Power and Weakness" [1] has been compared to Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* and Francois Fukuyama's *End of History* for the discussion it is generating. This is something less and more than an intellectual honor. Less, because it puts it in company notable for sweeping generalizations and sloppy theorizing; it seems unlikely, to say the least, that Huntington or Fukuyama will be frequently referenced in the future for their insight into global political processes. More, because these works are read by policy elites and rulers, thus shaping the actions of some of the most powerful people in the world. In the case of "Power and Weakness", it is reportedly circulating by e-mail among European elites. [2] It is thus critical to pay attention to what Kagan has to say, even if one cannot glean a great deal of genuine insight from him.

The thesis of "Power and Weakness" is simple. Europe and the United States see the world and act in it very differently. They do so as a result of different historical experiences, and differences in their power in the present. The US is powerful, and hence quite able and willing to act in the Balkans, or against Iraq, or in the context of any other troublesome place in the world. Europe is weak, and therefore favors policies enhancing international law and other strategies to live with but constrain troublemakers. Furthermore, the post-World War II experience of Europe and the United States has been very different. The US, having defeated Germany, was forced to exert power on many occasions in the context of the cold war. It has become convinced of the importance of wielding force in the world. It was thus able to intervene in Kosovo and is ready to take on the challenges of Iraq, North Korea, China, et al.

Europe, in the shadow of the US, was able to integrate itself into a post-modern system based on laws, treaties, international institutions, etc. It is presently unimaginable that European powers will go to war with each other. Although its power world wide has shrunk with the collapse of the colonial empires, Europe is entering a post-historical, inward-turned period of peace and prosperity. Europeans have predictably become convinced that their way is the true road to happiness for all of humanity. They thus react with fury to US exertions of force. Nevertheless, they are unlikely to become an armed power prepared to challenge the US anytime soon. Their own predisposition against the use of force is one reason. A second is that the creation of a European power would reopen the question of a militarily strong Germany, and at present most Europeans (including most German intellectuals) are pleased that they do not have to address this issue.

These viewpoints are deep-seated, and shape the perspective of commentators on all points of the political spectrum in both Europe and the United States. Thus US liberals (the most 'European' Americans) are more hawkish than most Europeans, even on the conservative end of the political spectrum. Ironically, the attitudes towards the use of force and the importance of international law mark a reversal in the position of each power. When the US was young, and weak, it used to advocate for the importance of international law and the prospect of global peace. The European powers, in contrast, were much stronger and thus claimed they could do whatever they wanted on the grounds of reason of state.

Kagan ultimately argues for more mutual understanding between the US and Europe. Europeans should understand that, while they have indeed created an impressive post-modern world within their borders, they need the US to protect them from threats in the wider world. This protection will require measures unpalatable to a mentality fixated on international law and human rights. For their part, Americans should understand that European hostility to American use of force is understandable historically, albeit wrong-headed. Although the US doesn't really need Europe, it would be better for everyone to remain friends, and thus America should act multilaterally if at all possible.

Four things strike us as notable about this analysis. First, Kagan is remarkably sanguine about the possibility that Europe and the United States are drifting apart. Although he would like to see them remain friends, he does not appear to regard the prospect that they might not be as something the US should worry a great deal about. This is above all because the US is strong and Europe is weak. The dense network of economic ties that developed between the US and Europe following World War II play no role in his analysis. This brings us to the second point, his manner of conceptualizing 'power' and 'weakness'.

For Kagan, power is almost entirely a question of military strength. And military strength is a question of how much one spends on arms, and how high tech those armaments are. The fact that the US can field armies in the Gulf, Afghanistan, Kosovo is evidence of US strength. That the US had to flee much more poorly armed rivals in Lebanon and Somalia does not figure into his analysis. Nor does he make much of the ability of a non-state, transnational force to wound the US on September 11 2001. Being the most powerful nation in the world, it is inevitable that the US will become a target. This is one of the reasons why Europe does not mind remaining weak.

