THE NEW IMPERIALISM, VOLUME I
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VOLUME I

MILITARISM, HUMANISM, AND OCCUPATION

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This volume emerges from a recently concluded advanced undergraduate seminar in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, from which all of the contributions are drawn. The title of the seminar is “The New Imperialism,” and this is the first of what is intended to be a (near) annual series of volumes.

The seminar focused on the ideological, political, and military expressions of the “new imperialism,” as well as the contemporary justifications for global intervention that have advanced themselves as rationales for a “new imperialism,” what others might call “liberal imperialism,” “humanitarian interventionism,” “military humanism,” and so forth, and as we learn, it is not all that “new.” While concerned with wars against “terror” and “insurgency,” and Canada’s own involvement in the war in Afghanistan—indeed, the war in Afghanistan remained one of the constant points of reference in most of the discussions held throughout the 13 weeks of the seminar—the key concern was the contemporary merging of humanitarianism, universalism, diplomacy, peacekeeping/peace-building, development, the production of knowledge in the social sciences, with an ascendant and expansive militarism. We therefore also addressed the militarization of the social sciences, as well as militarism in popular culture, and the militarization of foreign aid and diplomacy.

There were no lectures in this seminar. Instead, seminar participants were invited to develop or advance their own analytical perspectives around research areas of relevance to the seminar and of interest to them, and to engage with one another—quite intensely as it turned out—on a weekly basis, offering their ideas, defending them, and discovering new knowledge. While by no means always perfectly balanced between competing perspectives on a weekly basis, the assigned materials in the seminar, around which most of the discussions were held, emanated from a wide range of views, from those of military officers, political leaders, journalists, media pundits, the “policy wonks” in major think tanks, public intellectuals, to historians, political scientists, and anthropologists within academia, from diverse political standpoints. Most of the textual materials used were written for a general audience, and seminar
participants themselves obtained some training in developing and articulating their own ideas in writing for a general audience. The chapters contained herein are also suitable for a general audience. One of the ideas behind the seminar was indeed about how to comprehend and address public debates and contemporary political conditions under which we, as anthropologists and sociologists, all work, and to be conscious of that fact, rather than another instance of training persons to better fold themselves into a discipline, with only academic reading within disciplinary confines. While there are excellent works by anthropologists and sociologists dealing with contemporary warfare and imperialism (or empire-building as some prefer to call it), not all of what anthropologists and sociologists need to know comes from within their disciplines, so that an introverted approach would prove inadvisable.

Each one of the chapters presented in this volume has clearly been carefully built, based on intensive and often extensive research and analysis, presenting ideas and information that most members of the general audience will find both illuminating and compelling. Not only that, they possess these qualities in equal or greater measure to much of the published material for a general audience that addresses these subjects. Having said that, not all of the papers produced by seminar participants made the final cut. The chapters, with the exception of that of the editor, are the product of consultation, review, and revision, often extending well past the end of the seminar. Their strengths are to their credit, and any shortcomings are those of the editor.
Until the recent shift from empire denial to empire avowal (Johnson, 2004, p. 67) among prominent proponents of an aggressive expansion of the U.S. presence in world affairs as the world’s unrivaled military superpower, there has been for at least a few decades great reticence among scholars in North America to use the term “imperialism.” Indeed, more often than not, it was bracketed by scare quotes, as I just did, as a term whose use should inspire caution, caginess, treating it as a term that possibly signaled propaganda or hyperbole. This stylistic practice has continued to a significant extent in the mainstream media, even while showing no such concern when writing about “terrorism,” which has itself become an expansive, ambiguous, politically motivated catchword that can apply to just about everything from blowing up babies, to counter-terrorism, to attacks on soldiers, to erecting a blockade on a Native reserve in Canada, and to questioning the very use of the word terrorism (implying that only terrorist-sympathizers would do so). So why bother using the term, imperialism, if it presents too many definitional and political challenges to begin with? One reason is that now the leading actors themselves employ the term, and not just the anti-imperialists. Another reason, as Cohen (1973, p. 9) put it, is that the “word is part of the common language and preoccupies a large and growing part of the world’s population.” As he adds, to “avoid its use would be, in a sense, to avoid the issue itself” (Cohen, 1973, p. 10). What is imperialism, and what is the new imperialism?
The New Imperialism: The First Time

Imperialism has clearly taken on many different meanings, and its uses have been varied. It has referred to political systems under the rule of an emperor, with greatly centralized power (and reappears today in discussions of the “the imperial presidency” in the U.S.); it has also been synonymous with colonialism overseas, with the acquisition of colonies central to building an empire; it has been tied to monopoly capitalism; it has referred to both indirect control through economic and cultural pressures, as well as direct military intervention; it has been implicated in nation-building and internal colonialism in settler states such as the U.S., Canada, and Australia; it has been both nationalistic, and materialistic, driven by either ideology or strict calculations of economic gain, sometimes both. In the midst of this mass proliferation of meanings of imperialism there have been, over the past 150 years, two periods when one encounters references to a “new imperialism.”

In the first instance, in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain, the term was used by both opponents and adherents to an imperialistic policy. In the 1870s, when use of the term imperialism spread to Britain, “supporters, as well as critics, of Prime Minister Disraeli began to describe his policy of strengthening and expanding the British colonial empire as imperialistic” (Cohen, 1973, p. 10). In the second instance, especially notable in the U.S. since the advent of George W. Bush and liberal interventionists (wrongly yet widely called “neo-conservatives”), the phrase has once again surfaced in the literature. “Imperialism” is neither passé, nor solely the rhetorical possession of one side of a debate.

As best as I can tell, the earliest and most salient use of the phrase in the literature, “New Imperialism” (written with or without capitals, in the same text even), is to be found repeatedly in the 1905 classic, *Imperialism: A Study*, by J. A. Hobson (specifically on pp. 21, 22, 23, 27, 35, 38, 39, 43, 45, 46, 53, 64, 71, 118, 124, 136, 138, 139, 152, 304, 328, 337, 352, 353, 355, 367). It is not even clear that this “new imperialism” was all that new, in the way Hobson handles it. It seems to be his particular way of distinguishing between colonization through white settlement, versus acquiring despotic control over non-European populations: “The new Imperialism has been…chiefly concerned with tropical and sub-tropical countries where large ‘lower races’ are brought under white control” (Hobson, 1905, p. 136). On the one hand, there does not appear to be anything “new” about that, not even when restricted to Britain alone, since it had multiple forms of colonization from the 1600s onwards. On the other hand, Hobson gives the phrase more specific meaning as he delves further into comparison between past and then (present) imperialism, with some telling parallels (the original spelling is retained): “The new Imperialism differs from the older, first in substituting for the ambition of a single growing empire the the-
ory and the practice of competing empires, each motivated by similar lusts of political aggrandisement and commercial gain; secondly, in the dominance of financial or investing over mercantile interests” (1905, p. 304). Most important, it is what we might call a post-crude imperialism—new for being more refined, more indirect, more competitive, and not based on outright slavery and direct political control. There are then, it appears, two new imperialisms in Hobson’s work: one being the imperialism that acquires control over populations in tropical zones, the other being dominated by competition between empires and the dominance of the financial sector. These need not be mutually exclusive.

In some instances, pertaining to the late nineteenth century, writers spoke of a “new imperialism” as a means of referring to something that was not so much substantively new, as it was a current phase, a new wave of imperialism, especially with reference to the Scramble for Africa (Bongie, 1991, p. 18). In other cases, with reference to British and American imperialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (circa 1880-1915), “the new imperialism” refers to “a new attitude of responsibility and obligation” (Betts, 1968, p. 74), not so unlike the current preoccupation with “humanitarian interventionism” and the “responsibility to protect.” As Betts summarized, “many late-nineteenth-century Europeans convinced themselves that they were discharging a significant burden by helping the ‘lesser breeds’” (Betts, 1968, p. 74). This was a “new” conception of “Empire as a duty” (Carrington, 1950, p. 663), as a duty to the prestige of the motherland, to world order, and to “civilization” itself.

