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I've come here this afternoon to talk of Americas wake.

It seems a useful conceit for my luncheon remarks to this brave assembly gathering in Miami rather than in New Orleans all because Katrina left New Orleans devastated in her wake. And, I marvel at CIEE for choosing a second city on the proven path of hurricanes to discuss the value of experiential learning.

We should never again doubt that CIEE lives its mission of having experiences beyond one's national borders [in this case, Miami!] in order to broaden knowledge and skills.

Meeting here on the shores of Biscayne Bay, we might also send our gratitude to Wilma for the timing of her visit to Miami-Dade County. Had Wilma blown through a bit later in this remarkable storm season, the turbulence of her passing would still be visible to those of us gathered here – if indeed we had the power by which to see. As it is, not far from the air conditioned comfort of this hotel, there are people still living buildings without electricity or roofs or windows. Their lives have been up-ended by the hard reality of a storm blowing out of the west.

For many in the world, America too seems like a powerful storm blowing out of the west. She is uncontrollable, unpredictable and potentially destructive of the certain and the known. She can not be tamed by the rule of law, the opinions of mankind or moral standards. She can careen into any place of her choosing blowing the lid off the status quo, destroying the existing order and unleashing powerful landscape changing forces she cannot or will not control.

This is the image of the United States carried by the anti-globalization and anti-war movements among others on the intellectual left. We hear it often on American campuses both in and out of the classroom.

I would not have served for 26 years in representation of the United States abroad if I believed the image were a true reflection of reality. Yet, I might acknowledge faint recognition of some level of truth in the caricature were I to stand in someone else's shoes.

This negative image of America is captured in the science fiction of Neal Stephenson who creates a different metaphor of America's wake. He writes:

*Well, the function of the raft is to bring in more biomass to renew America. Most countries are static; all they need to do is keep having babies. But America's like this big old clanking, smoking machine that just lumbers across the landscape scooping up and eating everything in sight. Leaves a trail of garbage a mile wide. Always needs more fuel....Those people down there give up their children willingly. Send them into the labyrinth by the millions to be eaten up. The industry feeds on them and spits back images, sends out movies and TV programs...images of wealth and exotic things beyond their wildest dreams, back to those people, and it gives them something to dream about, something to aspire to. And that is the function of the raft. It is just a big old krill carrier.*

America as leviathan is a dreadful and overblown image best suited to the realm of science fiction where a wake is more often the residue effect caused by faster than light travel rather than a "big, old, clanking smoking machine." Key to Stephenson's image, a characterization I do not share, is both the economic predation and seduction of the American democratic model.

British political theorist John Dunn calls this siren song of American democracy the "order of egoism." It is about individual opportunity and choice and, as Dunn writes, it "arose from and endorsed a society both self-consciously and actually in rapid motion, expanding in territory, growing in wealth and looking forward to a future of permanent and all but limitless change." The vibrant economy it produces and the wealth it generates preclude equality by any measure other than opportunity.

Critics of the result and the lavish use of resources consumed by the American model are, at their core, motivated by passion for social and economic justice. It is concern for the many over the few, concern for community over the individual that feeds into this image of America as bad actor.

On the other side of the rhetorical debate is a passion for liberty. From this perspective, America is freedom itself. Her founding values are the universal embodiment of human rights – and so she need not learn from or be judged by others. Unchained and unbound, she is exceptional and insists that her exceptionalism be recognized. This America is the power of right and reason which blow the winds of liberty around the globe to convince all men, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, that they "were born not to be ruled but to rule themselves in freedom."

In remarks to the Women's Foreign Policy Group meeting in Washington just last week (Nov.4, 2005), Karen P. Hughes, the new Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs articulated this messianic freedom agenda:

*... America must continue to serve as a beacon of hope in the world, as that city on a hill. There is no more powerful instrument of American diplomacy than our commitment to freedom, rights and opportunities for all people everywhere. We're committed to expanding freedom not because we seek carbon copies of our own democracy, but because we believe it is our common birthright, and because we welcome new members to the community of nations who protect the rights of free speech and assembly, the right to worship freely, the rule of law, and individual opportunity.*

Ambassador Hughes is certainly not the first post cold-war American official to extol American virtue. After all it was Secretary Madeleine Albright, in the Clinton administration who coined the term "indispensable nation" to describe the "sole remaining super power."

