The Anglosphere Challenge: Why the English-Speaking Nations Will Lead the Way in the Twenty-First Century

with

James C. Bennett
President, Anglosphere Institute

John O’Sullivan
Editor, National Interest

Gerard Baker
Columnist, Times of London

and moderated by

Kenneth Weinstein
Vice President and COO, Hudson Institute

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Suite 300
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DR. KENNETH WEINSTEIN: Well, good morning, and welcome to Hudson Institute on this snowy morning. I’m Ken Weinstein. I’m Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Hudson.

We’re delighted to be able to host this book forum for adjunct fellow James Bennett’s rather thoughtful and provocative new volume, *The Anglosphere Challenge: Why the English Speaking Nations Will Lead the Way in the 21st Century*.

And this book, as I think many of you know here, makes a rather interesting claim and one that’s certainly going to generate a lot of controversy: essentially, that despite predictions of the demise of America in the English-speaking world as the world’s dominant culture that, in fact, in coming years the difference between the English-speaking world and the rest of the world is likely to grow even larger because of certain traits inherent to the Anglophone nation. And, in particular, strong and independent civil societies, openness and receptivity to the world, dynamic economies, have positioned—according to Jim Bennett—the Anglosphere nations in a rather strong position as the 21st century begins.

And so we’re going to have Jim speak to us for about 20 minutes first on the book, and then we’ll turn to our two rather distinguished commentators, Gerald Baker, who’s a columnist for the *Times of London*, and John O’Sullivan, the editor of the *National Interest*, and former advisor to Prime Minister Thatcher.

So let’s first hear from Jim, who is the President of the Anglosphere Institute, a non-profit organization that seeks to further the concepts of the Anglosphere and the Network Commonwealth. He’s the founding director of the non-profit Foresight Institute, which deals with education and research on nanotechnology and the related Institute for Molecular Manufacturing.

He’s a former columnist for the United Press International. He’s someone who I guess in the tradition of the learned men of early modern Europe seems to have a wide variety of interests in science, technology and politics, and he writes regularly on these subjects with some insight. And we’re delighted that he’s an adjunct with Hudson and that his new book is just out. Jim?

MR. JAMES BENNETT: Thanks, Ken. Well, first of all, I want to thank everybody for braving the elements and the typical snow emergency, which is to say there is snow; therefore, there’s an emergency—in coming here today. It has cut down the attendance over what was originally expected, but we are going to have to make up with quality what we lack in quantity today. And I know already most of the people in the room have either corresponded with me or published themselves reviews and other discussions of the book; and I know that we’re in the fortunate position that a great many people in the room already know quite a bit about what has been said and why it’s said, so I think that we can have a particularly good conversation in the course of doing this, and I look forward, of course, to Gerry and John’s contributions as well.
So jumping in to it, there are a number of different facets and angles to what I said in the *Anglosphere Challenge*, and to some extent it makes a difficult book to discuss in the sense of where to start and what are the key elements to it.

But it was one of these problems that over the past probably about 10 years of experience and research, I had been noticing a lot of things happening in parallel in different places and times and seeking to understand these things and to generate some kind of theoretical base that tied them all together and made sense of it and that would give us a useful predictive tool for the future required stepping back a couple steps, looking back, quite far back in history, and attempting to project well out into the future. So you end up with a fairly big intellectual complex to try to deal with these things.

And, in actual fact, if you tried to merely take one particular aspect of it, or one little chunk, and focus on that, it wouldn’t make much sense because the other supporting, underlying elements of it wouldn’t be there, and you would just generate this large list of unresolved questions. And you would say, well, we can’t really think usefully about this because X, Y, Z have to be addressed as well.

So I ended up with a book which was attempting to say at least something about each of those chunks or pieces of the problem, and also draw an overview over it.

So it made for an interesting intellectual challenge. And, of course, the editorial process then required that I cut back quite a bit on the explanation of each part, and it left me with something which I hoped was still accurate enough for professionals who knew quite a bit about any of the one topics discussed would still feel that it made sense, yet the whole thing not being so technical or so abstract and obtuse that it was inaccessible to the average intelligent reader, for whom I was attempting to write.

But let me try to make a brief summary of the three elements that I think are the most important facets of it, underpinning the theoretical message it puts out.

One of which is that the technological environment in which we are living right now is an important factor, and, although I’m not a technological determinist, it just has to be the case that the rapid advance of technology and the social consequences of it are changing things quite fast. It is going to result in a somewhat different alignment of the social and political forces in the coming years. And we can’t make sense out of where we’re at now or where we’re going and what’s happening to us without trying to make some of the assumptions and conclusions about the technological environment and its effects.

I’ve been writing about this in various forms for about 10 years. One of the things, for instance, which I talk a lot about, is electronic media and disintermediation. Now this has been predicted by people like Theodore Holme Nelson as early as the early 1970s. Quite a few different people have brought it up here or there, but it was mostly people who were kind of classified as computer theorists. And many of these people didn’t have much social or political backgrounds so they couldn’t really take it very far.
Yet, this is what we’re seeing. We’re coming into an area in which the transaction costs of producing and presenting information to, you know, the broad masses, to the very wide number of people have dropped incredibly dramatically, and the rise of the bloggers, for instance, the rise of Internet media are all part and parcel of this process. And, you know, in my opinion, this process has only just begun. It has a long way to go, and the effects of it for the most part have not yet been felt.

We’re starting to see it, with things like the demise of Dan Rather and the unsuccessful attempt to present the case about President Bush’s national guard duty last fall, which, you know, is a thing that would have succeeded had it been done four or certainly eight years previously; certainly if he had been done 10 or 15 years ago, people wouldn’t have even questioned it.

And, of course, the things that we’ve seen most recently with Eason and CNN going are just—these are just straws in the wind. These are indications of the fact that we’re getting into a much different universe, and this has already having political consequences. And the Anglosphere aspect of this is one consequence that people haven’t thought about very much. And I will get back to that in a minute.

But in general, I believe that we’re in a period of rapid technologically driven sociological change. It’s going to change economic structure to some extent. It’s going to change political structures to some extent, and it may end up being a transitional era for that purpose. And we can’t really understand the Anglosphere, why it’s emerging. Why we’re in a different situation than we were 30 years ago unless we look at that a little more deeply.

The other aspect of this is that as I argue in the book, I believe that the particular structures of the English speaking world, particularly the use of common law rather than Roman civil law, certain attitudes about enterprise, regulation, the role of the state in people’s lives, which are still, by and large, a common thread of the Anglosphere, and quite different from the assumptions in continental Europe.

They’ve always had an effect, but in a period of rapid technological change in which entrepreneurship and fluidity of labor and capital markets are key to handling these transitions, the advantage of the Anglosphere is much greater than it was, say, in the period from 1945 through 1975.

In that era, although new technologies were being introduced, they were being introduced in a relatively controlled and plannable manner. The continental European nations were recovering from a period of, you know, financial and economic and infrastructure disaster from the war period.

Therefore, the relatively planned, relatively state directed and state financed economies that you had in France and Germany, which were still market economies, were able to perform those tasks very well. They were essentially catch-up or follower type tasks. In other words, everybody knew what kind of steel mills needed to be built. Everybody knew what kind of auto factories needed to be built. Everybody knew what needed to be done in terms of reconstructing the cities and building houses.
And, in fact, in actual fact, the French and German states and other continental European states, aided I might add with large amounts of Marshall Plan money, were able to make very rapid progress. You saw this big rise in the GDP in those economies for quite some time; whereas, if you looked at what was happening to the U.K. at time, although they were also experiencing an expansion of prosperity and a rise in GDP, it was not as dramatic as the continents.

So a lot of people began to think well this is the norm, you know, they bought into the Carelli-Barnett ideas of sociological causes of the British stagnation; that this was a more or less permanent thing, and there was all this stuff written about graceful decline and adapting to a non-productive economy, and this in the U.K. Whereas, the European model was looked at quite seriously.

And, in fact, if you look at the position of the early ‘70s, a lot of the Anglosphere economies have kind of worked their way into regulatory dead ends and we’re relatively stagnant.

