A Pact With The Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise

Roundtable Review

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7 November 2007
Tufts University political scientist Tony Smith is, like many liberal academics, angry over the war in Iraq and the Bush Doctrine that seeks to democratize the Middle East. In fact, he appears to have experienced something of an ideological epiphany as revealed in his new book, *Pact With the Devil*.1

The religious overtones of this statement are not an exaggeration. They are not only contained in the title of the book, but in the very first paragraph of his introduction, following a quotation from the bible, Smith expresses concern about facing St. Peter given his previous support and praise of democracy promotion by the United States as evidenced in his 1994 book *America’s Mission* (p. ix.)2 In the earlier work, Smith had offered the assessment that the spread of democracy since WWI had largely depended on U.S. power. He believes this no longer. Indeed, he refers to such proactive democratic value projection as a form of mental illness, as a “pathology” of American liberal democratic thought.3 In making his new counter-argument, Smith abandons the nuances of *America’s Mission* and utilizes a tone and temper that the late, great French historian Francois Furet called “the dear-sightedness and relentless determination of all who have changed sides.”4 There is

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no longer middle ground or mixed results here. It used to be America the Good. Now it is America the Demented.

Smith is not the only analyst who has recently “changed sides” on this question. In 1981, Samuel P. Huntington argued that there was a “significant correlation” between American power and the spread of liberty and democracy.\textsuperscript{5} Huntington more recently has apparently become far more skeptical of such a notion. Mark Peceny, an American political scientist, has written convincingly in the past that the American record of democratization, including through military invasion, was better than generally acknowledged in much of the literature on the subject.\textsuperscript{6} He, too, now sings a different song.\textsuperscript{7} Other analysts, such as American political scientist Robert G. Kaufman and this reviewer, continue to maintain the original, generally positive assessment of the American role in the world, and the necessity and plausibility of the promotion of democratic capitalism as one important aspect of United States foreign policy in the long run.\textsuperscript{8} I do not see this as betraying America’s promise, as does Smith, but as keeping it.

Ideologically, this group is all over the lot. Huntington and Kaufman, although on opposite ends of the spectrum on this particular issue, are generally considered conservatives. Peceny’s philosophical viewpoint is difficult to discern from his writings. I am a JFK/Lieberman independent, until the mid-1990s a lifelong Democrat. (I have never been a Republican.) Interestingly, in \textit{Pact With the Devil} Smith continues to identify himself as a progressive liberal internationalist. Although mentioned occasionally, Realism is not his mode of analysis in condemning proactive democratic value projection, as it is with so many critics of the Bush Doctrine, though he adopts many of the Realists’ criticisms of the policy. This book is a \textit{cri de coeur} from the moderate left in the American political context, and from a sophisticated analyst who used to see the world very differently. He expends much effort in excoriating his fellow liberals as harshly as many attack the dreaded neoconservatives. As I shall argue below, I believe he does so erroneously and unfairly in places. But, given Smith’s past writings and political positions, this book is far more interesting than a typical Bush-bash. Although I find it fundamentally wrong-headed, it is a book that people of all political and ideological persuasions would profit from reading.


\textsuperscript{6} \textit{Democracy at the Point of Bayonets} (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).


Smith’s treatment of the liberal triumphalism following the Cold War is often on target. Given the vast changes that followed the collapse of the Soviet Empire, the 1990s seemed like an exciting time for the spread of democracy. This “Third Wave” of global democratization began with the collapse of the Portuguese empire in 1974. In 1983, American political scientist Michael Doyle wrote two seminal articles that gave impetus to the “democratic peace” theory, which Smith takes strong issue with, which holds that democracies are unlikely to fight one another. With the collapse of the USSR, the argument was furthered by Francis Fukuyama’s famous “End of History?” thesis and was accompanied by the development of real world economic globalization and increased talk of an international order made up of market democracies.

In discussing these developments and how they evolved into an alleged “pathology,” Smith’s list of villains is long: John Lewis Gaddis, John Rawls, Thomas Friedman, Bruce Russett, Larry Diamond, Larry Berman, Andrew Moravcsik, and John O’Neal, among others, come in for particular scorn. Indeed, Smith himself would have to be included in that cohort, hence his mea culpa at the start of the book. When discussing liberals he disagrees with he adopts a kind of legalistic tone, speaking of “The Case of Thomas Friedman,” “The Case of Larry Diamond,” etc. that is downright accusatory. In addition, he decries the harsh rhetoric and name-calling of some supporters of the Iraq War, but ends up calling some of them “liberal fundamentalist jihadists” (Chapter 7.) Tone isn’t everything, but it does matter, and the overwrought tone of this book detracted from his polemic in my view.