When I hear phrases like these I am reminded of Walter Lippmann writing on Public Opinion in 1922. While serving as an Army officer in WW I, Lippmann helped write President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. That time of war was also a time of idealism when according to President Wilson, "America had the infinite privilege of fulfilling her destiny and saving the world."

Mugged by the reality of WWI and disillusioned by his own idealism, Lippmann reflected on the effect that "publicity agents" have on political speech. He wrote of the ensuing rhetoric, "as you go up in the balloon, you throw more and more concrete objects over board, and when you have reached the top with some phrase like *rights of humanity* or *the world made safe for democracy*, you may see far and wide but you see very little."

Because we have been breathing in our own rhetorical fumes from the right and the left for quite a few years now, we have been flying blind to our domestic and global realities. Rather than mapping the world as it is, we project the pictures in our heads on top of the world outside.

As you know, the academy often contributes to this ungrounding by ignoring geography and favoring deconstruction. Focusing on ideascapes rather than human geography, we do not prepare our students to deal with a future of major global population shifts and massive environmental change.

We do not arm them with the pins they need as good citizens to puncture the balloons launched by the ideological right and left that float above the hard problems confronting our polity and distract us from the civic discussion we should have about the lives we live in common.

Thanks to the publication of a new book by Harry G. Frankfurt, Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Princeton University, we academics can now freely use the word "*bullshit*" to capture the reality-free spirit of the present age. To quote Professor Frankfurt, "It is just this lack of connection to a concern with truth—this indifference to how things really are—that I regard as the essence of bullshit."

As a Floridian, I remind you that we lunch today in one of the Florida counties known in the 2000 elections as the land of the infamous hanging chads. We should take no pride in the fact that our presidential election that year was decided by the Supreme Court rather than the voters. We may have chosen to overlook the deviation from our constitutional process and move on, but viewed from abroad the light of American democracy had dimmed.

We should also not celebrate the fact, reported on the front page of the New York Times on Sunday that computer technology has made redistricting so easy to engineer that our state and national legislative bodies have become incumbent fortresses. In the last three congressional elections, the incumbent re-election rate has hovered from 96 to 98 percent and it is expected to increase next year.

Manipulated in this fashion, elections have become a system of privilege that bares scant relationship to the democratic political ideal of being governed by those that a majority can eventually dismiss. We have developed such a distaste for politics in the United States that more energy is spent trying to rig the system than to debating the public questions before our community.

It is good then that Ambassador Hughes assures us that the administration does not seek to create "carbon copies of our own democracy" abroad.

By using lofty phrases about expanding freedom abroad in speaking to the Women's Foreign Policy Group, Ambassador Hughes seemed to me to convey the true intentions of the Bush administration. I understood her statement as an accurate reflection of what Reinhold Niebuhr once called, "the deep layer of messianic consciousness in the mind of America."

What Ambassador Hughes says about American freedom and the role America has played in the world is substantively true. The United States may

take some credit for contributing to a 21<sup>st</sup> century world heavily populated by other modern democratic states within which interests are negotiated, values are debated and political identities are formed and contested in elections.

Today however, in this free world that Americans struggled to create, we do not demonstrate a willingness to engage others in serious discussion – at home or abroad – of the ideas and policies America chooses to advance. We carry our domestic distaste for politics into the world and try to rig the system to favor us – the incumbent great power.

The Bush administration's approach to the world was characterized recently by *Foreign Affairs* managing editor Gideon Rose as "one more failed idealistic attempt to escape the difficult trade-offs and unpleasant compromises that international politics inevitably demand--even from the strongest power since Rome."

As we were reminded most cruelly by the atrocious slaughter on 9/11, different interests and values are often irreconcilable and must be dealt with by equally intense opposition and force.

There will be conflict.

Rather than seeing this conflict as political failure, Michael Walzer insists in his new book *Politics and Passion* that "opposition and conflict, disagreement and struggle where the stakes are high" *is* politics.

The United States has an enormous global agenda. To achieve any portion of it Americans will need the co-operation of others. A good place to begin is the recognition that there are *others* and they may value things differently. These others have lives of their own. They find meaning in their lives in a multitude of ways that are not destined to disappear. In that regard, a more practical cultural diplomacy would be to ameliorate the conflicts of cultures that will always be different, rather than aim to found a universal civilization.