Other arguments hold that there was something indeed “new” about imperialism in the late nineteenth century, without positing any fundamental break with the past. For August (1985, p. 1) the erection of tariff walls and the rise of the new nationalism contributed to “a new vision of empire” in both Britain and France. Also distinctive was that imperialists in Britain and France “set out to build a mass movement, to win the hearts and minds of their compatriots” (August, 1985, p. 1). The public proponents of imperialism argued that “economic and political rivalry among the leading industrial powers” dictated a “redefinition of the ‘national interest’ along imperialist lines” (August, 1985, p. 1).

Even at this stage, in the first articulation of “the new imperialism,” we see a conjunction of forces and motivations paralleled by the new imperialism of the early twenty-first century. Among these we can list, from the aforementioned arguments: 1) economic competition against other emergent powers; 2) a new phase of expansionism; 3) empire as responsibility and duty; 4) public propaganda to win supporters at home for new adventures abroad. The latter element is today referred to by various terms: public diplomacy, information operations, strategic communications, and soft power.
The New Imperialism: One More Time

In the simplest of terms, the “new imperialism” today (now appearing more often in book and chapter titles—see Connelly, 2006; Harvey, 2003; Heller, 2006; Magdoff, 2003, ch. 2; Mooers, 2006) is not a phrase that is necessarily used to argue that current imperialism is fundamentally new and without historical precedents and foundations. With respect to the temporal dimension—the new—the idea tends to be used more often as a shorthand for contemporary imperialism, that of the U.S., following the end of the Cold War. More substantively, it embraces the confluence and culmination of several trends and factors in the contemporary period, ranging from unilateralism, empire avowal (no shame in being imperialists, let’s do a better job of it), increased militarism in popular culture, war corporatism, the extraordinary global spread and multiplication of U.S. military facilities, the militarization of politics and economics, neo-colonial forms of “humanitarianism,” full spectrum occupation and the creation of new international protectorates when convenient (notably Bosnia, Kosovo, and Haiti), and the increased interest in the use of “soft power” to acquire some degree of legitimacy that was lost by undermining the UN and its Charter. The chapters in this book explore these various dimensions in the new imperialist cluster, across a range of countries, including Algeria, Afghanistan, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, Somalia, Iran, Kosovo, Kuwait, and the U.S. The dominant themes of the chapters prepared by the seminar participants place themselves under certain logical headings, given this cluster: militarism and militarization; humanitarianism and the responsibility to protect; occupation; and, soft power.

Historical Context, Political Economy, and the New Imperialism

In Magdoff’s work there is an attempt to retain ties between contemporary imperialism and world capitalism. Magdoff argues that “there are good and sufficient reasons for clearly marking off a new period in the affairs of world capitalism,” for which the term “new imperialism” may be used (2003, p. 35). The distinguishing features of the new imperialism that he highlights are: a) that the U.K. is no longer the leading industrial power, and, b) that within each of the leading industrial powers, economic power shifted to a small number of very big integrated industrial and financial firms. However, even this approach appears to be dated, valid perhaps only to the 1980s, since it does not take into account de-industrialization or any of the other features listed in the last paragraph—nor should we attempt to develop a definition for a “new new imperialism” for the obvious abuses to which this lends itself. Indeed, much of his
definition of the “new imperialism” seems most applicable to the late nineteen-
teenth and early twentieth centuries (Magdoff, 2003, p. 41). Magdoff goes
beyond this, to more recent times, and he writes:

“The imperialism of today has several distinctly new features: These are...1) the shift
of the main emphasis from rivalry in carving up the world to the struggle against the
contraction of the imperialist system; 2) the new role of the United States as organizer
and leader of the world imperialist system; and 3) the rise of a technology which is
international in character.” (Magdoff, 2003, p. 46)

What is also new, Magdoff later adds, is that the U.S. has become a “have
not” nation for a wide range of common and rare minerals, on which giant cor-
porations still rely and which are now almost always “foreign” sources (2003, p.
50). We will return to this point later.

Placing the new imperialism today in hi storical context, Heller (2006) deals
with globalization, neoliberal capitalism, structural adjustment across the “de-
veloping world,” the decline in multilateral political institutions and the rise of
U.S. dominated multilateral economic institutions, and military actions since 11
September 2001 (frequently referred to in this book, as elsewhere, as “9/11”).
Discourse also matters, considerably, to the extent that it announces intentions,
plays a role in shaping public opinion, and articulates policy. In this vein, Heller
notes that since the end of the Cold War around 1990, we see a case where the
dominant U.S. discourse of power evolved from, “discussion of American in-
dispensability, unipolarity, and possible unilateralism,” to one that was soon
enlarged “to frank avowals of American primacy, hegemony, empire, and even
imperialism” (Heller, 2006, p. 320). Empire avowal means that “imperialism”
no longer needs the scare quotes—imperialism is no longer a dirty word of ac-
cusation, when we triumphantly adopt it as the buzzword of our new public
credo. Here Heller observes that “key foreign policy experts spoke of the neces-
sity of preventive war to block the emergence of possible rivals to American
military power” (2006, p. 320). In addition, “the militarization of American for-
eign policy was a notable feature of this rhetoric” (Heller, 2006, p. 320). Com-
bined with this was the rise to dominance of a political elite in Washington with
close ties to the defense industry, and the rise of a new imperialist elite that
frankly championed unilateralism and outright empire, the emergence and in-
clusion in government of the so-called “neo-conservatives” such as Richard
Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and Douglas Feith, and their Project for a New Ameri-
Can Century. Other “neo-con” branches were to be found in private Washing-
ton think tanks which frequently provided the talking heads called upon by the
mainstream media, as well as neo-cons housed within media outlets themselves,
these two facets best represented by Bill Kristol and Charles Krauthammer, and
Max Boot, who spans the think tank-media distinction (not divide).

The new imperialist project, singularly American, envisages a coercive re-
fashioning of the world to suit American interests. This call for a new order was
first used to justify a massive military buildup, even without a superpower rival to justify it, and the retention of all Cold War military installations, with the creation of hundreds of new ones worldwide. Launching itself in an open-ended and permanent “war on terror,” the U.S. cared less and less for multilateral solutions, paid scant attention to domestic and global public opposition, and set about remaking the Middle East and Central Asia, targeting Iraq and Afghanistan, and heightening threats to Iran. With reference to multilateralism, Chomsky quotes former Reagan State Department official Francis Fukuyama who wrote in 1992: “[the UN is] perfectly serviceable as an instrument of American unilateralism and indeed may be the primary mechanism through which that unilateralism will be exercised in the future” (2003, p. 29).

While discourse matters, so do underlying economic conditions for American imperial expansion. As Heller explains:

“This audacious U.S. plan [described above] was born out of overwhelming military strength combined with a growing sense of economic vulnerability. On the latter point, American military power and, if possible, control of Middle East oil would enable it to reassert its waning economic primacy while shoring up the dollar. Massive increases in military and reconstruction expenditure in the form of contracts to American companies would help to reawaken the United States economy out of deep recession.” (Heller, 2006, p. 321)

Eric Hobsbawm makes an almost identical point: “Military strength underlines the economic vulnerability of a United States whose enormous trade deficit is maintained by Asian investors, whose economic interest in supporting a falling dollar is rapidly diminishing” (2008, pp. 56-57). In U.S. strength, Hobsbawm finds weakness: “Indeed, may not the very rhetoric of aggression justified by implausible ‘threats to America’ indicate a basic sense of insecurity about the global future of the United States?” (2008, p. 57).

Again, in historical context, this new imperialism parallels some of the phenomena of the early twentieth century, during “new imperialism, part one.” Heller speaks to this question of historical cyclicality:

“Predatory and militaristic behaviour may, in fact, be rooted in factors deeply lodged in an American economy in relative decline, in the predisposition of American politics and society, or, indeed, in the nature of the existing global political economy. If so, the American invasion of Iraq marks the beginning of a new period of unpredictable and destructive international rivalry that harks back to the conflicts of the early twentieth century.” (Heller, 2006, p. 325)

This volume focuses on a particular cluster of the current magnification or reconfiguration of power, ambition, intent, and means. The focus is specifically on militarism, the military-industrial-media-academic complex, soft power, humanitarianism, and occupation. Certainly there are other approaches worth considering that shed some light on the new in the new imperialism. David Harvey (2003), using that phrase as the title of his volume, provides one of these ap-
proaches, focusing on the contemporary, and in particular on the invasion of Iraq. To those who would scoff at (their caricatured) arguments about a “war for oil,” Harvey effectively says: not so fast. There is more to this argument than meets the eye, if one is willing to go beyond simplistic assertions, and equally hasty denials.