But during the decade of the ‘70s and especially the ‘80s, technological innovation began to change in its pace and nature. And there was a good deal more innovation. There was a switch to much more entrepreneurially driven change in the technological and the financial areas, and there was also a wave of deregulatory economics in the U.S. and particularly the U.K. and the U.S., and which basically because of the longstanding traditions of those countries, the still remaining values of initiative, entreprenurism, the common law system and all these, once a layer of bureaucratic obstacle had been stripped away, progress was extremely rapid thereafter.

At the same time, the same features that had allowed the French and the Germans to make good progress—the Italians, et cetera—after World War II had begun a downward spiral of public choice problems, i.e., it was always easier to take a little bit more of the prosperity that had been generated by these economic machines and buy off the unions, buy off various classes of people, and create more and more obligations.

And this social structure began to be a real economic drag into the ‘80s, into the ‘90s, just at the time when the English speaking world was privatizing, deregulating.

In the U.K., you already had the beginnings of pension privatization, and although they made some implementational mistakes there, the overall trend of that was to relieve the pending pension crisis at the same time that the continents were increasing their pension crises by piling benefit upon benefit and promise on promise at the same time they were going into the demographic decline, which basically meant they were writing checks that future generations were going to have difficulty paying.

You know, some people look at the relative forces right now, and they say well, these are, you know, short-term structural things and that a little bit of reform in continental Europe, and, you know, we need a stronger European Commission to force more market reforms on these, you know, stagnant national systems I think is a fundamentally wrong-headed assessment.
I think that the demographic and structural traps that the continentals have painted themselves into have very long-term roots having to do with the kind of societies they inherited and the kind of attitudes towards the states, which go back centuries.

You know, you’re going back to Cobert and Necker in France, and even beyond that to this whole wave of centralization you started to see in the 16th century. These mechanisms were never really dismantled. They were just kind of put in abeyance for a little while and adapted a bit to market conditions.

They’re back. They’re back with a vengeance, and they’re very, very hard to get rid of. Whereas, in the English speaking world, it actually was relatively easy to trim back some of the public choice problems. Now we’re watching the administration about to tackle pension privatization in the U.S., and, of course, there’s a lot of heat. But I—you know, the chances of it happening here are much better than the chances of it happening in most of the continental economies.

Interestingly, the Netherlands, which has historically had a much less centralized, much more robust civil society, much more mercantile attitude is the only continental state with any degree of private pensions. And, you know, there have been some market reforms there and in Scandinavia which have been surprisingly successful, which gets me to another point, which is that you can’t understand the Anglosphere message as one of some kind of inherent exceptionalism. There’s nothing inherent about being English speaking person or living in an English speaking society that makes you better or more productive, et cetera, than people elsewhere.

You see other strong civil societies, typically the ones in Europe, who are the margin of the big continental systems who are protected by some feature of nature. The Dutch were protected by, you know, the bogs. The Scandinavians were protected by, you know, geography and climate, and to some extent they were able to develop stronger, less state dominated civil societies until they got into sort of the welfarism in the late 19th early 20th century. But they have many marks of a stronger civil society there.

And, as a result, even though there are a lot of regulations, you also see a lot of creativity and productivity in those societies.

The Finnish example of innovation in mobile phones, for instance, in electronics is very interesting; and it may be related to the fact that Finland never had a centralized telephone company in their history because the Russian state was so backward in Finland, the telephone service was introduced by basically rural cooperative organizations, and there was something like 40 different rural cooperative telephone organizations, so you had actually competition in supply in Finland. And after independence, they never nationalized it into a single phone company.

So you get these odd little survivals of civil society, even in highly regulated states, which seem to, you know, come back and deliver advantages.
So in order to understand the Anglosphere situation, you have to reject the essentialist interpretation of it. And this gets into the historical roots thing, because to some extent the way I got to the conclusions I have in the book was by looking at the modern situation and working my way backwards.

In other words, I was doing a lot of business in Latin America and the emerging economies in the late ‘90s, and I watched both the very hopeful days of the mid-‘90s and then the very sour days at the end of the ‘90s when it all turned bad.

And I saw a number of projects and got a good chance to observe well, why did they go wrong? And some of it has to do with the endemic corruption and lack of transparency in the societies. One thing that was quite eye-opening was the way that the Roman law system worked to very much aid and abet the lack of transparency and the corruption in those societies.

And I came back to the states and I started thinking well, it really seems to be the case that all of the English speaking societies are adapting better to an entrepreneurial rapid technological change era than the Roman law continental societies and some of the other more bureaucratic and centralized societies elsewhere. Why is this? And I started looking backwards in history.

Two really important intellectual landmarks. Of course, the one is the work of David Hackett Fisher, Albion Seed and his more recent work, which discusses the continuity of social structures, attitudes, and culture from the founding cultures in the British Isles to the United States and by extension—although Fisher doesn’t get into this very heavily—is also if you research it a bit is present in the other societies which stem from the British Isles.

So many of the assumptions we’ve been going on to the 20th century stemming basically from the work of Turner and the frontier thesis, American exceptionalism versus Anglosphere exceptionalism, I think there’s a very strong case to minimalize the American exceptionalism side of it and to maximize the continuity of culture throughout the Anglosphere.

But going beyond Fisher, you go back and very, very interesting work of Alan McFarland [ph] and his students and followers. And I think that this relatively unknown work is, like Fisher, an intellectual revolution which is just starting to happen.

You have—you know, Fisher published in the early ‘90s and after more than a decade, his influence is finally starting to seep into work like James Webb’s recent work on the Scots Irish and, you know, we’re starting to see it here and there, even if some people in the U.K. have started to become aware of it. But going back to McFarland’s work, and he draws on Maitland [ph], which is even more unknown and abstruse, but extremely important, he has made a very, very strong case for the deep and very old roots of Anglosphere exceptionalism, and basically his historical research indicates that the transition from peasant, the old Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft switch that the Marxist and people like Weber talk about actually never happened in Britain.
There was never a period of time in which you had the classical European peasants in England, where they, you know, had familial patrimonial owning of land, where you had the patriarch at the head of the family controlling the moves and the lives of everyone below it.

To some extent, people got a wrong idea about this because there were some vestiges of continental paternalism in the Norman aristocratic culture that got brought over, but, in fact, this never trickled down to the people below.

There is a very amusing episode in his work, the Origins of English Individualism, where he shows well, all these Marxist sociologists needed to, you know, get the data on the English peasants. They could never find it. They could never get any proof from the land records that there had been family versus individual land title, for instance.

So they basically just extrapolated what the English peasants must have been like by using Dutch and German records, and this is not quite like Bellio [ph] and his gun control work because they didn’t actually pretend to find this in the English records.

But they said, well, but it was a completely circular argument. Well, we know the English were peasants; therefore, their sociology must have been like this because this is what the Dutch and the Germans were like; and, therefore, this data proves that the English were peasants.

It was an entirely circular argument that nobody ever called them on until McFarland actually went back, and here’s a—it’s a bit of a disintermediation and technological revolution thing.

One of the sources of McFarland’s work was the fact that in the 1970s and the 1980s people in England began to put the entire land record of certain regions of England in a computerized form, which made it a readily searchable and understandable database.

And Earls Colm and—what was the other village—do you remember—two widely separated villages in different parts of England, he got extremely detailed data on—that was presented in an attractable and bindable format, and that was one of the things that led him to conclude that the English peasant was like the dog that did not bark in the night. There was no English peasant. And you had basically an individual "bourgeois" society in England as far back as records show, and more recently in his new works on the Riddle of the Modern World and the Making of the Modern World that was published in the last couple years, you began to look a little more at the Anglo-Saxon state and the new information that’s coming out about Anglo-Saxon society, and, as far as we can tell, you had individual market-based individualistic relations even in Anglo-Saxon times.

He’s also done some very interesting work on the structure of the family and showed that you had an essentially "bourgeois" family style; in other words, nuclear families, not extended families, living together, mobility of families in which people readily bought and sold land and moved within roughly four days journey from their native villages with extreme frequency, going at least back into the 13th century and probably before that, but the records don’t exist to support it beyond that.
So what you’re beginning to see is that—a couple things: that there is such a thing as Anglosphere exceptionalism; that the exceptionalism is not with the United States, but with the English speaking world as a whole; that these are quite deep roots.

The consequence of all these sociological findings is that the so-called transition to modernity, which was supposed to have happened in the 16th century, where people got ripped out of their patriarchal peasant lifestyle and flung into the modern world of market relations and alienation, blah, blah, blah, and got all upset about it never happened in England.