The novelty of Smith’s argument is that, in contrast to many other critiques of the Bush Doctrine that blame the neocons for the whole thing, Smith blames liberal internationalists equally for enabling the neocons and also for supporting the war in Iraq. Smith seems to join with the Realists in arguing that the war in Iraq discredits all of this intellectual and analytical work on democracy promotion and development. But he is inconsistent on this: he still defends his support for sending troops to Kosovo, stating the difference with Iraq and the Middle East is one of the “magnitude” of the quest (p. xi.) So not all democracy promotion is pathological, just those that fail, are judged too ambitious and of which Smith disapproves. Indeed, despite calling liberal internationalism a “pact with the devil” and a “pathology” in its current form, Smith also declares that liberal internationalism remains a “noble idea” that has been “tainted” by the Bush administration (p. xvii.) He displays similar ambivalence about Bush’s motives, sometimes portraying them as naive in their simplistic adoption of democracy promotion and sometimes as deeply self-interested to demonstrate leadership or a simple “power grab” to get control over oil.

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His primary evidence for this last claim is that many in the Muslim countries see oil as the real reason for the war. Actually the more common response given is that the U.S. is attacking Muslims to keep them weak. This reasoning is applied to both the Afghanistan (a country that does not have oil) and Iraq wars.\textsuperscript{11} For example, after being captured for the 2002 Bali, Indonesia bombing, one of the bombers said the attack, the planning and execution of which preceded Iraq by months, was aimed at Americans and their “associates” in order to “defend the people of Afghanistan from America.”\textsuperscript{12} But large majorities in many Muslim countries also have strongly negative views against the entire West, not just the U.S., and see Westerners as selfish, arrogant, and violent.\textsuperscript{13} Yet as of June 2005, over two years after the war in Iraq began, 52% of the people living in predominantly Islamic countries had a favorable view of the United States, despite strong disapproval of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In all of the countries of Asia, not just the Muslim countries, but where most of the world’s Muslims live, that figure stood at 74%. In the Middle East, it was 48% favorable and 49% unfavorable.\textsuperscript{14} These figures may have changed with the Lebanese War of 2006, but it is not at all clear that long term damage has been done, especially if the outcome in Iraq is generally positive.

But the Muslim world lives in a state of appalling ignorance, aided and abetted in many cases by their illiberal regimes, but even in those Muslim democracies with a relatively free press such as Indonesia and Turkey. When the Pew Foundation asked the question in 2006 in Muslim countries: “Do you believe that groups of Arabs carried out the attacks against the United States on Sept. 11, 2001?” this is how they reported the results:

By wide margins, Muslims living in Muslim countries say they do not believe this to be the case. The least skeptical Muslim nation is Jordan; even there, a majority (53%) says they do not believe Arabs carried out the attacks. The most skeptical nation is Indonesia, where 65% say they do not believe it and just 16% say they do, with the remaining 20% expressing no opinion.

In Turkey, nearly as many (59%) say they do not believe that groups of Arabs carried out the Sept. 11 attacks, while 16% say they did. In 2002, a much bigger share of the Turkish public - 46% - said they believed that Arabs were responsible for Sept. 11, according to a Gallup survey. Roughly four-in-ten Pakistanis (41%) say they do not believe groups of

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., at: \url{http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?PageID=60}. (Accessed 9/27/07)
\end{enumerate}
Arabs carried out the 9/11 attacks, compared with 5% who think they did; 44% of Pakistanis declined to respond.

The Muslim minorities of France, Germany, and Spain are fairly evenly divided over whether Arabs did, or did not, carry out the Sept.11 attacks, while opinion among British Muslims is similar to views in predominantly Muslim countries. By 56%-17%, British Muslims do not believe Arabs were responsible for the 9/11 attacks.15

It is small wonder that there is a widespread belief in Muslim countries more generally that 9/11 was an “inside job” carried out by the CIA and the Israelis as an excuse to attack Muslims worldwide. (It should be noted that there are a good number of vocal Americans who share this appalling ignorance.) How can one reason with people in such denial? How can we not expect them to see virtually anything we do as a plot to destroy them? Should we have done nothing about Afghanistan after 9/11?