European weakness is easy to conceptualize so long as one ignores economic developments, and this Kagan also does. The most striking development in the economic realm recently has been the launching of the Euro, which at this writing is nearly at parity with the dollar. In other words, there is no longer only one globally significant currency. While the late nineties were characterized by euphoric or hysterical claims that the US possessed tremendous economic might, lately the US has been wracked by dramatic corporate scandals and a sliding stock market. Furthermore, the US debt is drawing some international attention. [3] Europe, it should be noted, has made some economic incursions into Latin America, during the privatization drives of the nineties, and has signed a free trade pact with Chile ahead of the United States. [4]

As for 'soft' power, Kagan dismisses Europe in this area. His evidence is that Sharon ignored European requests to meet with Arafat when the Israelis had him surrounded in his compound, while Sharon let a US representative through. This seems a somewhat specious example, given the intensity of the relationship between the US and Israel. In fact, it is notable that, in the realm of Mid East diplomacy, the 'quartet' (the US, UN, European Union, and Russia) has begun to supplant the US. Europe's capacity, in stark contrast to the US, to lead the international community into a variety of treaties (e.g., the international criminal court) gets little play in Kagan's article.

Both Europe's economic and soft power are important, however, because they are forms of power. In other words, they facilitate getting people to act how they want them to. To exercise power, the US these days seems to rely almost exclusively on military and economic [5] coercion. The US military has been effective in forcing Milosevic and the Taliban out of power. It may yet prove capable of ousting Saddam Hussein. But in these confrontations, one is

reminded of Groucho Marx's famous quip—"you big bully, stop picking on that little bully". Each of these regimes is almost universally disliked. Could the US exert similar force to get Europe, or even Russia, India, South Korea or Brazil to act as it wished? Bullies typically don't beat up the popular kids, whose social networks provide a resource stronger than the bullies' muscles. Those who are popular are often able to get others to do as they wish without threatening to beat them up.

Kagan believes it doesn't matter all that much that the US is not loved in Europe, since Europe is 'weak' and not much interested in the outside world. To prove the latter point, he notes that foreign affairs don't play a significant role in European elections. But the last election in the US where they played a major role was in 1980, when Ronald Reagan was able to play off concerns that declining US power abroad was responsible for the poor performance of the US economy. Anyone who has listened to the BBC as compared to, say, the CBS evening news can hardly help but be aware that Europeans appear to be interested in many countries, including some they are not planning to imminently go to war with. It would take a lot for Europe to mobilize its power against US plans—the US is a valuable ally after all—but if Europe felt that the US was endangering global peace, or creating unbearable refugee crises, it might try. Then one might see whether it is better to stockpile arms or make friends with the world.

Which brings us to the next point worth thinking about, Kagan's vision of the world beyond Europe and the US. Whatever the limits of Huntington and Fukuyama, they were both in some ways concerned more with dynamics beyond Europe and the US than in the 'core'. Huntington believed civilizations are reemerging, [6] potentially threatening the West; Fukuyama believed a consensus was being consolidated around the idea of democracy and free markets as being best suited to meet the needs of people. In contrast, Kagan has no vision to speak of regarding the wider world. He at times metaphorically refers to it as a 'jungle', and he seems concerned exclusively with those countries which are perceived as threats to the US—Iraq, Korea, Iran, China. This, of course, is Bush's 'axis of evil' with China added on. China was very much, to borrow a phrase from the postmodernists, a 'present absence' during the axis of evil speech. It too lacks a democratic electoral system (making it more difficult to penetrate by US agencies) and it too follows an independent foreign policy. These appear to be the main qualifications for appearing on the 'axis of evil' list, but China also has a gigantic population (making it difficult to confront militarily) and is a crucial trading partner of the US. Kagan's view represents an abandonment by some American intellectuals of any pretense of promising the poorer parts of the world that things will get better if they follow US leadership. Instead, the US is simply the guardian of the wealthy countries against the threats that will inevitably emerge out of the 'jungle'. Employing any richer understanding of power than simply counting arms, the self-demotion of the US from 'leader of the free world' to a cowboy (a metaphor Kagan supports), defending unarmed Europe against menacing forces, would surely be seen as a reduction in power.