However, it did happen in the continent in the 18th and 19th centuries. And this leads me to the interesting question: did the continent of Europe ever make a fully complete transition to modernity or is the very quick recurrence of authoritarian, paternalistic forms of the state and forms of society most noticeably the reversion to fascism in the early 20th century a sign that you had some block of people that never did become truly modern, truly comfortable with being individuals?

And then you look at what’s going on today with this rejection of cowboy capitalism, rejection with the—of Americanism is the anti-Americanism of Europe fundamentally a product of intellectuals and a certain portion of the public, and I’m never saying it’s a majority of the public or even a huge part of the public, but if it was 25 percent of the public or 15 percent of the public that had never psychologically been truly modernized, doesn’t that have a huge effect on politics? And I don’t make a conclusion in the book about this. As a matter of fact, some of this is post-book thinking and writing on my part, but it’s true.

So given the Anglosphere exceptionalism, given the fact that Anglosphere exceptionalism seems to make us more competitive in a world charged with rapid technological change and a relative valuing of entrepreneurism, what does the future look like? What are the consequences? What does this recommend to us in terms of policy?

One thing is I believe this is heading toward the rise of what I call the Network Commonwealth. The Network Commonwealth is a political forum larger than the nation-state, but not regional or worldwide in nature. And it’s basically a response to the problem of extending the ties of civil society beyond national borders.

And what I’m seeing is that this is being done in a very piecemeal fashion where two countries or three or four countries say, hmm, cooperation in this makes sense. Let’s make some agreements between our nation-states in order to allow civil society organizations to link together across the border and act semi-transparently.

Now, for Americans, we have an extremely successful example of this right under our doorstep, which is almost always ignored, which is U.S.-Canadian trans border civil society institutions. And you see many, many civil society institutions in the United States which are "international." What it really means is U.S. and Canada. And occasionally U.S., Canada, U.K., and sometimes U.S., Canada, U.K., Australia—because these kinds of civil society institutions are far easier to tie together across borders with relatively simple ideas than it is to go to countries with substantially different legal systems, substantially different attitudes and such. This is often seen
as a linguistic argument, but I think language is only one factor in this. It’s language plus cultural factors.

So the Anglosphere idea shouldn’t be confused or conflated with the rise of English as a world language of wider communication. I think that’s actually a somewhat related but separate and not critical phenomenon.

There are societies in which, you know, people—enough people in there speak English that they can have those kind of civil society relationships with the rest of the English speaking world. That doesn’t make them Anglosphere per se. Some of the Scandinavian countries you have almost universal use of English among, you know, not only the upper classes, but, you know, the broad mass of the public.

And, you know, this does allow them to proceed economically with us to a greater degree, but because their social systems are different, the degree of integration is only ever going to go so far.

And a Network Commonwealth I would just define as the sum of the set of cooperative institutions, such as free trade area and agreements, defense alliances and joint institutions, organizations for cooperation in science and technology, for instance. And I don’t think these need to be or even it’s even desirable to fuse all of these different strands into a single cable, I mean into a single organization.

I think the Europeans have created something like this in European Union, but they’ve over optimized far beyond what is likely because, you know, they’ve gone from a model of imposing so-called harmonization, which is actually uniformity from above, and, you know, to put it in economic terms the costs of creating this uniformity usually outstrip for a long time whatever benefits you get from easier interoperability, given that there are many other mechanisms to assure interoperability than forced harmonization.

A couple months ago, I was at a dinner with a pro-European Union British MP, and he was saying, well, you need to have a single market. You Americans have had one for 225 years quite successfully, and the only way to do it is to enforce common standards from above.

And my first response is well, we don’t do that. In actual fact, the United States has never dictated mandatory nationwide standards except in very select areas.

Most of the time it’s done by voluntary coordination among states, and there are many, many states which have regulations which whose effect is to exclude certain products from local markets. And there are many little, you know, dairy producers or whatever who, in fact, don’t bother to export beyond their state borders.

And by essentially voluntary coordination, we have achieved, you know, what is effectively a single market, not only within the U.S., but between the U.S. and Canada without a North American union and forcing North American standards and harmonization.
So the Europeans are going way overboard on this. But the Network Commonwealth I think that we’re about half way to it actually happening.

If, you know, somebody will say well, look at the U.S. and Canada. You’ve got NAFTA. You’ve got NORAD. You’ve got the Saint Lawrence Seaway Commission. You have lots and lots of little bodies, many of which, you know, only specialists have ever heard of, which are, taken together, have created a single market, have created a highly integrated defense system, et cetera. Not perfectly integrated, as we see by the news today, but you don’t need perfection in order to make these things work.

One model for where we could go from here would be to start taking these civil society institutions and seeing how many of them could be extended to Australia and New Zealand, and, depending on what happens with the U.K. and the European Union, to the U.K. and Ireland. And this would be most of the coordination we would ever need in order to get the fruits of wider market areas and stronger defense cooperation.

I’m going to predict that that cooperation is not going to go away, but we’re never going to get much further. I would like to see a North Atlantic Free Trade Area, including all of Europe and North America, and hopefully Japan as well.

But I’m not sure we’re going to see it happen short of a major, major financial crisis in continental Europe, which renders them in a position where they have to start thinking the unthinkable, which is a phrase which I could use at the Hudson Institute.

In international defense relations, I think that an Anglosphere alignment—you can call it an alliance—you can call it a structure—or you can leave it unnamed—makes a huge amount of sense. I think that one of the other lessons we see here is that it’s made me more bullish on India than on China. There’s a link between strength of civil society and civil society institutions and entrepreneurship and prosperity.

If this is true at all, and it just seems to be overwhelmingly true, sooner or later India is going to overtake China in the nature and pace of its economic development, and I think shortly after it overtakes it, it’s going to far outstrip it.

I think that India—the rise of India is going to be one of the big stories of the 21st century and the relative problems of China, once they get another two or three decades down the road, is going to be another big story and one that a lot of people aren’t expecting.

All you’re—people are mesmerized by the growth curves in China right now. They see pictures of the big skyscrapers in Pudong and, you know, they’re extremely impressed by this, but they’re not looking the fact that China is on the wrong side of a huge transition problem.

If you look at these transition problems in small countries like Taiwan and South Korea, which have very similar social structures, this was a big crisis. It was a huge crisis in Japan, which is not so similar, but had some similar issues, and it led to a, you know, major world war.
China’s got big problems. I hope they work through them peacefully, without an enormous amount of disruptions; but, you know, I’m not going to lay odds on that it’s anything like 80 percent chance of success there. I think they’ve got a 50-50 chance of getting through their democratic transition without major problems and disruption, which are going to be I think the big international crisis of the 2030 or 2040.

To deal with trying to stabilize this and prevent it from turning into an actual war, we need a strong alliance of sort of the responsible and upcoming powers, which I think are going to be the Anglosphere nations, India, and probably Japan.

Japan is working through its structural demographic problem situation better than continental Europe is. They’re 10 years ahead in reforming that. They still got a long way to go, but they have a lot of inherent strengths.

I think it’s very interesting to look at the post tsunami disaster relief, and see that a kind of an instantaneous pick up team of U.S., Australia, Japan, and India came together in a matter of a few days, and this turned into an extremely effective axis of coordination, so effective that the United Nations had to go and try to drape a blue flag over it all, because it was making them look bad.

But the fact is that this coalition could be assembled with a few phone calls, and you could chalk it up with the U.S. and Australia to the fact that we have extremely close defense coordination ties, with Japan, again with the fact that the Japanese armed forces, you know, have worked hand and hand with the allied forces for 50 years.

Now, India has been, you know, has a long history of being a pro-Soviet neutral, but its armed forces were formed on the British model. They all speak English, and they always retained a certain amount of defense cooperative ties with the U.K. And because of these things, and because basically India has a link with the Anglosphere stronger than that of a random foreign nation, it’s not part of the Anglosphere per se, but it’s inextricably tied up with it in a way that China is not.

The Indians were able to pick up the telephone when it counted, and get on the phone with the Americans and the Aussies and the Japanese and, you know, come to conclusions right away.

Why couldn’t we do this with China? You know, the Chinese military, they speak English. It wasn’t a language problem per se. It was an attitude, expectation, and politics.