What is new about the new imperialism is partly reflected in the deeper and unstated reasons for the U.S. war against Iraq, Harvey argues. One reason for the war that he highlights is the tactic of using foreign military adventures abroad, and the concomitant fear mongering at home, to divert attention away from domestic “difficulties” (Harvey, 2003, p. 12). He admits this is nothing new, but certainly the specific problems motivating leaders to use this tactic are particular to the present. Among the difficulties he lists, are those that have become acute for the past decade, and that continue to worsen: a recession that began in 2001; rising unemployment; corporate scandals; catastrophic corporate accounting failures; lost pensions; health care in a mess; increased domestic indebtedness, and foreign indebtedness, with the U.S. becoming the biggest debtor nation in world history. We can also add to the list a loss of legitimacy of national institutions and mainstream party politics; the growing disgust with influence peddling in Congress; dependency on loans and imports from abroad, and so forth. Any party in power—and specifically the Republican Party on the eve of 11 September 2001, would favour distraction, deflection, and a nationalist revival (Harvey, 2003, p. 13).

A second and related explanation offered by Harvey is that war is a means for the state to increase its power, and for a government to build national solidarity and domestic social cohesion, in a situation that seems to lack both (Harvey, 2003, pp. 15-17). As American society was perceived by some on the right as collapsing into a state of increased disorder, the chaos of competing private interests coupled with “irrational” acts of disaffection (riots, school shootings, militia violence), society “seemed to be fragmenting and flying apart at an alarming rate” (Harvey, 2003, p. 17). The absence of a defined external enemy in the 1990s only aggravated this perceived senseless disorientation. War after 9/11 would help to change that, by inspiring national purpose, national solidarity, and patriotism. Security, the “homeland,” flag pins, real Americans. As Harvey argues,

“The engagement with Iraq was far more than a mere diversion from difficulties at home; it was a grand opportunity to impose a new sense of social order at home and bring the commonwealth to heel. Criticism was silenced as unpatriotic. The evil enemy without became the prime force through which to exorcise or tame the devils lurking within.” (Harvey, 2003, p. 17)

A third reason for war with Iraq, that highlights a key aspect of the new imperialism in Harvey’s explanation, concerns oil. Harvey, arguing against easy dismissals about the “war for oil” theme, says that “there is no question that oil
is crucial. But exactly how and in what sense is not so easy to determine” (2003, p. 18). Harvey does not agree with simplistic assertions that the U.S. intended to simply go into Iraq and take all of its oil for itself. Instead, Harvey argues for a different proposition, that the war was about controlling access, as an economic good in itself: “whoever controls the Middle East controls the oil spigot and whoever controls the global oil spigot can control the global economy, at least for the near future” (2003, p. 19). For a U.S. dependent on imports and foreign loans, this is a vital stranglehold, a clever way to use its massive military apparatus to positive economic effect. It is international economic blackmail. China could conceivably cause the collapse of the dollar, and cause the U.S. to implode economically by recalling all of its loans. On the other hand, the U.S. could cause the industrial collapse of China by shutting off access to its most important sources of oil. In the meantime, China continues to lend and export, and therefore the oil continues to flow. The U.S. has thus implicitly negotiated for itself an arrangement with ascending economic powers, as its own power declines, using the best instrument it has at its disposal, to exercise maximum leverage: the military.

Harvey notes that this started to take shape as policy at least as far back as the administration of Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s:

“President Carter enunciated the doctrine that the United States would not under any circumstances allow an interruption of the flow of Gulf oil. This meant a commitment to keeping the Strait of Hormuz open (for the delivery and distribution systems are every bit as important as the oilfields themselves) and a permanent military presence in the region, plus the formation of a Rapid Deployment Force to deal with any emergencies [emphasis added].” (Harvey, 2003, p. 21)

Likewise, on 11 September 1990, then President George H. W. Bush in a joint address to Congress about the impending Gulf War made these very telling points (see Appendix B for the full speech):

“Vital economic interests are at risk as well. Iraq itself controls some 10 percent of the world's proven oil reserves. Iraq plus Kuwait controls twice that. An Iraq permitted to swallow Kuwait would have the economic and military power, as well as the arrogance, to intimidate and coerce its neighbors—neighbors who control the lion's share of the world's remaining oil reserves. We cannot permit a resource so vital to be dominated by one so ruthless. And we won't. (¶ 9)

“Our ability to function effectively as a great power abroad depends on how we conduct ourselves at home. Our economy, our Armed Forces, our energy dependence, and our cohesion all determine whether we can help our friends and stand up to our foes. For America to lead, America must remain strong and vital. Our world leadership and domestic strength are mutual and reinforcing; a woven piece, strongly bound as Old Glory. To revitalize our leadership, our leadership capacity, we must address our budget deficit—not after election day, or next year, but now. (¶ 21)
“Higher oil prices slow our growth, and higher defense costs would only make our fiscal deficit problem worse.” (Bush, 1990, ¶ 22)

(Bush also said in the same speech, “Americans must never again enter any crisis, economic or military, with an excessive dependence on foreign oil and an excessive burden of Federal debt” [Bush, 1990, ¶ 23]—presumably this is an element of the speech that some American leaders have forgotten or never accepted.)

Harvey concludes his explanation of the root economic basis of the new imperialism thus: “Access to Middle Eastern oil is now…a crucial security issue for the United States, as it is for the global economy as a whole” (2003, pp. 23-24). The issue is so critical given that the rate of exploitation of oil reserves has exceeded the rate of discovery of new reserves for the past 30 years, and oil is thus becoming increasingly scarce (Harvey, 2003, p. 23). Harvey also notes that, “the only fields that look set to last fifty years or more are those in Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait” (2003, p. 23). Harvey’s argument has been reinforced by more recent data about world oil production, increased demand, and reduced supply (see especially Macalister, 2009a, 2009b; Elkington & Kendall, 2009).

The Iraq war may not have been a war for oil, but it seems likely to have been a war about oil, about U.S. nationalism, and about enhancing the U.S. military presence worldwide, as a strategic means to delay inevitable imperial decline that is already in progress. That is yet another feature of the “new imperialism”—for Britain in the early twentieth century, as for the U.S. in the early twenty-first century, it appears as the empire begins to collapse.

There are also decidedly non-Marxist interpretations of the existence of American empire that choose to focus heavily on military power. One prominent example comes from the works of a former CIA analyst, Chalmers Johnson. Johnson focuses on the global spread of U.S. military bases. Military ubiquity is critical in his analysis, especially as with the end of the Cold War it should have become clear even to the empire-denying part of the American public that America’s vast network of military bases abroad was being maintained despite the absence of any external military threat like the USSR (Johnson, 2000, p. 5). He writes of “America’s informal empire” as one “based on the projection of military power to every corner of the world and on the use of American capital and markets to force global economic integration on our terms, at whatever costs to others [emphasis added]” (Johnson, 2000, p. 7). Johnson then provides us with his theory of empire:

“In speaking of an ‘American empire,’ however, I am not using the concept in these traditional senses [those being Marxist-Leninist ones, and those based on historical analogies with Rome, Britain, etc.]. I am not talking about the United States’ former colony in the Philippines, or about such dependent territories as Puerto Rico, nor when I use the term ‘imperialism’…do I mean the extension of one state’s legal dominion
over another; nor do I even want to imply that imperialism must have primarily economic causes. The more modern empires I have in mind normally lie concealed beneath some ideological or juridical concept—commonwealth, alliance, free world, the West, the Communist bloc—that disguises the actual relationships among its members.” (2000, p. 19)

Also divorcing imperialism from capitalism, somewhat in the same vein as Johnson, is the approach offered by one of the leading “new imperialist” scholars, Niall Ferguson. Ferguson argues that “empire” denotes “the extension of one’s civilization, usually by military force, to rule over other peoples” (2004, p. 169).