Prof. Frankfurt writes that "*indifference to the way things are*" is an inevitable byproduct of public life in this media age, "where people are frequently impelled—whether by their own propensities or by the demands of others—to speak extensively about matters of which they are to some degree ignorant."

Still, ignorance is dangerous. As Francis Fukuyama wrote last year, "failure to appreciate America's own current legitimacy deficit hurts both the realist

part of our agenda, by diminishing our actual power, and the idealist portion of it, by undercutting our appeal as the embodiment of certain ideas and values.”

The more we highlight American virtue, the greater the target offered to those whose identity is formed by being “not-American.” This negative identity and the political power that flows from it require an inflated image of the United States to shove away from. As a matter of effective global communication strategy the United States should not contribute by singing its own praises. This self-referential focus works against American credibility in an age of globalization.

Much like the alternating weather periods in which hurricanes are few or frequent, we Americans seem to cycle through ideological and practical periods in our history. Historian Richard Hofstadter once wrote, “The most prominent and pervasive failing [of American political culture] is a certain prouess to fits of moral crusading that would be fatal if they were not sooner or later tempered with a measure of apathy and common sense.”

Let’s hope that common sense, rather than apathy, lies just around the corner because repairing the damage to our democracy at home and our legitimacy abroad is likely to take years. It will require the revival of good old American pragmatism, purpose aligned with means, and political skill. It will require honesty and a vision of a more democratic America engaging the world with mutual respect. It will require many more young Americans taking part in our public affairs.

In that regard, I miss the inspiring presence of Senator Paul Simon more and more. I know all of you do too and are thinking of him as you read and discuss the *Global Competence and National Needs Report* issued just this week by the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program. There could be no better tribute to him than having his vision of one million American students studying abroad each year come to life.

Senator Simon honored me once by presenting me with the Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange Award for Outstanding Service. I would like to honor him in return by insisting that all of us in this room have a significant role to play in arming our young Americans with the will and the critical tools they need to bring our domestic politics back down to earth and debate back into the public square.

Abraham Lincoln would have wanted no less of fellow citizens in this time when, as the new report reminds us he once said:

*The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. Our case is new so we must think anew and act anew.*

In a much earlier time we are told that Pericles once spoke to the Athenians of their democracy:

*For we alone regard the man who takes no part in public affairs not as one who minds his own business, but as good for nothing; and we Athenians decide public questions for ourselves or at least endeavor to arrive at a sound understanding of them, in the belief that it is not debate which is a hindrance to action, but rather not to be instructed by debate before the time comes for action.*

As was made clear on 9/11 to anyone who wasn't paying attention earlier, the public questions that Americans in this century will have to decide are not bounded by American borders. And, like the Athenians of the classical age, Americans will not get to decide them alone.

Walter Lippmann argued as early as 1922 that, "the world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. It has to be explored, reported, and imagined. It must be mapped."

By organizing study abroad experiences for young Americans you help them create the trustworthy mental maps they must have of the world outside our heads but not, in this global age, outside our American reach.

You help them escape the echo chamber by developing skills of language, listening, and observation. Understanding what other societies – with their own history and politics – value helps us better see our own. Seeing how other societies decide public questions illuminates how well we do the job in our democracy.

The experiential and service learning aspects of study abroad that we focus on at this year's conference can be particularly good at making sure that our students do not end up stranded on American islands of learning abroad.

In that regard, I very much like the story Kwame Anthony Appiah tells in his book *The Ethics of Identity* of his Ghanaian father's advice to his cosmopolitan but not uprooted family: "... when my father told us we were citizens of the world, he went on to tell us that we should work, for that reason, for the good of the places where – whether for the moment or for a lifetime – we had pitched our tents.

It is this vision of Americans as *rooted cosmopolitans* that inspires me. You do not want to send students abroad simply to improve their individual life chances or to escape America in some cosmopolitan bubble: you want them go abroad to find America. And, you want them to come home into our public life to contribute to a sound understanding of the issues before us in our community and in the community of nations.

Your work makes it possible for America to wake-up from the fantasy of abolishing politics and raise its civic voice again.

Thank-you.

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