For one thing, you know, the Indians are military [inaudible] in a free country with a constitutional tradition, and they knew what they could say and what they couldn’t say; what the press would say and what they wouldn’t say. If you’re a PLA general, and you get a call from somebody in India or the United States saying let’s discuss disaster coordination, the first thing you think is jeez, what is the secret police going to say about me getting a call from an American general, and they’re always looking over their shoulders.
China is on the other side of the democratic transition, which I will think will happen sooner or later. It will be a different story. But that’s a story that’s I think 10, 20, 30, 40 years into the future.

So we get to not only an Anglosphere alliance, which I think is going to be the core of the developed prospering world, you get to what I’m starting the baseball-cricket alliance, which is Anglosphere, India, Japan, which I think is going to be the wider core alliance of the future that makes sense.

A couple small points for this discussion. The conclusions this leads to are very strongly Euroskeptic for the U.K. and Ireland. I think it’s critical that the British people vote down the proposed European constitution, to clear away that whole model to force them to make a serious reconsideration of their relationship with Europe, and hopefully end up with something that is loose enough to allow them to develop the Anglosphere ties which make economic, social, and political sense for them.

Also I think the European Constitution has to be defeated because the European Constitution is going to make the demographic, structural, and financial problems worse rather than better, and the world needs a Europe that is not in financial crisis, and if they don’t have some kind of meaningful reform by 2010, 2015, it’s the start of a major crisis which is going to have, you know, row back effects on our economy, because, you know, the Anglosphere is not an island.

We are inextricably linked with these economies, and rather than, you know, there are people that have schadenfreude when they see the other country having economic problems or currency stability problems, I don’t. That’s stupid. If they suffer, we’ll suffer.

So I hope the Constitution gets defeated partly so that the Europeans can get on the problem of reforming themselves before the crisis gets too bad.

Domestically, I think this argues for a substantially decentralist domestic policy, both for economic reasons, because decentralism is more flexible, and because one of the other conclusions you get from Fisher and McFarland is that there is a substantial diversity within the English speaking world of cultural traditions and attitudes; and basically, we do not have nation-states on the continental European model, even in the U.K. And continental European ideas—uniform national social policies, for the most part, don’t make sense for us.

Anyway, I’ve probably gone over my time. But that is a capsule summary of the book. We have some copies of the book available here. And I’m very interested in hearing what everyone else has to say.

DR.WEINSTEIN: Thank you very much. Let’s turn it over to John O’Sullivan. John obviously needs no introduction. He’s the editor of the National Interest and been a distinguished writer for many years on the European front.

MR. O’SULLIVAN: Ken, thank you very much. Very kind remarks.
First of all, let me say that I think that Jim’s book is a brilliant book. In fact, if I have one criticism of it, it’s really six brilliant books. As his remarks just now indicated, it brings together a host of different themes, which I think can be very fruitfully explored, not simply around the table here, but in future books. He’s basically given us a master key, but that master key opens a number of doors. I will make a few slightly episodic, not wholly logically remarks before Gerry and the debate opens.

First of all, I see the Anglosphere, as described by Jim, as a natural development in the history of nationalism in the sense that nationalism is a byproduct. The development of nationalism is a byproduct of communications. First the printing press, later radio, made it possible for people to get a consciousness—to belong to groups larger than the locality and the province. And I do think you see the development of nationalism proceeding not exactly hand in hand, but what you might call immediately, almost immediately, following the spread of communications.

The development, which is, therefore, most important here is that the creation of instantaneous telecommunications in the form of the Internet and the communications revolution in general, the existence of cheap air travel, and the—not the erosion of national boundaries, but their very considerable reduction so that many more people, partly because of wealth, can travel to other countries—has created a different situation in world politics.

And that situation is one in which people tend, because of these easy communications, both to go abroad and more frequently than they did before to emigrate, to travel, to holiday, to vacation, to invest.

But at the same time, they do so where they feel most comfortable. Now I don’t know if you saw a poll that recently appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* in London. It was reported here, but the reporting here focused principally on the fact that a lot of English people thought that Israel was an unpleasant place. And that was indeed one finding in a batch of 40. And I think reflects, by the way, the general reporting of Israeli-Palestinian affairs in the British press rather than any other major historical factor.

But at a time when the British are constantly being told by their political elites that they really belong to Europe, what this poll showed was whenever you asked the British questions like “Where would you like to live if you didn’t live here? Which countries would you like to vacation in? Which countries do you think are democratic? Which are pleasant places to live?” —and a whole host of these kind of questions, the answers were always the same: Here, of course, except when they—yes, a lot of Brits wanted to vacation in Britain, but it was Britain, Australia, America, New Zealand, and Canada. Those five—

MR. BENNETT: Ireland as well.

MR. O’SULLIVAN: Ireland came up. Yeah.

MR. BENNETT: That’s right.
MR. O’SULLIVAN: Well, there would be a lot of Irish people who’d be [inaudible] or maybe with names like mine, and so, again and again, that’s the way the Brits thought about where they would like to go.

If you check on where British people ring up their relatives—phone calls on Christmas Day, which is a traditional thing—if you’ve got relatives living abroad, you ring them up on Christmas Day. It’s all to the British Commonwealth and generally what they call the old white commonwealth and the United States of America. How many ring up Europe? Well, there must be a phone number of British bureaucrats who are scattered around Brussels these days. But I mean the number, and there are certainly middle-class families who have homes in France and in Tuscany, which is sufficiently British that it’s called Chiantischade.

But, in fact, those figures are dwarfed extraordinarily by the fact that the British and indeed the Australians and others tend to think of the other English speaking countries as not exactly foreign, not exactly home, but somewhere between the two, and somewhere where they feel comfortable either to go and live themselves or invest their money. And Jim gives very good reasons why that is the case.

Now one aspect of why it’s the case is this: it seems to me that the English speaking countries combine two things that are rarely found together. And that is they are both relatively open societies, and they are high trust societies.

Now we have high trust societies like Japan, but Japan is about as closed as a democratic liberal society can get. You have very open societies—practically—Argentina is a tremendously easy place to go to and from. They hardly keep records. In fact, when I last went there, they announced we’re sorry for the delay, but we’re starting to list people coming in and going out of the country. So, on the other hand, you wouldn’t say Argentina was a high trust society at all.

And when you narrow it down even further and say well, can you find societies that are high trust and relatively open, outside of the English-speaking, and there are cases, generally speaking, that trust tends to be confined to certain sorts of institutions. You get very family based societies and so on.

The Chinese have—

[TAPE FLIP.]

MR. O’SULLIVAN: With high trust, you do have a very good recipe for long-term success, not by the way, necessarily short-term success. The description that Jim gave of continental Europe today reminded me very much of the lectures I used to give in the ‘70s. I made quite a decent living out of the British disease, coming and telling the Americans about it. And, of course, Meinke Olson’s [ph] analysis, which is the one which I think was the correct analysis of that occasion. The British had—partly because of their success in maintaining a society without invasion and so on for so long—they had built up a whole series of rent seeking coalitions which were robbing the economy blind and introducing and maintaining inefficiency on a vast scale.
Now all of that was changed in about five years. And it was changed partly because the British system of government, which meant that when a party came in that actually did have a program for reform, it was able to get it through and implement it.

I think that is much more difficult in the European system because the European system is designed to prevent either wing of politics coming to power. It’s designed to maintain a coalition of both wings which elections shift slightly to the left or slightly to the right. Now that’s not absolutely universal, of course; and you get a DeGaulle occasionally.

But nonetheless, the larger the unit is, the more difficult reform is going to be because the more actors, namely in this case, governments and politicians, are actually going to be called upon to assent to reform and can, therefore, block it.

So I think that’s another problem. Now, so I think that the English speaking world is an extremely valuable concept, and one that relates to actual reality such questions as where do people put foreign direct investment, and the answer is the English speaking world overwhelmingly invests in each other’s countries, and that’s a much better measure these days than physical trade.

My—I should also say that this is a much more fiery topic than perhaps most of you realize. Jim mentioned Hackett Fisher’s book. Hackett Fisher’s book is a wonderful book, and has been respectfully reviewed and so on. But when it came out, I wouldn’t call it, by the way, a polemical book or a book that has obvious application to today’s political disputes, but, in fact, he received death threats when it came out.