Catherine Lutz’s approach to the “empire of bases” re-links the spread of military bases with other basic features of imperial dominance. Lutz argues that “a country can be called an empire when its policies aim to assert and maintain dominance over other regions,” and those policies succeed when “wealth is extracted from peripheral areas and redistributed to the imperial center” (2009b, p. 9). There is a proliferation of military bases when states have imperial ambitions and exercise either direct control of territory or indirect control via political economy, laws, and foreign policy. An empire of bases, Lutz says, “is associated with a growing gap between the wealth and welfare of the powerful center and the regions affiliated with it,” and along with this there has often been an “elevated self-regard in the imperial power, or a sense of racial, cultural, or social superiority” (2009b, p. 9).

Most controversial in recent times, perhaps, has been the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri as found in Empire (2000). What they call empire is “a new global form of sovereignty”, with a “series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xii). They distinguish “empire” in their sense from “imperialism” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xii). Moreover, they assert that “The United States does not, and indeed no nation-state can today, form the center of an imperialist project [their emphasis]. Imperialism is over. No nation will be world leader in the way modern European nations were” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, pp. xiii-xiv). What is critical about Empire (as they capitalize it) is the lack of boundaries: “Empire’s rule has no limits” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xiv). Their Empire is all pervasive, and seeks to rule down to the deepest depths of human nature. Its aim is “peace,” they think: “although the practice of Empire is continually bathed in blood, the concept of Empire is always dedicated to peace—a perpetual and universal peace outside of history” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xv). The crisis of the nation-state form is what propels the world toward Empire. The new normative global order, as they see it, rules over all:

“what used to be conflict or competition among several imperialist powers has in important respects been replaced by the idea of a single power that overdetermines them all, structures them in a unitary way and treats them under one common notion
of right that is decidedly postcolonial and postimperialist. This is really the point of departure for our study of Empire: a new notion of right, or rather, a new inscription of authority and a new design of the production of norms and legal instruments of coercion that guarantee contracts and resolve conflicts.” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 9)

Tracing the genealogy of Empire back to Christian Rome, the authors see a “rebirth of the concept of Empire” evidenced by key symptoms (except that this Empire apparently has no Rome):

“One symptom, for example, is the renewed interest in and effectiveness of the concept of bellum justum, or ‘just war’....The traditional concept of just war involves the banalization of war and the celebration of it as an ethical instrument, both of which were ideas that modern political thought and the international community of nation-states had resolutely refused. These two traditional characteristics have reappeared in our postmodern world: on the one hand, war is reduced to the status of police action, and on the other, the new power that can legitimately exercise ethical functions through war is sacralized.” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 12)

Another key symptom is the development of the “right of intervention” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 18). What stands behind this intervention, on humanitarian and moral grounds, is “a permanent state of emergency and exception justified by the appeal to essential values of justice [their emphasis]” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 18). Theirs is an empire without imperialism, and governance without government. A new Rome, but without the Rome.

One wonders then, to borrow Gertrude Stein’s phrase: “Is there a there there?” Boron (2005) argues there is, and thoroughly dismantles Hardt and Negri’s attempt at reformulating empire as a post-modern juridical innovation with no real centre. Taking away the discovery of novelty, historian Eric Hobsbawm reminds us that “Empires have always justified themselves, sometimes quite sincerely, in moral terms—whether they claimed to spread (their version of) civilization or religion to the benighted, or to spread (their version of) freedom to the victims of (someone else’s) oppression, or, today, as champions of human rights” (2008, p. 52). Likewise, Bricmont argues that the rhetoric of humanitarian intervention is what links the new imperialism of the late nineteenth century Britain with the new imperialism of the early twenty-first century U.S.: “British liberal imperialists discovered in the late nineteenth century that presenting foreign interventions as moral crusades was particularly effective in whipping up popular support in a parliamentary democracy with a press eager to denounce foreign villainy” (2006, p. 69).
Empire Avowal

As mentioned before, one of the features of the contemporary “new imperialism” is precisely the explicit embrace of imperialism by writers and policy makers tied to the defense establishment, to think tanks, and elite academic institutions. As the New York Times’ Emily Eakin observed:

“Americans are used to being told—typically by resentful foreigners—that they are imperialists. But lately some of the nation’s own eminent thinkers are embracing the idea. More astonishing, they are using the term with approval. From the isolationist right to the imperialist-bashing left, a growing number of experts are issuing stirring paens to American empire.” (Eakin, 2002, ¶ 5)

“The label of empire does not bother William Kristol, a neoconservative leader and editor of the Weekly Standard magazine,” Morgan (2003, ¶ 15) tells us, “If people want to say we’re an imperial power, fine,’ he has stated.” Harvard University historian Niall Ferguson, author of Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power says the U.S. should stop denying its imperial role and study the good the British Empire did in spreading prosperity and progressive thought: “The United States is and should be an empire” (Morgan, 2003, ¶ 18). “People are now coming out of the closet on the word ‘empire’,” said columnist Charles Krauthammer, and with approval he adds: “The fact is no country has been as dominant culturally, economically, technologically and militarily in the history of the world since the Roman Empire” (quoted in Eakin, 2002, ¶ 4). Robert D. Kaplan stated: “There’s a positive side to empire. It’s in some ways the most benign form of order” (quoted in Eakin, 2002, ¶ 16). Max Boot, of the Council on Foreign Relations and frequent columnist in many of the U.S.’ largest circulation newspapers, had a stream of articles with titles such as: “The Case for American Empire” (2001); “American Imperialism? No Need to Run Away from a Label” (2003a); “U.S. Imperialism: A Force for Good” (2003b); “Washington Needs a Colonial Office” (2003c); and, “Enlightened Imperialism Could Save Liberia” (2003d). Boot (2003a, ¶ 5, 6) frankly stated:

“on the whole, U.S. imperialism has been the greatest force for good in the world during the past century…Yet, while generally successful as imperialists, Americans have been loath to confirm that’s what they were doing. That’s OK. Given the historical baggage that ‘imperialism’ carries, there’s no need for the U.S. government to embrace the term. But it should definitely embrace the practice.”

Elsewhere, Boot has asserted: “Afghanistan and other troubled lands today cry out for the sort of enlightened foreign administration once provided by self-confident Englishmen in jodhpurs and pith helmets,” adding later, “unilateral U.S. rule may no longer be an option today” (2001, ¶ 7, 9).
As Chalmers Johnson remarked,

“not since the jingoists of the Spanish-American War have so many Americans openly called for abandoning even a semblance of constitutional and democratic foreign policy and endorsed imperialism.” (Johnson, 2004, p. 67)

Almost as if a cyclical return to the first new imperialism, at the time of the Spanish-American War, two camps have formed: those who call for an unconstrained, unilateral imperialism, and those who seek empire through the pursuit of “humanitarian” objectives (Johnson, 2004, p. 67). Representative of the former are Charles Krauthammer, Robert D. Kaplan, Max Boot, and others. Representative of the latter, heirs to the tradition of Woodrow Wilson, defenders of soft imperialism or humanitarian imperialism, are the globalist liberals who believe in “making the world safe for democracy” such as Sebastian Mallaby and Michael Ignatieff.

Speaking of imperialism, Michael Ignatieff argued for its necessity:

“Imperialism used to be the white man’s burden. This gave it a bad reputation. But imperialism doesn’t stop being necessary just because it becomes politically incorrect. Nations sometimes fail, and when they do, only outside help—imperial power—can get them back on their feet.

“Nation-building is the kind of imperialism you get in a human rights era, a time when great powers believe simultaneously in the right of small nations to govern themselves and in their own right to rule the world. Nation-building lite is supposed to reconcile these principles: to safeguard American interests in Central Asia at the lowest possible cost and to give Afghanistan back a stable government of its own choosing.” (Ignatieff, 2002, ¶ 69)

Speaking of the U.S. in particular, Ignatieff asked: “what word but ‘empire’ describes the awesome thing that America is becoming?” (2003b, ¶ 2). He then answers with obvious admiration and approval: “the 21st century imperium is a new invention in the annals of political science, an empire lite, a global hegemony whose grace notes are free markets, human rights and democracy, enforced by the most awesome military power the world has ever known” (Ignatieff, 2003b, ¶ 5). Elsewhere he adds, “America’s entire war on terror is an exercise in imperialism. This may come as a shock to Americans, who don’t like to think of their country as an empire. But what else can you call America’s legions of soldiers, spooks and Special Forces straddling the globe?” (Ignatieff, 2002, ¶ 4). Ignatieff concludes: “The case for empire is that it has become, in a place like Iraq, the last hope for democracy and stability alike” (2003b, ¶ 23). Iraq has neither—but Ignatieff has yet to revise his “case for empire.” Indeed, he has offered the imperialists some helpful advice: “Effective imperial power also requires controlling the subject people’s sense of time, convincing them that they will be ruled forever” (2002, ¶ 29). Ignatieff worries: “The question, then,
is not whether America is too powerful but whether it is powerful enough” (2003a, ¶ 29).

