

orously expressed, do have a place on the airwaves of the nation.”

Camp was a loner, as Stevens points out. His favourite song was “My Way,” by Frank Sinatra, and he lived that song. To the astonishment of his friends and his grown up family, he left his first wife in the 1970s and acquired a second wife, by whom he had a sixth child. There were other women and every detail of these relationships is chronicled by Stevens — sometimes more than one wants.

The end result, though, is an illuminating biography that could

serve as a tour through the years 1952 to 2002 in Canadian politics. Stevens catches the flavour of the times — even if it often is a bitter flavour — because he lived and worked through it as a journalist and commentator himself.

Camp never made it to the top rung, though he harboured ambitions to be prime minister himself. But he had an abiding influence on Canadian politics nonetheless. For a start, he revived the Conservative Party as a viable and credible political force in Canada. And, as Stevens put it, “He

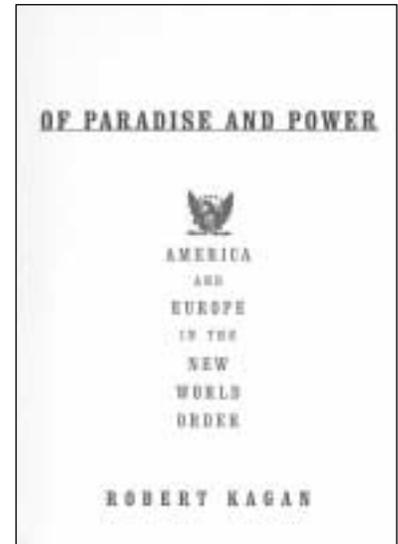
attracted scores of previously uncommitted young people who became involved in public life because he made them believe that they, too, could make a difference. In the process he raised the level of politics in Canada.” That is quite an achievement, which even his political opponents would not deny.

*James Ferrabee covered Canadian politics through the 1960s, 1970s and part of the 1980s for Southam News. He is contributing editor of Policy Options. [jferrabee@irpp.org](mailto:jferrabee@irpp.org) His on-line column appears monthly at [www.irpp.org](http://www.irpp.org)*

## Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus

Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

Review by Leigh Turner



According to Robert Kagan, Americans and Europeans have travelled divergent roads since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the European Union. Europe, Kagan argues, has emerged into a political paradise much like the stable, civilized world order of perpetual peace envisioned by Immanuel Kant. America, in contrast, with its massive defense budget, capacity to launch military operations around the world, and willingness to

engage in unilateral actions against “rogue states,” remains inside a violent, anarchic Hobbesian world. If the Cold War was an era when “the West” held together, integrated in part by a common ideological opponent and military threat, the post-Cold War era witnessed a profound rift in the “transatlantic alliance” between the United States and Europe. Kagan writes that “on major strategic and international questions today, Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus.”

The opening words of Kagan’s work capture the core message of his book. Europe, he insists, seeks to inhabit the paradisiacal realm of a cosmopolitan, liberal-democratic order governed by treaties, deliberative bodies, and international law. The US, in contrast, the only hyperpower capable of waging war in almost any setting and on numerous fronts simultaneously, plays the sheriff outside paradise in the unruly Wild West of rogue states unwilling to submit to international

law and peaceful mechanisms of dispute resolution.

According to Kagan, the First and Second World Wars decimated the military and economic strength of the major European powers. France, Germany and Great Britain had their imperialist ambitions severely curtailed; Britain, in particular, would lose its status as empire. Following the Second World War, the US and the Soviet Union emerged as the dominant superpowers. The transatlantic alliance was formed as the US and the countries of Western Europe formed an integrated block — “the West” — allied against the Soviet Union. With the end of the Cold War, the need for unity in the West diminished. In Europe, countries celebrated the “peace dividend” marking the end of the Soviet Union by reducing military budgets and emphasizing social programs and international aid. The countries of Europe sought to move beyond the clash of nations to a peaceful social order built upon international laws, shared dispute resolution mechanisms and common institutions. The US, in contrast, though it would lower its level of military spending, continued to maintain a powerful military capable of operating in regions around the globe.

Kagan argues that EU members and the United States have different psychologies and different material resources. EU countries, he insists, have little interest in military action; ideologically, they prefer to resolve conflicts through laws, treaties, and extended exercises in diplomacy. The

The establishment of the EU has helped move Europe away from the bloody, violent world of Hobbes toward the more peaceful, civil world envisioned by Kant.

US, in contrast, has a large and powerful military and a political leadership willing to see that military used, even without UN sanction. Furthermore, as the self-appointed global “sheriff” willing to engage in combat around the world, the United States serves as a focal point for opposition. The psy-

chologies of Europe and America are marked by different perceptions of threats. While Kagan recognizes variations in the psychologies and material capacities of different European countries and acknowledges the existence of voices of dissent from dominant positions in both the EU the US, he insists upon a profound difference in the willingness of Americans and Europeans to use military power to achieve particular objectives.