It’s quite amazing to me that. But there is obviously something that roused up. What is it? And I think the answer is that the Anglosphere, in addition to its other aspects, is an extension of the society in which we live. It’s a development of the narrative of that society. It is fundamentally a patriotic concept.

Now I’ve hesitated to talk about American patriotism in the presence of John Fonte, who is Washington’s leading expert on the topic. But having said that, let me say that I think that there have always been elements in American patriotism of hostility to Britain, going way back, and there have been elements of proposals of reconciliation, and they have for a hundred years essentially won the day.

This is, in a sense, a development of that and an extension of it to other countries in the world. And that’s why it arouses instinctive hostility on the part of some people who don’t wish their society well. My calculation is about 20 percent of the American population at the moment fits into that category and probably the same in Britain, too.

Anyway, let me now turn to a much more topical question, which is, what does all this mean for American policy and grand strategy?
Well, I think this week is a good time to ask that. When Bush went to Europe, he went a week after Gerhard Schroeder had basically announced the end of the Transatlantic Alliance as it has existed for the last 40 or 50 years.

You cannot overestimate the importance of the speech—which Schroeder did not read. It was read out for him—he was ill—to the Wehrkundetagung conference in Munich. What he said was we want to move from a system in which the western alliance is a grouping of small and medium and significant countries under American leadership to one in which it’s an alliance of two blocs, one the United States of America, and the other the European Union.

Now that’s a huge change, because, of course, it proposes a western alliance without a leader. It suggests an equality relationship.

It also has extremely important consequences for Europe itself. After all, the smaller European countries generally like the EU because it elevates their international importance. But when it comes to NATO, they also like having direct access to the United States. They like sitting at the same table as the American representative able to express their views.

Of course, everyone knows that votes on these occasions are really weighted. But the culture of unanimity in NATO gives these countries considerable standing. And I this is the one issue in which they do not want the EU to take over because it means that they will be talking to Uncle Sam through an interpreter in Brussels, and that interpreter will almost certainly have either a French or a German accent.

So the proposal that Schroeder made was extremely important. It was threatening to the United States in a sense, but it was also threatening to the interests of other people in Europe, and it remains to be seen how it will be handled.

At the moment, as Gerry and I were saying before, we think there is what you might call some confusion in American high circles as to how it should be handled, because on the one hand, there are some people—and I think they’re right—who correctly perceive the European Union as a very serious long-term threat to American interests, even with all the weaknesses in the EU described by Jim. I mean, I think that there are real problems, but that doesn’t remove the threat.

It means the threat is of a different nature. It is what Henry Kissinger has called the threat of a sniper Europe—a Europe which is weak, resentful, powerful enough to cause trouble; not powerful enough to be much help, but determined to frustrate American purposes by aligning itself with the Chinese, which is what we see happening at the moment because the parallel to the Anglosphere-Japan alliance is the EU-China alliance. And, by the way, the EU-

MR. BENNETT: The EU-Arabian-China Alliance.

MR. O’SULLIVAN: Yes—that’s right—EU-Arabia-China alliance—and that, by the way, the political culture of that alliance will not be a liberal one. It won’t be liberal in economics, and it won’t be liberal in human rights questions either. It will be tolerant of the necessary actions that governments have to take to ensure stability. Let me put it that way.
So the Americans have—at the moment—have got to work at how they’re going to deal with this. Some think it’s a threat. And others essentially think either it’s not a threat because of its weakness or it’s going to be an ally or it is a threat but it’s too late to do anything about it; let’s smile and say we’re happy to go along with it.

In any event, no clear coherent policy at the moment has emerged from this, although I detected—and I may be wrong here—in the President’s speeches a determination not to yield at all to the Schroeder position and to try to reestablish the circumstances in which NATO could be the same kind of alliance as it’s been for some time. In order for him to do that, he’s going to have to do a great deal more than shore up NATO. He’s going to have to introduce the kind of Transatlantic free trade area; he’s going to have to give NATO the same kind of economic trade and regulatory underpinning, which would be the equivalent of the EU developing a defense identity. That’s the choice.

Frankly, I wouldn’t bet on the right choice being made or pursued successfully here, which means, therefore, that the Americans are going to lose a very important set of allies in world politics. And if the British are part of it, they’re going to lose even more than they think.

Now what are the alternatives in these circumstances? Well, there are three.

The first is a hemispheric—to build up a kind of hemispheric relationship. People forget that when George Bush came into office four years ago, this was his policy. The very first foreign meeting he had was with Vincente Fox. The very first trip abroad was to Ottawa to sign the agreement on the free trade area of the Americas.

And there were high hopes in those days that there would be a rapid develop to the free trade area of the Americas and that a body less intrusive in sovereignty, but equivalent in other respects to the EU, might be created on this side of the Atlantic. I think those hopes now look absurd.

The situation in Latin America is deteriorating from the United States standpoint very sharply in all sorts of ways. First of all, in the northern parts of South America, with Chavez and others, you’re seeing the redevelopment of a kind of left-wing [inaudible] politics again, which is hostile to the United States.

In the southern cone—I think things are probably going to be all right in Chile for a long while—but I sense a drift downwards into a kind of social democratic regulatory state, which, after all, is what seems to me what most Latin Americans feel most comfortable with, unfortunately. And in Argentina, where I’ve recklessly bought an apartment in the last year, I’ve left hoping that the dollar will continue to decline and pull the chestnuts out of the fire.

But in Latin America what you can see is that whatever else happens, it’s not going to be as the war on [inaudible] is not going to be the basis for the United States to be able to rely either diplomatically, economically, or in military terms on support from those countries. In fact, what
they’re going to do is to try to forge an alliance with the EU, which will have mild anti-American overtones. So that’s the first choice.

The second choice is just to operate entirely alone, seeking allies where you can. Well, you can do that. America is powerful enough to do that for the time being. It may not be possible indefinitely. But it doesn’t seem to me to be prudent because frankly the American people themselves don’t like operating unilaterally. They don’t like it. And I think they’re prudent not to like it.

I think the question Americans ask is, well, if this is such a good idea, why are we the only people who want to do it? You know, that’s a commonsense question, and I think they’re wise.

So although I believe that that’s a possibility in technical terms, I think politically it won’t fly, and that crisis after crisis would be dealt with unsatisfactorily because of that.

So where can you get your allies? Well, as Jim has pointed out, in a whole extraordinary set of areas, again and again, we find ourselves operating with the same set of allies in quite different crises. I won’t talk about the tsunami.

But let me talk about in another cases. The East Timor crisis. The military committee of the U.N. that handled the East Timor crisis consisted of the following powers: Australia, absolutely. They were the principal military power involved. They were next door. You can imagine why. New Zealand. Well, maybe they just went along with it, you can say, because Australia is next door. They have good relations with the Australians. Their military know each other well and so on. They would have been prepared to help in a kind of vaguely humanitarian operation. The United States. Well, of course. The country, the most important military power in the world, and the most important military power in the U.N. Naturally, they would be involved. You can see that.

Canada. Well, it’s a bit like New Zealand I suppose. Every now and then if they can cooperate with the Americans in something which isn’t an American enterprise they’ll go along.

And Britain. Why Britain? A long bloody way from East Timor, and I don’t believe East Timor was ever a British colony. So why?

There you have the five powers. Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. And you can see that again and again and again.

The New Zealand SAS were I think the second or the third foreign forces to be operating alongside the Americans in Afghanistan. The New Zealand SAS. Who knew they had an SAS? But they were there. So in military questions that’s the case.

I’ve mentioned foreign direct investment. There is, so to speak, the underpinnings and the texture of international cooperation exists between the Anglosphere countries at the present time. Even without people being aware of it.
The big final question. So I can imagine that developing, and we see it—India is now being drawn into this relationship for all sorts of interesting reasons, but one of them is that apparently the Indian and American militaries get on well together.

My final point, namely the role of Britain in this. This strikes me as extremely important to the British and of some importance to the other members and potential members of the Anglosphere. But at the present time, we have a political elite which has thrown in its lot with the concept of Europe and which would be perfectly happy to submerge in English identity with the European one.

This creates an unending series of difficulties and tensions within Britain itself, where the British people do not feel comfortable in structures which are based on entirely different principles.