Ignatieff writes in a rather sober way about the humanitarian imperialists. Having argued for their necessity, it’s not clear that his words are meant to be taken as criticizing them. Ignatieff (2002) states, and it is worth quoting at length,

“Wherever the traveling caravan of nation-builders settles, it creates an instant boomtown, living on foreign money and hope (¶ 37)…. Kabul is the Klondike of the new century, a place where a young person can make, if not a fortune, then a stellar career riding the tide of international money that is flooding in with every United Nations flight from Islamabad. It’s one of the few places where a bright spark just out of college can end up in a job that comes with a servant and a driver. So Kabul has the social attractions of a colonial outpost joined to the feverish excitement of a boomtown (¶ 38).

“Nation-building isn’t supposed to be an exercise in colonialism, but the relationship between the locals and the internationals is inherently colonial. The locals do the translating, cleaning and driving while the internationals do the grand imperial planning (¶ 42).

“The UN nation-builders all repeat the mantra that they are here to ‘build capacity’ and to ‘empower local people.’ This is the authentic vocabulary of the new imperialism, only it isn’t as new as it sounds. The British called it ‘indirect rule.’ Local agents ran the day-to-day administration; local potentates exercised some power, while real decisions were made back in imperial capitals. Indirect rule is the pattern in Afghanistan: the illusion of self-government joined to the reality of imperial tutelage (¶ 48, emphasis added).

“American foreign assistance concentrates on food aid in part because it sops up U.S. farm surpluses. The unpleasant underside of nation-building is that the internationals’ first priority is building their own capacity—increasing their budgets and giving themselves good jobs. The last priority is financing the Afghan government.” (¶ 50)

Where Ignatieff seems to write with acid about the reality (and remember, necessity) of humanitarian imperialists, he is much brasher about defending pre-emptive war (the most supreme of all international crimes, according to the Nuremberg tribunal [International Criminal Court, 1998, ¶ 9]):

“The dilemmas here are best illustrated by looking closely at pre-emptive war. It is a lesser evil because, according to our traditional understanding of war, the only justified resort to war is a response to actual aggression. But those standards are outdated. They were conceived for wars against states and their armies, not for wars against terrorists and suicide bombers. Against this kind of enemy, everyone can see that instead of waiting for terrorists to hit us, it makes sense to get our retaliation in first.” (Ignatieff, 2004, ¶ 44).

Here Ignatieff plays at forgetting that the war in Iraq was first a war against a state and its army, and against a state that never attacked the U.S., nor had the
means to do so. Ignatieff went as far as defending torture and targeted assassinations, also crimes under international humanitarian law: “To defeat evil, we may have to traffic in evils: indefinite detention of suspects, coercive interrogations, targeted assassinations, even pre-emptive war….A liberal society cannot be defended by herbivores. We need carnivores to save us, but we had better make sure the meat-eaters hunt only on our orders” (2004, ¶ 11, 52).

**Militarism, Militarization, and War Corporatism**

Ascendant, and nearly hegemonic militarism is also a critical feature of this new imperialism. Here I wish to quote Johnson at length, given his effective description of the fundamental changes that have occurred in American political economy that demonstrate this militarist ascendance and the dominance of the national security state:

“As late as 1874, well after the Civil War, our country’s standing army had an authorized strength of only 16,000 soldiers, and the military was considerably less important to most Americans than, say, the post office. In those days, an American did not need a passport or governmental permission to travel abroad. When immigrants arrived they were tested only for infectious diseases and did not have to report to anyone. No drugs were prohibited. Tariffs were the main source of revenue for the federal government; there was no income tax.

“A century and a quarter later the U.S. Army has 480,000 members, the navy 375,000, the air force 359,000, and the marines 175,000, for a total of 1,389,000 men and women on active duty. The payroll for these uniformed personnel in 2003 was $27.1 billion for the active army, $22 billion each for the navy and the air force, and $8.6 billion for the marines. Today, the federal government can tap into and listen to all citizens’ phone calls, faxes, and e-mail transmissions if it chooses to. It has begun to incarcerate native-born and naturalized citizens as well as immigrants and travelers in military prisons without bringing charges against them. The president alone decides who is an ‘illegal belligerent,’ a term the Bush administration introduced, and there is no appeal from his decision. Much of the defense budget and all intelligence agency budgets are secret. These are all signs of militarism and of the creation of the national security state.” (Johnson, 2004, pp. 78-79)

The military has become the single largest purchaser of goods and services in the U.S. It is also the world’s single largest consumer of petroleum. Almost every imaginable company, and most of the major mainstream media corporations, either has defense contracts, or is owned by a major defense contractor (see Turse, 2008). As anthropologist Catherine Lutz (2009a) described, the American nation-state is one marked by permanent war. Permanent war began in 1947 with the passage of the National Security Act, and the creation of what is effectively a second, shadow state organization that includes the National Security Organization (NSA), the National Security Council (NSC), and the Cen-
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to which we can now add several more. The head of this second state, as Lutz puts it, is an imperial President with ever-expanding powers. The U.S. has the largest military budget in recorded history, regardless of the end of the Cold War. This goes beyond published figures, as there is also a “black budget” whose funds are kept secret even from Congress. The Pentagon’s black budget reached $32 billion a year under Bush and “billions more in black funds go to the CIA and NSA, whose budgets are completely classified, disguised as seemingly unrelated line items in the budgets of other government departments, which sometimes even Congress does not realize” (Lutz, 2009a, p. 368). In 2009, $1.2 trillion was spent on military matters, including the off-budget costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, debt payments for past wars, and allocations for veteran care. In terms of global reach, the U.S. now has over 190,000 troops and 115,000 civilian employees in 909 military facilities in 46 countries and territories, with bases located on 795,000 acres of land owned or rented by the U.S., housing over 26,000 buildings and structures, figures that obviously do not include secret and other unacknowledged installations (Lutz, 2009a, p. 368). The U.S. military rents or owns 28 million acres in total (43,750 square miles). The U.S. military has become the single biggest employer in the U.S., paying the wages of 2.3 million soldiers and 700,000 civilians, with even the largest private corporations dwarfed by comparison. This in a country where politicians and public commentators shriek at any hint of “socialism,” yet remain largely mute in the face of such massive state expenditures and social regimentation. Having remodeled itself, as Lutz says, after neoliberal business restructuring, the U.S. military now has as many temporary employees as permanent ones: 1.4 million are permanent employees in the regular branches of the military, with another 0.9 million in the Reserves and National Guard. Millions more Americans receive paycheques through defense contracting. Taking all of this into account, Lutz shows that military labour constitutes 5 per cent of the total U.S. workforce (Lutz, 2009a, p. 369). One quarter of scientists and technicians in the U.S. work on military contracts. Now, work that was once done within the military is now contracted out to private firms. To this we can add the fact that the Pentagon has “perhaps the single largest public relations apparatus on earth—spending $4.7 billion on P.R. in 2009 alone and employing 27,000 people, a staff nearly as large as the 30,000-person State Department” (Taibbi, 2010, ¶ 7), and substantial influence in Hollywood (Forte, 2010; Robb, 2004; Stahl, 2010).