As a work of descriptive analysis, there is much to commend in Kagan’s analysis. He accurately and sensibly describes differences in American and European efforts to respond to countries whose actions fall outside the boundaries of international law. Political leaders and citizens in many countries — and not just nations within Europe — have little interest in maintaining large defence budgets with sizeable standing armies. Many countries lost their appetite for war-making following the deaths of millions in the trenches of the first World War and the sustained period of blood-letting during the second World War. The establishment of the EU has helped move Europe away from the bloody, violent world of Hobbes toward the more peaceful, civil world envisioned by Kant.

Though brief and prone to generalization, Kagan’s work successfully captures the different roads down which the US and the European Union have travelled since the end of the Cold War. As a work of normative analysis, however, *Of Paradise and Power* falls notably short.

Kagan insists that countries lacking in war-making capacities inevitably seek peaceful means of resolving disputes. They turn to diplomatic negotiation, provide incentives, or use international aid as means of defusing potential conflicts. In contrast, the United States, with the



Claudio Vasquez

Robert Kagan  
“Much to commend”

capacity to launch prolonged military engagements on multiple fronts, is much more willing to use military intervention as a means of achieving national objectives. Regrettably — and crucially — Kagan offers no practical insight into when the use of military power is warranted. He suggests that Europeans and civilians of other nations suffer from a form of naiveté when they presume to live in a Kantian paradise of international laws with small armies and modest budgets for the military. For Kagan, just outside the borders of the civil, cosmopolitan social order lies the Hobbesian, violent world of the lawless “jungle.”

The chief shortcoming with this analysis is that it refuses to take seriously the possibility that diplomatic and economic alternatives to military engagement might be both more ethically justifiable and ultimately more effective than the exercise of military power. For example, while it is possible to view the dispute over the justifiability of the invasion of Iraq as a conflict between “Kantian” and “Hobbesian” inspired views of the world, it is

also possible to view the debate over military action as a legitimate dispute over both the nature of Iraq as a threat and the justified use of military power. True, it is possible to follow the logic of Kagan's argument that weak countries tend to underestimate threats. However, another way of analyzing the situation is to argue that many countries were not persuaded that existing intelligence lent support to the claim that Iraq was a legitimate, immediate threat to other nations. Furthermore, many countries insisted that all diplomatic and nonviolent methods be used short of military intervention before they would consider providing support for a UN Security Council resolution permitting the invasion of Iraq.

Though Kagan provides a clear analysis of who has power and how

that power was acquired over the last several hundred years, he offers little insight into how military power ought to be exercised. The disinclination to use military power as a force for "regime change" is not just a sign of weakness or a sign of an excessively idealistic conception of human nature. It can also reflect the judicious, prudent use of power in response to available evidence, the likelihood of particular threats, and the anticipation of particular outcomes. The willingness to consider alternatives to war might also reflect a better appreciation for the destruction wrought by military conflict. *Of Paradise and Power* would be much more persuasive and significant if Kagan had offered a considered account of when the exercise of US military power is justified.

Paradise is a place that neither Europeans nor Americans occupy. Even in an uncertain, "Hobbesian" world, there are powerful reasons for limiting the exercise of military power to very carefully defined circumstances where the available evidence leads to the conclusion that no other alternative ought to be pursued. Given Kagan's focus on the significance of power, he offers surprisingly little insight into how such power should be wielded.

*Leigh Turner is an Assistant Professor in the Biomedical Ethics Unit and Department of Social Studies of Medicine at McGill University. In 2003-2004, he is a member in the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey.*



POLICY

**OPTIONS**  
POLITIQUES

POLICY OPTIONS SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

SUBSCRIBE  
ON-LINE  
[www.irpp.org](http://www.irpp.org)

1470 Peel Street  
Bureau 200  
Montreal, Quebec  
Canada H3A 1T1

New       Renewal (please include subscriber # \_\_\_\_\_ )

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year individual	\$39.95	+	\$2.80 GST*	=	\$42.75**
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years individual	\$69.95	+	\$4.90 GST*	=	\$74.85**
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year institutional	\$50.00	+	\$3.50 GST*	=	\$53.50**
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years institutional	\$85.00	+	\$5.95 GST*	=	\$90.95**

\* GST on orders from Canada only.  
\*\* Quebec residents add 7.5% to this amount.  
US orders please add C\$15 per year postage; other countries add C\$20 per year.

**PAYABLE IN CANADIAN FUNDS ONLY**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Company \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal code \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Payment enclosed       VISA       MasterCard       Amex  
Card no. \_\_\_\_\_  
Card expiry date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill me later      Signature \_\_\_\_\_