More to the point in our context, there are whole series of relationships between Britain and other English speaking countries which are now put seriously at risk. The Europeans, for example, are anxious to close down the echelon international electronic eavesdropping operation, which is an Anglosphere set up, entirely Anglosphere. The French suspect it of being used to listen in on French commercial conversations and report cases of bribery when they happen. And unfortunately, [inaudible] confirmed that they were right on that.

[Laughter.]

MR. O’SULLIVAN: So the Europeans want to close it down. The intelligence cooperation between Britain and the United States is the closest of any two intelligence agencies, not excluding Mosad. At the Joint Intelligence Briefing that takes place—the Joint Intelligence Committee that takes place in Downing Street—there is, for most of the meeting, a member of the CIA present. At a certain point, he gets up and leaves, but he’s there.

One of the highest classifications is the U.S.-U.K. eyes only. And it’s not just the intelligence, but the military cooperation in general. This relationship will wither on the vine if Britain is absorbed into a European defense system because the intelligence that you share with the Brits would then be shared with the French and the Germans and indeed with a lot of countries which in theory at least are even dodgier.

So, the Americans will simply not share that intelligence. I mean, they may not—it might be a public break or more likely it might be the case that less and less serious stuff is put into that particular set of envelopes that are passed around.

So, the British have got to make up their mind on this one. Tony Blair refuses to make up his mind in principle, but every time the question comes up in practice, as on the lifting of the China arms embargo, he throws in his lot with the Europeans for a reason which I think is perhaps generational, but is otherwise inexplicable to me, he thinks that there is no future for the fourth largest economy in the world outside the European Union; and wants to tie himself to what looks to me increasingly like a corpse—the nearest thing to necrophilia in strategy I know.
So I think that the question that Jim has got to answer is how can the concept of the Anglosphere survive if the English are not in it? Or can it? Does it matter? And secondly—and this is my last sentence—can this idea survive in a country like the United States where the elite is committed to a very different idea, namely multiculturalism?

DR. WEINSTEIN: Thank you for that characteristically insightful and entertaining presentation. Gerard Baker used to be the best reason for those of us without multimillion dollar stock portfolios to read the Financial Times. He’s now taken to the Times of London, and we’re delighted to have him here.

GERALD BAKER: Thank you very much indeed. And thanks for having me in.

Well, I am in the unenviable position of going last after two brilliant presentations. Thank you for both of them, and not only were they both extremely clever and insightful, as I would expect from both of them, but they unfortunately happened to more or less chime exactly what I believe. So I find myself in that position, famously described by whoever it was—Elizabeth Taylor’s sixth husband—we all know what I have to do, but I’m just not sure how to make it interesting.

[Laughter.]

MR. BAKER: I think there was one thing I should say which I violently objected to in Jim’s otherwise brilliant presentation, which is the notion of a baseball-cricket world. I think if you’re serious about that, you would have to include most of Central America, Jim, and in particular Cuba. And I think there would be some serious problems with that, not to mention, of course, the fact that Canada has lost half of its Major League Baseball teams and Washington is, of course, the beneficiary of that.

But I do—

DR. WEINSTEIN: Another from the Canadian Anglosphere.

MR. BAKER: Yes. Yes. Quite. But I want to talk briefly about the two aspects to this. I think the genius, which is the economics and the politics and to some extent I’ll avoid trying to repeat much of what John said, although I do agree with it.

On the economic side, the genius of this book and of Jim’s thesis is the way he marries the economic trends, these remarkable economic trends of the last—well, over a long period of time—over the last 50 year if you like, but particularly the emergence of what we call the New Economy or the information-based economy in the last 10 to 20 years, and the way he marries that with the longer-term, very long-term, as he says in the book, going back before the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and right away back to Magna Carter and perhaps beyond, too—the very long-term roots of the Anglosphere, if you like, what is the basic elements of civil society that have been—that characterize England particularly, then more broadly Great Britain and then, of course, the United States, most notably in the other Anglosphere countries—the way he marries all of that with—and then pulls it with the information revolution, and then pulls it all forward into a 21st century—into some prognoses for the 21st century.
And I think that that is extraordinary—you know, it’s an extraordinarily original analysis, and I think it’s quite brilliant in those terms.

And on the economics I think—just briefly because John didn’t talk much about that—I think I do essentially agree with him. I think some economists have tended to underestimate the importance of the information technology revolution. Some people don’t see it as the discontinuity or the singularity that Jim talks about in the book. They see it simply—some still doubt whether or not it actually has changed dramatically. Well, it may have changed the way we—much of—the way we do—the way we conduct our cultural business as it were, and significantly changed fundamental economics.

But I disagree and I think I’m with Jim on this in believing that once in a century at least one event, possibly even more significant than that, which has fundamentally changed not only the nature of business, the nature of economic and political and cultural relations but actually also the economic performance, and I think it’s very striking that the U.S. economy continues to be—continues to benefit from the information revolution—the technology revolution, and I’m interested there—one of the questions I have, and to some extent what I’ll try and do in my brief remarks is to try and play a little bit of devil’s advocate and raise some of the questions that I think someone who wasn’t as sympathetic to the book and its thesis, as John and I clearly are, might be raising if they were here.

But interestingly, and I think it is very striking on this first point, on the economics, one of the things that I think demonstrates the power of the thesis of the book, and indeed the very idea of an Anglosphere, is that over the last 10 years, it is very striking that the countries that have performed—that the—if you like the post industrial countries that have performed—the industrial age economies that have performed best in the last 10 years in what has been a challenging international economic environment have been—you can just rattle them off—the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and Ireland. China is obviously a separate case because it’s still an industrializing economy essentially, and India, as we’ve—we can come talk about India in a little bit.

But it is very striking to me that those—the major—you know, you take those G7 economies, plus Australia and New Zealand and Ireland, you see that those—that it is the Anglosphere economies that have done well, and it is the continental European economies and Japan that have done very poorly in that time.

And I think that is no accident. I think it is because of the things that Jim talks about in his book—the nature of civil society that has enabled the Anglosphere countries to adapt much more effectively, much more quickly and flexibly to the information revolution.

A good friend of mine who spent half a lifetime studying German technology and sort of German industry has a good—I think a rather good way of putting this: which that he says, you know, Germany, the great success story of Germany, and to some extent, continental Europe and clearly of Japan, too, up until the 1990s, can be characterized as Germany was brilliant at the kind of economic activities that were necessary that obtained then. Germany and other—as he
puts it, Germany is a kind of two point zero information economy, and still—and remains a two point zero information economy when the rest of the world has moved on to seven point nine or eight point four or whatever the rest of the—I should say the Anglosphere has moved on to that.

And I think that’s—I do think that’s just no accident; that those economies that have done extremely well have been essentially almost exclusively the Anglosphere economies in the last 10 years and that must tell you something about the nature of those societies and the nature of those economies and their distinctions—the distinctions between those and those other advanced industrial economies.

So I think that is—however, here’s my first point as it were as the devil’s advocate, which is—and I would like Jim’s view on this—it is striking that having said all that, that the productivity revolution that is associated with the information and technology revolution has so far it seems only—has really occurred in the United States.

MR. O’SULLIVAN: That’s with the current [inaudible], though if you look at the numbers closely enough?

MR. BAKER: Well, I don’t—I mean if you—

MR. O’SULLIVAN: But they’re fudged.

MR. BAKER: No, I think—I mean, since 19—there does seem to be a pretty strong discontinuity since 1996 of labor productivity of unit—of labor productivity—

MR. O’SULLIVAN: Yes, but capital productivity is going through the floor.

MR. BAKER: Well—

MR. O’SULLIVAN: In fact, the productivity is slower than it has been since the ‘60s, and in any case way lower than the ‘50s and ‘60s.

MR. BAKER: Well, but I think you know—

MR. O’SULLIVAN: It’s a productivity myth. It’s a myth.

MR. BAKER: Well, you know, we’ll just disagree on that. I don’t think it is. I think the labor productivity figures are pretty striking. There has been an acceleration.