The final point to consider is Kagan's blindness to the significance of the world economy. We have already noted above that he disregards Europe's accumulating economic strength. Here we should note that the neoliberal world the US put so much energy into constructing in the eighties and nineties plays no role in his world view. The IMF, World Bank, and WTO are simultaneously instruments of US power and profoundly multilateral institutions (frequently led by non-Americans). Glibly speaking about a Europe/US split practically requires ignoring their significance. Again, if one regards power as something more than military might, it would be a disaster for US power if the US capacity to lead the world economy through these institutions were shattered. But it is difficult to see how this role can be sustained without the close cooperation of Europe.

And what of that economically prosperous zone, on the other end of Asia from Europe? East Asia is barely mentioned by Kagan. But while US and European intellectuals debate whether to turn their separation into a divorce, one reads in the New York Times that "From South Korea to Indonesia, China is rapidly strengthening its economic presence across Asia, gobbling up foreign investment and chipping away at the United States' position as the region's economic engine. As it buys up goods, parts and raw materials from its neighbors as never before, China has accompanied its new heft with diplomatic efforts to assure them that it wants to offer cooperation, not competition. Many have rushed to China's embrace and are nimbly shifting their economic alliances, particularly as the United States makes its way through only a tentative economic recovery." [7]

In many ways, the basic dynamic in the world is a situation in which the US's capacity to get other actors to do what it wants, its real power, is shrinking. This is not only because of the consolidation of the European Union, but also a result of nuclear proliferation, the rise of East Asia, distaste among the US population for the sacrifices involved in fighting wars, ideological crisis, etc. Were the US to accept this situation, one could imagine it helping to smooth the transition to a more multipolar world. Unfortunately, this is not at all the dynamic that is unfolding. The unwillingness of the US to come to terms with the shrinking of its real power is likely to be an element adding to the chaotic situation worldwide.

Notes

[1] Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness" in Policy Review, no. 113, June 2002 (www.policyreview.org)

[2] Steven Erlanger, "America the Invulnerable? The World Looks Again" in New York Times, July 21, 2002.

[3] Jeff Faux, "Falling Dollar, Rising Debt" in The American Prospect, July 18, 2002.

[4] Larry Rohter, "Washington's Slow Pace in Trade Talks Annoys Chileans" in New York Times, June 25, 2002.

[5] Twisting the arm of bankrupt countries, rather than winning friends with aid or generous trade terms.

[6] Although rarely noted, Huntington argues that this is in response to overweening Western economic

power.

[7] Jane Perlez, "China Races to Replace U.S. as Economic Power in Asia" in *New York Times*, June 27, 2002.

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New Positions

Johns Hopkins University. The Department of Sociology invites applications for a tenure-track assistant professorship, effective July 1, 2003, in the fields of comparative, cross-national or historical sociology. Experience in teaching, research and professional service should be commensurate with that expected in a research-intensive University in which there is a strong commitment to instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels. A letter of interest, curriculum vitae, three letters of recommendation and a writing sample should be sent to Search Committee, Department of Sociology, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD 21218. Review of applications will begin September 1, 2002. The Johns Hopkins University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. We especially encourage women and minorities to apply.

University of New Mexico. The Department of Sociology invites applications for a tenure-track position at the rank of Assistant Professor for the fall of 2003, pending budgetary approval. Minimum qualification is a Ph.D. in sociology, or a closely related discipline, with all requirements completed by August 15, 2003. Candidates must have an active research agenda in comparative sociology and record of teaching experience. The emphasis within comparative sociology is open; however, specialty areas of particular interest to the department include Latin America, organizations, stratification, demography/immigration, indigenous peoples, political sociology, social movements, and deviance/criminology. Candidates should demonstrate the ability to teach both undergraduate and graduate courses in comparative sociology and be prepared to supervise M.A. and Ph.D. students specializing in this area; also demonstrate the capacity to work cordially and cooperatively with colleagues and students. For best consideration, application materials must be received by September 20, 2002; however, the position will remain open until filled. Applications must include a signed letter of interest describing qualifications, a vita, two samples of written work, and at least two (preferably three) letters of recommendation. If possible, candidates are requested to include an e-mail address where they can be contacted. Address applications to: Chair, Recruitment Committee, Department of Sociology, 1103 Social Science Building, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1166. EEO/AA.

Senior Project Manager, Education Reform, State of Qatar General Project Description

RAND, headquartered in Santa Monica, California, is searching for a Senior Project Manager to oversee a major reform of Qatar's public education system. This position will be based in Doha, Qatar.