Where Lutz points to the U.S. military’s consumption of natural resources, we might return to Magdoff who tells us of the interests of the U.S. Defense Department in securing access to strategic raw materials. He informs us that it “operates with a list of strategic and critical raw materials as a guide to the stockpiling program,” materials that are “critical to the war potential” (especially because they are used for the production of armaments) and where...
difficulties can be anticipated” (Magdoff, 2003, pp. 54-55). For more than half of the items that the Pentagon needs, “80 to 100 percent of the supply…depends on imports” (Magdoff, 2003, p. 55). In addition, “For 52 out of the 62 materials, at least 40% have to be supplied from abroad” (Magdoff, 2003, p. 55). Moreover, “three quarters of the imported materials in the stockpile program come from the underdeveloped areas” (Magdoff, 2003, p. 55). As a board reporting to the President stated in the 1950s, “The loss of any of these materials, through aggression, would be the equivalent of a grave military set-back” (Magdoff, 2003, p. 55). When it comes to the production of the jet engine, six critical materials are needed (Tungsten, Chromium, Nickel, Columbium, Molybdenum, and Cobalt)—and except for Molybdenum, the U.S. is dependent on imports for an adequate supply of all of these items, and totally dependent on imports in the cases of columbium, chromium, and cobalt (Magdoff, 2003, p. 56).

We can also relate the militarization found under the new imperialism to the neoliberalism that has reshaped economies and reformulated the power of the state. Hobsbawm identifies one of the current transformations of the sovereign state given the ascendancy and global spread of “the prevailing theology of the free market,” as being the privatization of seemingly everything: “states are actually abandoning many of their most traditional direct activities—postal services, police, prisons, even important parts of their armed forces—to profit-making private contractors. It has been estimated that 100,000 or more such armed ‘private contractors’ are at present active in Iraq” (2008, p. 43). One of the dominant features of current military interventions by the U.S. is that of war corporatism. This is tied by Hobsbawm into another contemporary feature of politics in the U.S., and that is the unwillingness of the population to serve on war fronts: “I very much doubt whether any state today—not the United States, Russia, or China—could engage in major wars with conscript armies ready to fight and die ‘for their country’ to the bitter end” (2008, p. 44)—despite the profusion of patriotic jingoism in the U.S., few are actually willing to foot the personal, bloody cost of war. In the imperial state fear of the public is paramount (see Chomsky, 2003, p. 39), and thus we see the vigorous fortification of the national security state: “The extraordinary rise of technological and other means of keeping the citizens under surveillance at all times” (Hobsbawm, 2008, p. 45). Another important feature is the decline in warfare between states (Hobsbawm, 2008, p. 48). Moreover, we also witness with reference to, “noninterference in one another’s’ internal affairs, and…a sharp distinction between war and peace,” that “neither are any longer valid today” (Hobsbawm, 2008, p. 51). What is not a crucial dimension, contra Johnson above, is an emphasis on military superiority.

In this volume, Cameron Fenton, Corey Anhorn, Ricky Curotte, and Mark Shapiro consider militarism and militarization from diverse angles. Fenton fo-
cuses on cultural militarism, and the militarization of public discourse stemming from the “support the troops” slogan, which has gained strength in Canada, with obvious American inspiration. Interestingly, some of the critical questioning of the glorification of the Canadian military is offered by Anhorn as well, the seminar’s only serving member of the Canadian Forces. Anhorn’s chapter offers a very provocative, sometimes shocking look at the militarization of the Boy Scouts, the role of the JROTC in schools, the Pentagon’s relationship with Hollywood, and military counter-blogging. Both Fenton and Anhorn speak to the rise of “the new military normal.” This can be witnessed in Canada through governments’ endorsing more aggressive forms of foreign intervention; the lower role of Canada in international peacekeeping; the scandal involving Canada’s Afghan detainees who were transferred into Afghan hands, reportedly knowing they could or would be tortured (with such a transfer being a crime under international law), and the Harper government’s bullying of the senior diplomat behind the disclosures. Also of concern was the rise to prominence of a brash military commander, such as now retired General Rick Hillier, former chief of staff for the Canadian Forces, who once stated: “we’re not the public service of Canada, we’re not just another department. We are the Canadian Forces, and our job is to be able to kill people” (Leblanc, 2005). This flies in the face of most Canadians’ support for peacekeeping, not counterinsurgency missions.

Cameron Fenton argues that “to be pro-troop but anti-war is hypocrisy.” His reason for this daring argument is that “armies are the physical force extension of state power, and in a nation such as Canada, where the values of democracy are trumpeted, that should make the military a tool of the people.” This also means, he says, “that as long as these soldiers march with the flags of our nations stitched to their sleeves, we are culpable for their actions.” Fenton also argues that “soldiers of all levels need to be held accountable for their actions, regardless of the number of stripes on their arms, or if their uniform is a Tory blue suit, because from order givers to order takers, to the tax payers who fund the destruction, we are all responsible for what our governments and militaries do in our name.” Cameron Fenton, an anthropologist, was also the seminar’s only journalist.

Corey Anhorn, writing as an anthropologist and a member of the Canadian Forces, begins by suggesting, quite reasonably, that “as the militarization of culture and society becomes increasingly more apparent both in Canada and the U.S., the need for an honest discussion of the potential ramifications of...militarization is needed more than ever.” In his discussion he examines the Boy Scouts, the JROTC, and the fact that “nearly every major military film recorded in the U.S. over the past 40 years has either been asked to change portions of their content to show the U.S. military in a better light or has agreed to in exchange for the benefits it entails in production.” This is a phenomenon
now known as militainment. Anhorn is not necessarily enchanted with the ways in which young children are taught to glorify the military, and to some extent his discursive angle is an auto-biographic one.

Ricky Curotte’s extensive chapter produces another view of militarization, this time the militarization of foreign policy, aid, and development. He does so by looking specifically at the stated reason for being of the new U.S. Army Africa Command (AFRICOM). As Curotte argues, “the desire of the U.S. to establish a permanent AFRICOM signals the growing strategic, political and economic importance of Africa in the post-Cold War world.”

The militarization of academia, and anthropology in particular, became the concern of three seminar participants at one point, and the only chapter here on this topic is that by Mark Shapiro, dealing with the U.S. Army’s Human Terrain System. Shapiro’s terse chapter “addresses two fundamental ethical questions pertaining to Human Terrain Teams: whether team members practice anthropology in accordance with the Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association and whether the Human Terrain System contributes to a devaluation of the professional integrity of all anthropologists.”

**Humanitarianism, Human Rights, and the Responsibility to Protect**

During the course of the seminar several discussions revolved around what has been varyingly labeled as “military humanism,” “humanitarian imperialism,” “humanitarian interventionism,” and the new international doctrine of the “responsibility to protect.” Chapters in this volume by Elizabeth Vezina, Thomas Prince, Justin De Genova, and Nageen Siddiqui, each weigh the value and place of human rights discourse in the new imperialism that has taken shape since the end of the Cold War, and especially during this so-called “war on terror.” The chapters are very much related to those discussed and listed under the Occupation heading in this volume, with those in the latter group separated out mostly because they chose to focus squarely on current interventions that, to some extent, have leaned on humanitarian discourse as sources of justification.

In this section the authors examine the role of non-government organizations (NGOs), multilateral financial institutions, the UN, NATO, and the U.S. military as central among the key actors in drawing “humanitarianism” to an interventionist point. Vezina focuses on the NATO intervention in Kosovo, which although ostensibly committed to protecting the civilians of Kosovo, it was carried under a relentless wave of aerial bombardment that severely deteriorated the humanitarian situation for everyone concerned on the ground. Vezina notes that “U.S. officials admitted that the goal of demolishing civilian targets (‘Phase Three’ in military terms) was to make life miserable for the people and
to put pressure on Milošević to surrender.” Chomsky (1999, ¶ 2) aptly described this humanism applied by military means: “the bombing had been cast as a matter of cosmic significance, a test of a New Humanism, in which the ‘enlightened states’ (Foreign Affairs) open a new era of human history guided by ‘a new internationalism where the brutal repression of whole ethnic groups will no longer be tolerated’ (Tony Blair). The enlightened states are the United States and its British associate, perhaps also others who enlist in their crusades for justice.” In this vein, two appendixes appear in this volume to add to Vezina’s chapter: speeches by Bill Clinton and Tony Blair on their humanitarian interventionism in the former Yugoslavia (see Appendix C and D). The very sad irony, as described both by Chomsky and Vezina, is that the NATO air war perpetrated a humanitarian catastrophe far greater than that which Milošević has been accused of causing, leading to the first refugees to flee Kosovo, to an escalation in ethnic fighting, and Serb and Albanian casualties that far exceeded anything suffered by Kosovo Albanians before the NATO campaign (Chomsky, 1999, ¶ 7).