Although my evidence is impressionistic and anecdotal, I find Smith’s “the liberals are to blame” thesis unpersuasive. Virtually all of the people I have come into contact with or seen express their opinion on television or in print who would self-identify as academic liberals or “progressives” were strongly against the Iraq war. And some liberal theorists such as Bruce Russett, who is attacked by Smith for enabling intervention by his work on the “democratic peace” theory, have come out strongly against the war, or even unilateral intervention to spread democracy, instead calling for international organizations to take the lead.16 The Bush Doctrine can follow from a “democratic peace” argument, but it doesn’t necessarily do so. Professor Russet and other “democratic peace” theorists haven’t necessarily made a pact with anyone, never mind the devil. Smith’s attempt to debunk the “democratic peace” arguments is derivative and pedestrian; there is nothing new here.

The strength of his earlier work, America’s Mission, was that it put ideas and ideology back into the mix of factors that shape international behavior. Given the triumph of structural neorealism in the 1980s, which downplayed the role of ideology, or even of humans, this represented a needed corrective in the international relations literature. The rise of the popularity of social constructivism in the international relations literature, which portrayed a world far more malleable through human agency than structuralism, created a theoretical backdrop for this development. This was partly because of the remarkable spread of market democracy into areas long thought to be immune to its tenets in Latin America and Asia (though not in Africa and the Middle East for the most part) that led to an assumption among some that the emerging phenomenon could become universal. As Smith himself notes: “Freedom House certified 41 countries out or 150 in the world as

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16 Bruce Russett, “Bushwhacking the Democratic Peace,” International Studies Perspectives, Vol. 6 (2005), pp. 395-408. I would like to thank my colleague Fred Chernoff for bringing this article to my attention.
democratic in 1974; by 2002 that number had reached 121 out of 193, a rise from 27 percent to 63 percent” (p. 129.) Clearly something new was happening. The realist and neo-Marxist cultural relativism of the 1960s and 1970s appeared to be inadequate to explain the emerging world order. (How and why Marxists became cultural relativists is an intriguing question. My own view is that, like their support of nationalism, it was a short term tactic.)

In addition, historians started interpreting the Cold War in new ways with the release of information from the former communist countries and China. It now appeared that the Cold War had not only been a struggle for power, although it was that, but it had also been a struggle between socio-economic and political systems and the ideologies that sustained them.17 Such authors were careful to avoid an ideational determinism such as dominated some early traditional histories of the Cold War, but materialist determinism no longer held sway as it had earlier.

This intellectual ferment was accompanied by international governmental action promoting market democracies at a perhaps unprecedented level. But Smith portrays this development as a mostly if not exclusively American “pathology.” In fact, it was a global phenomenon supported by many older and new liberal states. It cannot, therefore, be seen as an American “pathology” alone.

For example, Smith barely discusses efforts by other liberal and even semi-liberal nations to foster liberalized governance and market economies, which have also had mixed yet real results. The European Union has been active in both Africa and Asia in this regard, especially since the end of the Cold War, and sent troops to the former Yugoslavia to promote democracy and stop the bloodshed.18 NATO has troops in Afghanistan, a prime source of Muslim anger. Although they have not intervened elsewhere militarily, the European policies are based on the assumption of the universality of liberal values. France has unilaterally intervened militarily in Africa several times since 1990, without a peep


from the UN, and often to maintain a given government. Is France “pathological” too? Was
the primarily Australian military intervention in East Timor in 1999, though under UN
auspices (and which could not have been undertaken without U.S. logistical support),
“pathological”? It certainly got radical Islamists angry: one of the 2002 Bali bombers
mentioned East Timor as one reason for the bombing attack in that resort area when
appearing in court.

This question of Muslim views of the West is part of a larger debate over whether Muslims
hate the U.S. because of our policies or our principles. Smith strongly sides with the former
position. But a systematic examination of the public statements and other evidence of the
Islamist radicals’ viewpoint demonstrates that they hate us for both our policies and
principles, as they see them as directly interrelated.\textsuperscript{19} They hate and fear our values as
much as our power. It is curious that Smith – correctly in my view – takes ideas in the U.S.
so seriously, but oddly has so little to say about the ideas of our adversaries.