What’s happened, interestingly, is that you had labor productivity growth in the United States from 1945 to 1973, as we know, of about roughly two and a quarter, two and a half percent per year, and post 1973, we had this extraordinary period for about 20 years a period where it was half that roughly—one and a quarter percent. And then since 1996, you’ve seen it accelerate again. So it’s not a miracle, as some people have claimed. That’s true, but labor productivity growth has clearly returned—has clearly sloughed off the slowdown of the last 20 or so years—of the 20 or so years between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s.
And it’s striking to me—and that may be part of your answer—that if you take total factory productivity, then maybe there is no significant difference, but I think it is pretty striking that the labor productivity performance of the U.S. economy in the last 10 years has significantly outpaced the rest of the world, including the rest of the Anglosphere.

Britain has not had any labor productivity growth whatsoever. Canada has had a small, not very significant, and Australia hasn’t had a significant benefit either. And I’d be interested to know what the explanation is—what your explanation is, Jim, for that?

There’s some other economic activity—but turning to the politics, and I agree again with what John said about President Bush. Indeed, I think again it’s another tribute to Jim’s book that President Bush has spent the last week trying to disprove the basic thesis of Jim’s book, and I agree with John not entirely succeeding or perhaps not reflecting, if you like, some divisions within the U.S. about where it should go and that the underlying differences between the United States and Europe seem to me not to have gone away despite the nice talk we’ve had this last week.

But I do think on the particular points that John raised that it is very striking that Condoleezza Rice went to Europe two weeks ago and explicitly endorsed the European Constitution which I did think was diplomatically a rather dubious thing to do, given that there are referendums in at least nine, I think 10 countries now on the European Constitution, and in at least three of those countries the result is in some serious doubt.

So it did seem a slightly odd thing to do, both in terms of the diplomacy, but also in terms of U.S. strategy. I’m not sure I entirely agree with John. I’m not sure at all that it is in the U.S. interest to see a constitutionally united Europe, if you like, which is what the Europeans are trying to do.

Let me just raise to say from a kind of devil’s advocate perspective then some of the questions that I had that I think others particularly would have, and you do address some of these in the book, but I think there are some other ones, too, that come up.

About practical underpinnings of the thesis about the Anglosphere, and let me raise some of the questions that I think some Europeans and certainly some members of the Anglosphere who would dispute your characterization about the unity of the Anglosphere, and some of the differences that there are. It is pretty striking that over the last few years—just taking, you know, on the broad—on the general issues of foreign policy that there have been significant differences in the Anglosphere.

As you said, the United States and Canada may have been an integrated political and economic system—I mean integrated and not obviously in the way the European Union would like to be integrated, but economically integrated and to some extent politically integrated—but it is very striking that since President Bush came to power, the United States and Canada have been further apart than they’ve been in a very, very long time. And not just at the leadership level. You can point to some quite significant divergence at the social and cultural level.
Indeed, these go back some way. But the nature of Canada as a more continental European society in terms of its attitude towards such things as religion and the role of gay—you know, the gay rights and indeed multiculturalism, internationalism, the commitment to the United Nations multilateralism, all that kind of stuff.

You could argue quite strongly that the differences between the United States and Canada are actually quite significant and perhaps at least as great in political terms as the difference between the United States and France in some of those fields.

Equally even in Britain one could make the same case; that Britain has been, despite all the continued hostility and Euro-skepticism—hostility to Europe and Euro-skepticism, which remains absolutely undented, although I have been struck and rather concerned by, as I’m sure John has, by some of the polls in the last month about British attitudes towards the European Constitution.

We, Euro-skeptics, were all going along fairly happily convinced that the European Constitution would go down to a tremendous and resounding defeat in the referendum that will be held in Britain in the first half of next year. But there have been some polls, strikingly, and not just one off rogue polls, there have now been three I think in the last month that have actually suggested that even now before the government has wield out all of its artillery and all of the resources that it can bring to bear in pressing for a yes vote, that even at this stage, the result, the opinion of the British people is actually much, much, much, much closer than we thought it was. As one poll that actually showed the yes campaign with a very small lead.

Again, that is odd to me. It sits oddly with the history of and indeed the recent trends in British Euro-skepticism. But it is something that I think is a reminder again in this general talk about the Anglosphere that perhaps there are some quite significant differences and across the Atlantic between Britain and the United States—John touched on these. Britain does find itself looking both ways, I think.

And over Iraq, obviously, British popular opinion remains fairly unfavorable. More generally towards the United States, it remains fairly unfavorable. The poll that John was talking about—the most interesting thing I found about that poll other than what John said, was that it did ask people all kinds of things: Where would you like to go on holiday? Where would you like to live? What societies do you admire? And actually, at the very top of each answer was Britain.

So, you know, you could argue that the power of nationalism and of patriotism is actually much stronger than any kind of comity that is felt with the Anglosphere.

The other striking thing I was going to say about that poll was attitudes, for example, with Israel, which again John mentioned. There is no question. Again, I agree with John that to some extent this just reflects, to a very large extent, the very one-sided portrayal in the media, in the British media, of Israel-Palestine.
But I would go further. Britain is on that question much closer to and on the whole broader question if you like of the Middle East, of progress in the Middle East. I think the British tend to—probably are not—I don’t think they’re as close to the continental European view, but I think they are certainly some way from the U.S. view, and I think you’ve seen again that’s one of the reasons for the tensions over the last few years.

And attitudes towards the United Nations. The British remain extremely supportive and committed to the principle of the United Nations and the notion that only the United Nations is able to authorize force. And I think that view is also quite strongly held in Australia and New Zealand, according to some recent polling of it.

And so there are some quite significant differences here, and you could argue that as powerful as these forces of the information revolution are, there are some really serious political forces that are rooted in different political cultures between the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and some of those other countries that are actually driving us apart. Religion. The role of religion is obviously one thing again that’s talked about.

Britain is much closer to Europe, to continental Europe in being essential a post religious society than the United States. You simply do not find comparators [sic] to the role of evangelical Christians in British politics that you find—you did obviously, you know, a hundred years ago—you don’t find them today. Britain is not a particularly religious society.

DR. WEINSTEIN: Outside of Ulster?

MR. BAKER: Sorry?

DR. WEINSTEIN: Outside of Ulster?

MR. BAKER: Outside of Ulster. Sorry. Sure yeah. Make that point. Well, that’s part of Ireland anyway.

Also there’s another issue, of course, which is—how Anglosphere is the United States? You touched on this, but there was a fascinating piece sort of elucidating some of this stuff by Joel Kopkin [ph] in the Weekly Standard a couple of weeks ago about the Eurocity. The United States is a clearly divided country. I think to some extent the degree of division is somewhat at times overstated by the media, but clearly there are a great metropolitan areas of the United States which account for a sizeable bulk of the population which feels themselves much, much closer to Paris in political outlook, in political culture, to Paris and Berlin and Rome I sure—perhaps some would even argue to Beijing—than the bulk of the country.

How united is the United States in terms of what it shares with these other—even amongst itself, how homogenous is the United States in terms of its political culture, let alone with the other members of the Anglosphere?

And, I know we’ve talked about this before, Jim, but, you know, London is pretty very similar in political respects to Manhattan. But is there a charact—is there something in Britain or in
Australia that is the same kind of comparison—is the same parallel rather with Oklahoma or with Alabama. You know, I doubt it. So I think there are some quite significant political culture differences there.

DR. WEINSTEIN: Well, there is Calgary.

MR. BAKER: Sorry?

DR. WEINSTEIN: There is Calgary.

MR. BAKER: Okay. Calgary. Sure. Alright. Of course, you can find someplace else. But I think broadly there are, you know, there are some quite significant differences.

So, I come back to my point about the poll that national identity may remain a more—even and indeed one of the paradoxes I’m sure—to me, one of the paradoxes of this information revolution is when it came along and when we all started working on the Internet, particularly as a journalist, I was very—I was convinced that national newspapers or regional newspapers would really cease to exist, because everybody would have access to everybody else’s newspaper, everybody else’s news media. They would—and actually this would be a tremendously good thing because it would mean that the stereotypes that are ridiculously peddled in all national papers about other nations and about other national cultures would simply be steadily ignored. If you were in London and you wanted to read what was going on in America, you didn’t any longer have to read the ridiculous stereotypes of the Guardian or even in the Daily Telegraph, I suppose the same stereotypes in the New York Times—but you could at least go and read regional papers in the middle of the country, and genuinely find out what was going on.