An even greater irony that gave the lie to NATO intentions was the fact that within NATO itself one of its own members, Turkey, and with millions of dollars in military aid from the U.S., was simultaneously conducting a war against the Kurds in dimensions far greater, and far bloodier, than anything we saw in Kosovo. And yet it largely passed without mention.

The “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P) also comes in for close examination. In his chapter, Thomas Prince is not dismissive of R2P; he instead wants it to live up to the best of its promises, to eschew the politicized selectivity that has been the norm when “humanitarian” principles have been invoked for military interventions, and to re-adopt the broader understanding of human rights enshrined in UN declarations, which include social and economic rights. He gives fair play to both advocates and critics of R2P, while raising numerous critical and important questions of R2P. Prince’s approach can best be summed up by looking at one of his concluding statements: “While supporters say that ambiguity is not a reason to do nothing, it should neither be a reason to race in, or ignore the creation of protocols and guidelines. Whatever guidelines and protocols are devised they need to be applied equally, so that allies of the U.S. and other powerful states are subject to the same requirements and obligations as those nations who pursue more independent politics.” The chapter by Justin De Genova is very wary of any proclamations of humanitarian intent on the part of interventionist, imperial powers. As he stated at the outset: “This chapter looks at the U.S. as a primary example of how a Western nation can disregard the harm it causes within the international community when it intervenes in another sovereign state’s affairs, using the excuse of humanitarian issues to further its worldwide influence.”

Perhaps the most painful counterpoint to declared principles of humanitarian protection comes in the chapter on torture by Nageen Siddiqui. She pro-
vides us with a condensed review and analysis of the role of torture in U.S. foreign policy in the so-called “war on terror,” in a very sobering account to the “other side” of humanitarian interventionism. Those who profess it are often the same as those who defend the need for the “lesser evil.”

Occupation

Canada’s role in the war in Afghanistan occupies the centre of attention of two chapters, by Kate Roland and Rosalia Stillitano. Haiti is the focus of the chapter by Katelyn Spidle, placed in this section given the extent to which Haiti has become an international protectorate, and was also subject to occupation by the Canadian military as part of the coup against Jean Bertrand Aristide in 2004.

Canada’s involvement in the occupation of Afghanistan has been a source of very serious political challenges to the way Canadians prefer to see themselves in an international context. At first, the public rhetoric was that of victorious war: Prime Minister Jean Chretien, in an address to the nation in October of 2001, declared: “I cannot promise that the campaign against terrorism will be painless, but I can promise that it will be won” (Chretien, 2001). In the summer of 2005 the Canadian government decided to transfer its military operations to Kandahar, still one of the most violent regions of Afghanistan, if not the most violent. However, “this was presented to Canadians as a simple re-positioning of the troops in that country” (Coulon & Liégeois, 2010, p. 43), with little indication that the role of Canada would be counterinsurgency, not peacekeeping. As others have also noted, “no official, civilian or military, used the word war to describe what was going on in southern Afghanistan” (Gross & Lang, 2007, p. 185). In their briefing notes, National Defence described the mission “as a more robust peace support role” (Gross & Lang, 2007, p. 186). Then later, in 2007, the Canadian Strategic Counsel advised the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper “to present the military intervention in Afghanistan in a manner that placed it within the Canadian peacekeeping tradition. It suggested avoiding ‘negative’ expressions and using more positive words such as ‘peacekeeping,’ ‘reconstruction,’ ‘stability,’ and helping ‘women and children.’ In short, they advised speaking of peace and not of war” (Coulon & Liégeois, 2010, p. 46).

The Canadian government presented the mission as the realization of its 3D strategy (defence, diplomacy and development—now often called the “whole of government” approach designed to aid “failed states”). The Minister of National Defence, Bill Graham, insisted that “in order to be efficient in robust peacekeeping operations today, it is obvious that our troops must at once be warriors, diplomats and humanitarian workers” (Coulon & Liégeois, 2010, p. 43; see also Phillips, 2008, ¶ 6). As Coulon and Liégeois argue reasonably, “considering Canada’s particular history on the international scene and its relation-
ship with the UN, when Canadians listen to the Prime Minister or view the Army’s slide presentation, they are led to believe that there are Blue Helmets with the UN in Afghanistan and that they are fighting terrorism” (2010, p. 44). They also note that “even the leaders of the UN and NATO contradict each other. When one of the authors of this study asked some of these leaders if the mission in Afghanistan was a peacekeeping operation, he received both positive and negative answers” (Coulon & Liégeois, 2010, p. 44).

We find similar equivocation among Canada’s other NATO partners. For example, in France, the day after the death of ten French soldiers near Kabul in August 2008,

“the Minister of Defence launched into acrobatic semantics trying to explain the French role in Afghanistan. He refused to use words such as ‘war’ or ‘counterinsurgency’ and insisted on saying that France is involved in a peace mission in that country. This induced a scathing reply from an eminent deputy in his own party, Pierre Lellouche, who is also a French specialist in military affairs. When asked what he thought of the emotions evoked by the death of ten soldiers, he replied: ‘The reproach we can make of the French political and military authorities is that they have not clarified the presence of our country in Afghanistan. Contrary to the claims of the Minister of Defence, Hervé Morin, this is a war and not a policing operation’.” (Coulon & Liégeois, 2010, p. 44).

Officially in Germany, until quite recently there was no acknowledgment of what was happening in Afghanistan as being in fact a war (see for an example: Spörl, 2010), and the same has also been true in the case of Italy.

With all of the mixed signals that have been deliberately sent by governments to the public, it is not surprising to see some confusion in public opinion. For example, a poll in March 2006 reported that,

“there appears to be some confusion about the primary mandate of the mission: most people think it is about peacekeeping which is a traditional role for the Canadian armed forces. Equally important, the Canadian public is almost equally divided about whether the Canadian forces should have an active combat role. Canadians have yet to be conditioned about the new active combat role that Canadian troops are being asked to undertake. This simply underscores the tremendous ambivalence Canadians have about the Afghanistan mission and the potential for this issue to become a major ‘hot button’ for the Harper government as opinions are clearly in the ‘early stages’ of being formed, but may shift with time and as events unfold.” (Strategic Counsel, 2006, p. 4)

The report found that “about 70% believe that the main purpose of the Canadian troops in Afghanistan is related more to peacekeeping than combat” (Strategic Counsel, 2006, p. 9). Had Canadians understood that the troops’ mission was to be active combat, a clear majority, 62 per cent, said they would have opposed sending troops to Afghanistan (Strategic Counsel, 2006, p. 8). Indeed, just as the report repeatedly notes that policy makers should expect volatility in public opinion, as the public would become better informed and more aware of
the actual Canadian mission in Afghanistan, almost all polls for several years have shown a consistent majority of Canadians opposed to the war.

Roland focuses considerably on the contradiction between a popularly imagined “Brand Canada,” a Canada of peacekeepers and non-aggressors, and the actuality of our war in Afghanistan. She examines what Canadians seem to know about the use of the military in Canadian foreign policy, and specifically how it applies to Afghanistan, by looking at: Canada’s power structure and foreign policy with respect to the Canadian military mission in Afghanistan; what Canadians have been told about the Afghanistan mission and what their reactions are in light of what they have been told; and, she examines one example of “off-brand,” seemingly “un-Canadian” military behavior to examine these dynamics. In the final analysis, Roland calls for greater attempts to seek consensus in a divided parliament ruled by a minority government (a situation that has persisted for several years and is likely to continue), inviting all stakeholders into crafting an appropriate Canadian military and foreign policy, return to peacekeeping, and better informing the Canadian public.