International organizations have also been heavily involved in democracy promotion. As
William Robinson noted in 1996:

\begin{quote}
Inter-governmental organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization of
American States, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the
European Economic Community established “democracy units” whose functions
ranged from local assistance for elections to mechanisms for coordinated
international diplomatic pressures against states that threatened to relapse from
polyarchic to authoritarian governments. The multilateral lending agencies,
including the IMF and the World Bank, have proposed making multilateral aid,
bilateral aid, and access to international financial markets in general conditional
upon a polyarchic system in the recipient country.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

More recently, Ibrahim Zaid, the Malaysian head of the Inter-parliamentary caucus of the
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), was quoted as saying about the unrest in
Myanmar (formerly Burma):

\begin{quote}
Mr Ibrahim said ASEAN member countries used to said [sic] let Myanmar sort its
own problems by themselves.

He said: “Now they have,[sic] you cannot just stand by. You cannot just wait for
another massacre, another round of killings, and then we start talking about
diplomacy again. This is 20 years overdue.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19} Macdonald, The New Totalitarians, pp. 45-47. See also, John C. Zimmerman, “Roots of Conflict: The
Islamist Critique of Western Values,” The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies, Vol. 30, Nr. 4
(Winter 2005), pp. 425-458. For an excellent brief overview of Islamist ideology, see Mary Habeck, Knowing
the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

“I think ASEAN must do something immediately, fly in ministers to talk things over, bring in all the attention of the world community to this problem.”

Thousands protested in the streets of Manila, Jakarta, Taibei, and Kuala Lumpur to demand liberalization of the Myanmar regime. To lay all this complementary political activity - at bilateral, multilateral, and international institutional levels - at the feet of American liberal “pathology” and disrespect for sovereignty is simply untenable. Are we discussing a zeitgeist or a “pathological” delusion? Smith follows Fukuyama’s change of heart and comes out strongly against “voluntarism.” But it has taken a lot of voluntarism at many levels to nurture the movements toward democracy on a global scale. Regardless how one feels about the war in Iraq, it should not be used as an excuse to undermine ongoing voluntarist efforts in other realms. One can attack the means being used and still support the ends and alternative means. Indeed, unlike the Realist view, I believe that is Smith’s position. But that would entail putting the Iraq War in perspective, something he does not do in this book.

Moreover, as Amartya Sen has noted democracy is not as quintessentially Western as Smith and others like to believe:

The Western world does not have any proprietary right over democratic ideas, and so the frequently aired debate on whether or not to “impose” democracy on the non-Western world is itself partly a reflection of Western arrogance.

In his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela describes how influenced he was, as a young boy, by seeing the democratic nature of the proceedings of the local meetings that were held in his African home town:

“Everyone who wanted to speak did so. It was democracy in its purest form. There may have been a hierarchy of importance among the speakers, but everyone was heard, chief and subject, warrior and medicine man, shopkeeper and farmer, landowner and laborer.”

Mandela’s quest for democracy and freedom did not emerge from any Western “imposition.” The integration of the importance of democracy in the human development approach is a reassertion of the relevance of different elements of human history.

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We are often told that liberalism has no philosophical basis in the non-Western world. Liberalism had reasonably wide appeal in the non-Western world in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and therefore has historical roots in those areas that are sometimes overlooked. Often borrowed from Western concepts, the ideas were adapted to local conditions and cultural sensitivities, but should be considered liberal nonetheless. In the Middle East, where we are often told there is no liberal tradition, Albert Hourani tells us of:

...[An] Islamic ‘reformism’ which was formulated by Muhammad ‘Abduh and Rashid Rida: Islamic because it stood for a re-assertion of the unique and perfect truth of Islam, but reformist in that it aimed at reviving what it conceived to be certain neglected elements in the Islamic tradition. [Emphases added.] But this revival took place under the stimulus of European liberal thought, and led to a gradual reinterpretation of Islamic concepts so as to make them equivalent to the guiding principles of European thought of the time: Ibn Khaldun’s ‘umran gradually turned into Guizot’s ‘civilization’, the maslaha of the Maliki jurists and Ibn Taymiyya into the ‘utility’ of John Stuart Mill, the ijima` of Islamic jurisprudence into the ‘public opinion’ of democratic theory, and ‘those who bind and loose’ into members of parliament.24

One should remember that much of this theorizing took place under the Ottomans, not the Western imperialists. It was often identified with nationalism, as in Egypt, but was also “liberal in the sense that it thought the welfare of society to be constituted by that of individuals, and the duty of government to be the protection of freedom, above all the freedom of the individual to fulfil [sic] himself and so to create true civilization.”25 This form of liberalism was in competition with other forms of thought, and did not win out. Similar intellectual and political movements took place in China and Japan.26 Few remember today that John Dewey and Bertrand Russell, among many others, were invited by Chinese liberals to teach in China in the 1920s. The global history of liberalism has yet to be written.