You’d be much better informed about America by reading what Americans were saying and in the same way Americans could read increasingly with the availability of the English language. You know, instead of reading New York Times views of what was going on in France or the Washington Post views of what was going on in Germany, you could actually just go online and read Le Monde or Zie Deutsche Zeitung and they would be much better informed, and this I thought in my rather naive way would lead to a much better mutual understanding of the way the world works.

In fact, the striking paradox I think is that actually, if anything, the stereotypes have gotten worse. I think in the last 10 years, we’ve actually become less understanding of each other. I think the extraordinary caricatures—I’m sure everybody here travels to Europe—the extraordinary caricatures that now pass for serious analysis and news in Europe about the United States that’s something I haven’t seen in—I’ve been sort of generally involved in this stuff for 25 years—it’s like nothing I’ve ever seen. There is a mutual misunderstanding now, and to a lesser extent it’s true of the way the United States perhaps is portraying something of what’s going in Europe.

So, again, that’s a paradox to me. And I don’t quite know whether this fits into the Anglosphere challenge as it were, but it does seem to me that there is something strange here that whereas there are—there ought to be, especially among the English speaking world, we’re using the
Internet so much, there ought to be a convergence of at least—of dialogue and of understanding of each other—actually if anything. As I say, if you read the *Guardian* versus what the U.S. papers are writing or if you read the Blogosphere, it doesn’t seem to me you’re getting a tremendous amount of convergence between those, but actually continuing portrayal, misrepresentation—a negative portrayal, a misrepresentation of each side.

So, again, to a very large extent what I’ve been doing just here is raising some, as I say, some sort of flags and playing the role of devil’s advocate. I’d be very interested in, you know, everybody’s views obviously on all of these things and the extent to which these are real objections to the notion of the Anglosphere or whether they are indeed just quibbling as devil’s advocates are required to do.

But in broad terms, I, you know, again, congratulate Jim for the book. I think it’s an absolutely magnificent book. I think it will be one of those books that will genuinely change the nature of international strategic debate I think, and I am very grateful to him personally as someone who entirely supports the ideas and the principles outlined in the book. I am very grateful to him for having done it.

DR. WEINSTEIN: Here. Here. Great. Well, thank you, Gerry, those are very, very thoughtful and thought-raising remarks. Why don’t we turn to questions? We’re very, very tight for time this morning. Why don’t we open for questions, and you can then respond and—Michael Horowitz.

MR. HOROWITZ: [off mike.] I think if John Fineman told me that it was true—almost completely true of [inaudible] Gerald Baker’s comments that the word Protestant isn’t [inaudible] in the—and I want to throw that in, and look beyond what [inaudible] and Schroeder is saying one day, and what the kind of politics of the [inaudible]. First to suggest that the cohesiveness between the United States and Great Britain is largely a function of Protestantism, and with Protestantism and from it came the kind of trust assigned, and you talked about notions of [inaudible], commitments to human rights, democracy and so forth. And that the split that Gerard Baker talked about was a split of Great Britain becoming more secular and [inaudible] its roots.

But at the same time, it may be Protestantism by the language it creates the great enduring [inaudible] of the United States in the 21st century, because around the Third World, one has seen the largest explosion of [inaudible] and of Christianity believe that [inaudible] and even in Latin America. You have Protestantism and evangelicalism and [inaudible] and some types of Catholicism [inaudible]. So but isn’t that the kind of [inaudible] does not describe the unity and the power of the 19th century, and isn’t it very much the—isn’t that a significant factor and don’t we just conflate an earlier notion, and indeed despite the secularism of Great Britain, isn’t there that lingering notion—you see it in Tony Blair pretty clearly in what his commitment to human rights that is so powerful; and to the extent it is, and to the extent that Protestant notion of human rights and individual dignity is there and it just [inaudible] what other in terms of the power, which is agreement, the burning issue of the 21st century [inaudible] will be the empowerment of women. And you look at George Bush getting on issues like [inaudible] and so forth, and to the extent to which England is so responsive. That’s really the enduring source of strength it seems
to me for the 21st century. It is vibrant in the United States and will remain so because the nation is vibrant and mainly the [inaudible] of Great Britain is the [inaudible], but it seems to me that that explains more than the stuff I’ve heard the notion of the [inaudible].

MR. BENNETT: Shall I respond to that?

DR. WEINSTEIN: Sure.

MR. BENNETT: Okay. Those are good points and I partly agree, and here’s my take on some of these points and I’ll try to work in Gerry because especially on the religion and cultural issues there is somewhat a related response here.

I think that especially if you get back into both McFarland’s work on the nature of English society before the Reformation and there’s quite a bit of other research about the medieval Catholic church and the nature of English society prior to the Reformation, much of what we call Protestant values I think are actually Anglosphere values in the sense that they existed in England before the Reformation and to some extent you can see the Reformation, and I’m starting to see the Reformation as a case of set of sociological needs and requirements in England that weren’t being met by the church linked with Rome not because of anything inherent in the Catholic church or in Catholic theology but because of some very particular political requirements of Latin Mediterranean cultures which were effectively in control of the papacy at that time and for much else of the history of the Catholic church. In other words, it was a political rift with religious color rather than a religious rift.

And it’s very interesting to see that as Catholicism became again, you know, allowed to exist above ground in the Anglosphere, in the late 18th and 19th centuries, you had this fascinating thing of Catholics and the Anglosphere remaining Catholic theologically but becoming "Protestant" sociologically to the—I mean there was a book called How the Irish Became White, which is essentially talking about this—to the point where now some of the best "Protestants" in the United States are our blue-collar Catholics.

MR. HOROWITZ: And Jews.

MR. BENNETT: Right. And Jews. And but the—the children of both covenants have always been—there’s always been that good old connection there, especially with the Calvinist side of Protestantism. And I think one of the things about Anglosphere theory in the sense that you wrap up McFarland’s research into it and Fisher’s research into it is that it rejects the specifically religious explanation of Anglosphere exceptionalism and goes back to a sociological one.

So whenever, we talk about Protestantism, I have to put the word Protestant in quotes, and I actually prefer just talking about Anglosphere values because it gets rid of this confusion with—of theology with sociology.

Now having said that, it is true I think that the Protestant Revolution in the Third World and especially Latin America is again a sociological revolution; in other words, some of the role that was-some of the functions that were handled by internal Catholic reform in the United States and
the U.K., the so-called Americanization of Catholicism, that was achieved to some degree by the anti-clerical secular movement in continental Europe in the 20th century is being accomplished sociologically in Latin America by the growing Protestantization. I think if many of these people had the choice of being American Catholics rather than Latin America Catholics, they’d probably prefer that choice. But that choice is not being offered to them, which is something that Catholics should think about.

But be that as it may, this is a sociological change which probably is of use to the Anglosphere, and it’s partly because this is being done in many cases by Anglosphere missionaries going down and providing social services in areas where the, you know, the social and church hierarchies in those countries never bothered to go—in the highlands of Guatemala, for instance.

Anyway, there’s this larger issue of the sociological divides within the Anglosphere, the intra Anglosphere differences in segmentation, and that’s a big topic, which unfortunately I didn’t have much chance to discuss in the book, but I have a couple articles in train because I have turned a lot of attention to this whole question of what about the differences within the Anglosphere.

I think that the answer to this and also the answer to some of John’s questions goes right back to disintermediation of the media. I think that many of the supposed visible differences in opinion between, you know, Middle Britain and Middle America are an artifact of what they’re being told by the media, and they do not yet get a lot of opinion or news or information off of disintermediated Internet media, although I think that’s going to become more and more the case in the next few years. I think it’s very significant in the Blogosphere, you’re saying well, people aren’t using the Internet to access English language papers from other countries, but in the Blogosphere, they are.

There’s actually—at least in the sections I see—a very strong use of the British press, for instance, and the Canadian and Australian press bloggers linked to that, and it’s interesting because they link to that far more than they link to the English language versions of continental European newspapers. And usually, they only link to the [inaudible] Deutsche Zeitung if they want to have an example of how terrible Europeans are.

What you’re getting is you’re getting a segmentation of the blogosphere not by Anglosphere country, but by political sentiment within the Anglosphere. So you have a right wing blogosphere in which Australian and British bloggers are extremely important to Americans, and they’re linked continuously. So you have—the sun never sets on the Anglo Blogosphere.

But at the same time, there’s a left blogosphere, which is also seamless pan Anglo—

[END OF RECORDED SEGMENT]