Stillitano makes some similar points, arguing that the problem with Canadian involvement in Afghanistan is not a problem with the military as such, but rather “the problem lies more in what the Canadian government is using the military for, which is primarily counterinsurgency warfare through the militarization of humanitarian aid. The problem is that the Canadian army is becoming Americanized; we are slowly but surely losing our identity as neutral peacekeepers.” Stillitano also casts an unusually critical glance at nation-building—unusual because it is often equated by critics with a strategy that would sink NATO into a never-ending quagmire. Instead, Stillitano sees it differently, saying that “nation-building is not about the interest of Afghans as it should be: it is an exit strategy.” By this we might assume that she means a superficial nation-building that hastily puts in place the semblance of a centralized nation-state, regardless of whether or not that state is actually integrated into the lives of Afghans and, more importantly, whether or not that state is beneficent one that is supported as legitimate by most Afghans. One may doubt, however, whether Stillitano has reason to worry: there is no sign from the U.S. or NATO, at this point, that they are running for the exits.

In Haiti, the only persons running for the exits have been Haitians themselves, while thousands of foreign NGOs have effectively colonized the once independent republic, thanks in part to Canadian military intervention in 2004 that helped to unseat the democratically elected government of Jean Bertrand Aristide. In this volume, Spidle focuses in particular on the NGO-U.S. occupation connection:

“The U.S. has, in past decades, maintained its stronghold over Haiti by either indirectly occupying the country through its funding of NGOs, or directly occupying the country through military invasion. The NGOs operating in Haiti do not improve the social,
political or economic situation in the country; rather, they create and perpetuate a dependency on foreign aid for its basic services, jobs, and food. In light of the earthquake, military intervention, justified as humanitarianism, has only strengthened that dependency: first, by hindering the activities of NGOs and thus rendering them less effective, and second, by undermining the Haitian government’s ability to react or respond to the disaster. The U.S. government has essentially overthrown the Haitian government by installing a military force in the country which has assumed nearly all of its government functions; it dictates the activities of NGOs, controls the airport and ports, and patrols to maintain stability and order.”

Far from nation-building, Western intervention in Haiti has been more along the lines of establishing a permanent international protectorate, an aid-dependent basket case whose policies are being dictated and written by foreign “donors.” We can see this in more global terms, and as counterintuitive as it may seem, we can critique this situation by using the explanation of someone who advocates in favour of intervention and state-building: Francis Fukuyama. Fukuyama was an official in the administration of President Ronald Reagan, and later became active in the Project for the New American Century, the leading think tank associated with “neoconservatism.” He also actively advocated in favour of the invasion of Iraq. This is not an anti-war critic, an anti-imperialist, or someone who rejects American exceptionalism—which makes his commentary even more interesting. In State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century he remarks that the “humanitarian interventions of the 1990s led to an extension of a de facto imperial power over the ‘failed state’ part of the world” (p. 97). He writes of the United Nations Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR) that,

“the OHR used its power to dismiss presidents, prime ministers, judges, mayors, and other elected officials. It could pass legislation and create new institutions without reference to the preferences of the Bosnian people. Much of the administrative capacity of the Bosnian government lay in the hands of international experts rather than indigenous civil servants, to the point that some observers compared it to the British Raj.” (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 103)

Writing on the situation in East Timor, he reiterates: “This international imperium may be a well-meaning one based on human rights and democracy, but it was an imperium nonetheless and set a precedent for the surrender of sovereignty to governance by international agencies” (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 98). This imperial effort has been dubbed by the U.S. as “nation-building” (which, more correctly, as Fukuyama himself notes, should be called state-building). In particular, Fukuyama notes that the practice of state-building has largely failed to achieve its aims, anywhere: “Neither the United States nor the international community has made much headway in creating self-sustaining states in any of the countries it has set out to rebuild” (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 103). He notes further that,
“the rhetoric of the international community stresses ‘capacity-building’ while the reality has been rather a kind of ‘capacity sucking out’. The international community, including the vast numbers of NGOs that are an intimate part of it, comes so richly endowed and full of capabilities that it tends to crowd out rather than complement the extremely weak state capacities of the targeted countries.” (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 103)

In a cold statement of pragmatism, another of the leading “new imperialist” intellectuals, Michael Ignatieff, argues: “humanitarian relief cannot be kept distinct from imperial projects, not least because humanitarian action is only possible, in many instances, if imperial armies have first cleared the ground and made it safe for humanitarians to act” (2003c, pp. 16-17).

From a perspective critical of the new imperialists, Matthew Connelly explains that “the essence of empire, is not military force, but the exercise of untrammeled power” (2006, p. 32). He follows with a very striking statement: “And imperialists have long understood that an entrance exam or a vaccination program are less costly and more compelling instruments of influence, especially when infused with an appealing idea—like *mission civilisatrice* or *médecins sans frontières*” (Connelly, 2006, p. 32). Here Connelly also takes aim at international and nongovernmental organizations whose power is most obvious in so-called “failed states,” but whose power is significantly magnified when those organizations work in concert with local governments, producing power that is “as great as any empire” (Connelly, 2006, p. 32).

**Soft Power**

“Arms have often established empires, but it takes more than arms to maintain them.”
(Hobsbawm, 2008, p. 53)

The “soft power” concept appeared to have attracted serious attention from a number of the seminar participants, who were critical and yet sympathetic for the most part, similar to what we see in this volume dealing with R2P.

Zoe Dominiak in particular offers a detailed and sympathetic overview of the concept, relying extensively on the writings of Joseph Nye. Dominiak’s perspective appears to be optimistic about the efficacy of soft power, while reinforcing the claim that “information is power.” Miles Smart, on the other hand, was impressed with neither the concept nor the means associated with soft power:

“The strategic positioning of the U.S. on the international stage has always employed a certain amount of soft power to attract sympathies and alliances. However, the true strength and source of U.S. power globally was and is achieved through military and economic might, both applied and implied.”
Miles Smart’s treatment of soft power as strategy is particularly critical about the jarring contrast between U.S. self-representation abroad versus its actual conduct. As Smart says, “the attractiveness of U.S. democracy and liberty is severely limited as a resource for soft power when the U.S. operates counter to its own ideals.” In anthropological terms, Smart sees the concept of “soft power” as closest to what anthropologists understand as hegemony: “hard power can achieve and even maintain dominance, but legitimacy is the ultimate goal. Legitimacy allows the powerful to maintain their position without force but rather through acceptance and localized support.” Soft power thus seeks rule with the consensus of the ruled, premised on the hope that the ruled will internalize the ideas of dominant elites.

Lesley Foster’s chapter differs somewhat, in that it is not intended as an explicit treatment of the concept of soft power, as much as it is a critical exploration of the corporate, non-state ways that American power and hegemony have been implanted and enforced internationally. Foster looks at the workings of the military-industrial complex, with a focus on the corporate industrial side, and specifically the workings of Coca-Cola in Colombia. She frames this within an analysis of “security-led investments” where private corporations acquire a military arm in order to better penetrate a market and subjugate workers. Foster raises an exceptional point concerning the other wars currently being fought, not by states but by corporations. As she explains: “Coca-Cola’s actions take on a different form of hard and soft power in regards to the normalized, dominant idea of violence and war and, in doing so deflects the regular public attention that the traditional ideas and forms of violence and war might receive. Corporate war does not carry the same urgent implications that other forms of war carry, such as the current ‘war on terror’, primarily because it does not represent a stated threat to the “free world” but “actually works in conjunction with it, protecting the neoliberal entitlement to own and conquer.” Foster counts the growth and spread of private military contractors, of mercenary groups, as part of the global spread of American militarism, and locates it as a direct by product of neoliberalism. In addition, Foster ties post-9/11 terrorism hysteria to the strengthening of “counter-terrorism” by the Colombian state, and private foreign investors, in quashing workers’ rights and social justice activism.

The final product of this first seminar, we think readers will agree, is a large and critical survey of contemporary imperialism, in historical and global context, attentive to local situations and the role of images, ideas, and ideologies. We hope that such efforts, multiple, varied, and cumulative, will help to bring about a radical shift in our awareness and understanding of the world in which we live, and in which we produce knowledge as both anthropologists and sociologists. On the role and duty of scholars in confronting empire Connelly writes:
“As scholars, we must work harder to illuminate the complex interconnections and
complicities between them, and bring those findings to the broadest possible public.
And it is that very complexity that commands us to speak and write clearly and with all
the specificity and evidence we can muster. If we do not, then the American [and
Canadian] academy, that most sovereign of institutions, will have to admit that it has
become nothing more and nothing less than a finishing school for new imperialists.”
(2006, p. 33)

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