25 Ibid., p. 344.

What went wrong? This is a complicated question, but generally the rampant imperialism of the late 19th century convinced many non-Western liberals that the beautiful ideas of the liberal world view were just words. Thus Ghandi’s wry comment when asked what he thought about Western Civilization: “I think it would be a good idea.” China tried to fend off the imperialists. Japan decided to stop emulating Western ideas and start emulating their behavior instead. As Japanese liberal-turned-antiliberal Fukuzawa Yukichi put it:

> We cannot wait for our neighbor countries to become so civilized that all may combine together to make Asia progress. We must rather break out of the formation and behave in the same way as the civilized countries of the West are doing.... We would do better to treat China and Korea in the same way as do the western nations.27

That is pretty much what they did. We know what happened. After World War II, Japan was induced to adopt a liberal system and the contrast in its behavior could not be more stark.

So much of the failure of liberalism in the non-Western world was not because the ideas were not attractive, or had no philosophical basis, or were inherently at odds with old and venerable cultures, but because Western behavior was at such odds with those ideas when they acted in the non-Western world. It was not because there was too much liberalism displayed, but because there was too little. Though Smith dwells on anger over certain of America’s policies like Iraq (and, as noted, Afghanistan is just as resented in Muslim countries, in Indonesia for example) and support of Israel, he underplays the anger directed at the United States for the containment policy that the invasion replaced, which also cost many, many lives. Or the resentment over U.S. and Western backing of “unrepresentative” governments in the region throughout the Cold War. That anger has grown, but it did not begin with Iraq. And it is an anger that can be directed at both intervention and non-intervention.

It just may be that liberalism is getting a second chance in the era of globalization. Despite its many discontents, the globalization era is showing uneven but real progress in most major areas of development. I have noted earlier Smith’s citation of the dramatic increase in the number of democracies in the world and the efforts of liberal nations, including the U.S., and international organizations to hasten that development. Because of these efforts, global trends in armed conflicts, the number of displaced persons and refugees, and economic prosperity are all in a positive direction.28 A recent Pew Foundation report shows a growing contentment in much of the developing world that is directly tied to its growing prosperity, especially in Latin America and Asia. Though it started from a low

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28 See the report of the Center for Systemic Peace of George Mason University, “Global Conflict trends,” (2006), at: [http://members.aol.com/cspgm%20/conflict.htm](http://members.aol.com/cspgm%20/conflict.htm). (Accessed 8/24/07)
base, that contentment could be a clear sign that the globalized economy is changing attitudes in parts of the Third World that seemed hopeless a generation ago when state socialism was in vogue. As the political theorist Uday Singh Mehta has written, “...the world we live in [today] is substantially molded by the triumph of a liberalism with its rationalistic certainties. Moreover, that liberalism remains the dominant framework from within which we imagine modifications on this world.”

(It should be note that Mehta, who is a political scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, is what I would term a Burkean anti-imperialist.)

Lastly, Smith makes some dubious historical and policy judgments without adequate evidence or even argumentation. He repeats the argument that he made in America’s Mission that American interventions in Central America and the Caribbean in the 1910s and 1920s only led to the rise of tyrants such as the Trujillo and Somoza families (p. 64). But Samuel Huntington has shown that the rise of those dictators – and Batista in Cuba - correlates with the anti-interventionist policies of FDR, not the interventions of the earlier period. As he puts it, the non-intervention of the 1930s was a time of the Good Neighbor and the Bad Tyrant.

Smith labels Iraq "a conflict that has benefited no one involved in it" (p. xxxviii.) Iraq is a tough situation, and has been bungled from the beginning, but surely the Kurds would disagree with this statement, and the “swamp Arabs,” and perhaps some of those who were destined for the wood chippers. When calculating the costs of the Iraq War one must factor in the reasonably estimated costs of containment and letting Saddam stay in power also. That might add some perspective.