The Government of Qatar has approved a reform plan designed by RAND to establish a new K-12 education system. The reform will begin with the creation of two new institutes to oversee the chartering and financing of schools, training for teachers and other staff, development of curriculum standards to provide guidelines for instruction, creation of a national testing and data collection system, and evaluation and dissemination to the public of school performance information.

The implementation of this reform follows a design project conducted by RAND to understand, document, and evaluate the current government education system and propose systemic reform. The new project, slated to officially commence in August 2002, will implement the reform design.

RAND will play an active role in implementing the reform. Initial implementation activities include hiring key personnel for the new institutes, monitoring the progress of the reform, suggesting corrections as necessary, and reporting on reform activities and progress. RAND staff will remain highly involved in the reform activities, working with Qatari partners to charter new schools, design a new school finance framework, train teachers and staff, develop curriculum standards, create national tests, and evaluate schools.

A senior level project manager will be stationed in Qatar fulltime along with other RAND staff. Reporting directly to the RAND Principal Investigator, who is based in Santa Monica, the Senior Project Manager will interact with Qatari authorities and manage the day-to-day progress of the reform. This individual will oversee the activities of RAND personnel stationed fulltime on site, coordinate the activities of visiting RAND research staff, and interact extensively with visiting senior RAND personnel. The Senior Project Manager will be the primary liaison between local authorities and the RAND Principal Investigator.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities

The Senior Project Manager will report to the RAND Principal Investigator directing the reform implementation. The tasks listed below will be carried out in conjunction with RAND research staff.

- Manage and oversee the research activities of RAND staff stationed fulltime in Qatar working on the education

reform project.

- Manage and oversee the administrative duties of staff assigned to assist fulltime RAND and local staff.
- Meet with local representatives involved in the reform, reporting and briefing Qatari authorities on the day-to-day activities of the reform effort, both proactively and in response to issues and concerns of project sponsors.
- Develop and maintain partnerships with government clients and relevant government agencies as well as representatives of national and international education organizations. Communicate RAND's perspective on the reform while working with others to raise and discuss issues related to the reform.
- Communicate on a day-to-day basis with senior RAND staff in the United States concerning the progress of the reform and participate actively in decisionmaking concerning the reform and reform activities. Daily communication with RAND headquarters is required to keep staff informed of reform progress and alert them to local issues that might impact the reform.

Qualifications and Criteria for Selection

It is important that the Senior Project Manager can become well acquainted with local Qatari culture and customs. The successful candidate must work well with both the RAND team and with the Qatari partners. Strong oral and written communication skills are required. The ideal candidate also will have strong team leadership and project management skills. In addition, demonstrated strong research and analytical skills are preferred. Candidates should be familiar with trends in education reform efforts and experiences, including decentralization and privatization. Knowledge and understanding of international education sector policies and reforms is highly desirable.

Candidates with experience managing the responsibilities and resources of large projects are strongly preferred. Individuals with experience working on international projects related to education or other human capital issues are strongly encouraged to apply. In addition, candidates familiar with the Middle East region and specifically the Gulf States are preferred.

Bachelor's Degree required. Advanced Degree(s) preferred (Master's, Doctorate, or Professional) in education, public policy, or social science.

Salary and benefits will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. Highly competitive allowances for senior placement in overseas appointment apply.

The review of applications will begin immediately and will continue through August 16, 2002. For application instructions and additional information about RAND, visit our website at www.rand.org. Please include the reference code, BHS/972, in the subject line of all electronic correspondence. RAND is an affirmative action employer and encourages applications from diverse candidates.

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Perennial Call for Submissions for PEWS NEWS & PEWS WEB

Yet another reminder to send in items for **PEWS News**. Everything is grist for the mill:

- Calls for Papers
- Change in position
- New publications
- New Syllabi posted for sharing
- New AV materials
- Discussions of PEWS issues
- Editorial on PEWS politics
- etc.

All of these are also suitable for PEWS web. In addition:

- Links to activist sites
- Links to your web page
- links to any web page of interest to PEWS members
- Data Sources on- or off-line
- New publications [yours, or others']
- Syllabi: especially those on line for others view
- etc.

Send items to Tom Hall thall@depauw.edu

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