Smith also does not seem to recognize that there were changes in attitudes towards democracy promotion within administrations as well as among them. He lauds Ronald Reagan’s consistent promotion of democracy, but one of the first things Reagan did as president, on his first day in office, was to tell the South Koreans that he would not pressure them for reforms as had Jimmy Carter. It was only after the successful removal of his old friend Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines in 1986 that Reagan consistently moved to foster democracy, and did so successfully. Eisenhower only became a reformer after about 1958. Kennedy started off a reformer but backed off with the spate of military coups in Latin America (but he did not back off in Vietnam, South Korea, or Iran.) American presidents have attempted to reform the world when they think they can do so quickly and easily, and become constrained when they find out they cannot. Constraint does not work very well either, and domestic and international pressures tend to lead to new periods of reformism over time.


30 Huntington, American Politics, p. 251.

Smith makes the same mistake with the Bush administration. He dates the president’s reformism from his inauguration, (p. 6) and even before. I have seen no persuasive evidence, and Smith presents none, that Bush, Cheney, or any other major figure in the administration was pushing a generalized democratic reform program prior to 9/11. In fact, there was much talk against nation-building and an unsuccessful attempt to withdraw from Kosovo over the objections of the Europeans. The ideas that were utilized to shape what became the Bush Doctrine may have been floating around, but they became policy only after 9/11 not when George W. Bush took office. Smith’s speculation about Bush wanting to demonstrate “leadership” by democracy promotion from the beginning of his administration does not hold up to scrutiny. It is also useful to note that the president has put his call for universal liberalism in the time frame of generations.

Other scholars have seen more general continuities in the promotion of democracy between the Clinton and Bush administrations than Smith does; 32 Clinton used force in Kosovo, Haiti, and Somalia; Bush in Afghanistan and Iraq. There is a large difference in scope and magnitude of the interventions, to be sure, but they were all in part attempts to spread democracy through the use of force nonetheless.

Smith sees liberalism having gone through various stages until it culminated in its current imperial “pathology.” But liberalism has always had this impulse inherent in its fundamental ideational structure, which is loaded with Enlightenment universals. In his excellent treatment of liberal British thought and the British Empire, Uday Singh Mehta explains the nature of liberal thought:

Liberal theoretical claims typically tend to be transhistorical, transcultural, and most certainly transracial. The declared and ostensible referent of liberal principles is quite literally a constituency with no delimiting boundary: that of all humankind. The political rights that it articulates and defends, the institutions such as laws, representation, contract all have their justification in a characterization of human beings that eschews names, social status, ethnic background, gender, and race.

In the mere fact of its universality, liberalism is not unique. Indeed, the quest for universal principles and cognate institutions attends political philosophy from its Greek inception. But whereas Plato grounds universal claims in a transcendent ontology, liberal universalism stems from almost the opposite, what one might call a philosophical anthropology. What I mean by this is that the universal claims can be

made because they derive from certain characteristics that are common to all human beings.33

These universals cannot be easily overlooked if one considers oneself a liberal. There can be no human rights without accepting that they eventually will apply everywhere. They are, says Mehta, “broad epistemological and normative commitments” to liberals.34 This does not lead inexorably to imperialism, though it has at times done so in the past. As Mehta puts it, “... I do not claim that liberalism must be imperialistic, only that the urge is internal to it.”35

Liberals would do well to pay heed to Smith’s warnings about going too far, too fast, and beware of the imperial temptation. But he overplays his intellectual hand here, in effect throwing out the baby, the bathwater, and the tub, while denying that he is doing so. My reading of history is that since World War II, when the liberal countries, led by the United States, are proactive in the promotion of liberal values things get better for the world incrementally, in fits and starts and steps in all directions, but consistently. International organizations become invigorated and more active. When they are apathetic, demoralized and reactive, things get considerably worse and many people die or are placed in misery. There are costs to liberal inaction also, an issue Smith barely touches upon, and they can be huge. The work of R.J. Rummell suggests that by a six-to-one ratio more people are killed by their own governments than by interstate wars.36 Modern liberal states are the best means for preventing this disgraceful bloodshed, though by no means perfect. Democracy promotion and globalization of the world’s economies should continue, with added patience and humility and by means short of war if at all possible. Genocides as in the Sudan should be stopped by military action if necessary. If not, we will remain two, three, or four worlds in terms of socio-economic reality and fundamental liberty. Many, many will suffer and die needlessly. And I wonder what St. Peter will say about that.

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33 Mehta, Liberalism and Empire, pp. 51-52.

34 Ibid., p. 25.
