Chapter Eight

Demystifying Globalization and US Power:
Michael Jordan and Global Capitalism

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Walter LaFeber loved sports. He played varsity basketball in high school and in his first year at Hanover College, until he decided that scholarship needed to take priority. When recruited to the Cornell faculty, he made the mistake of thinking that the status of Cornell's football team as the best in the Ivy League meant that the team actually played well. The poor quality of Cornell football did not prevent him from crowing over the team's victories, however, as his old friend Lloyd Gardner can attest. He reveled in baseball most of all, especially his beloved Chicago Cubs. Sandy LaFeber recalls that on the first morning on her very first visit to Walkerton, Indiana, LaFeber's hometown, Walt roused her out of bed early, because he had tickets to an afternoon Cubs game, and they needed to catch the train to Chicago. Gardner and Richard Immerman also recall an infamous outing to a Cubs-Reds game during a meeting of the Organization of American Historians in the early 1980s. Cold, rainy weather at a time when the two teams were absolutely abysmal did not deter LaFeber, which speaks volumes about his die-hard loyalty to the Cubs, not to mention his preference to avoid academic conferences. His daughter Suzanne fondly recalls a father-daughter trip to a playoff game at Wrigley Field in 2015, where after the game her father came away with a baseball signed by Billy Williams, a favorite former player from the 1960s and 1970s who later joined the coaching staff, and whom LaFeber admired for his basic decency, humility, and devotion to the Cubs. A year later, LaFeber finally enjoyed the ultimate reward for decades of beleaguered fandom, when his cherished team finally won the World Series.[1]

LaFeber preferred college basketball and football to their professional counterparts, however, so his 1999 book, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, did not represent an exercise in self-indulgent fandom. Rather, Jordan's iconic global stature, combined with Nike's ability to sell sneakers and sports imagery all over the world, grabbed his scholarly attention.[2] In the same year that the Michael Jordan book came out, LaFeber also delivered his presidential address to the Society for the History of American Foreign Relations on "Technology and American Foreign Relations." Together, both works provided occasions to grapple with the evolution of global capitalism, the mobilization of knowledge, culture, mediated imaginaries, and their implications for US power.

Of course, such issues had always featured prominently in LaFeber's work. Already in *The New Empire*, for example, culture and ideational spheres provided a driving force of US foreign relations with the "intellectual formation" of economic and racial anxieties that gave rise to the new American empire of the late 19th century. But by the 1990s, Emily Rosenberg's path-breaking work on business, popular culture, and US global relations,[3] combined with histories of science and technology increasingly attentive to the social, political, and institutional dimensions of knowledge production and dissemination, provided more robust foundations for LaFeber's ever-fertile historical imagination. In an immediate post-Cold War era that seemed to guarantee US hegemony for the foreseeable future, LaFeber focused more intently on how soft power, in the form of mass consumerism, mass communications, scientific knowledge, and technological systems, constituted the key means for the United States to amass and deploy global political capital. In his 1999 SHAFR address, secretaries of state William H. Seward, Elihu Root, and George P. Shultz emerged as movers, shakers, and visionaries who understood and exploited modern technology as means of power, whereas in the Michael Jordan book, "His Airness"

provided a vehicle for interrogating the blend of corporate power, mass media, mass consumerism, and the cult of celebrity that undergirded US cultural hegemony in the 1990s. In both accounts, knowledge and culture, by being embedded within and mobilized by well-organized and powerful corporate and political institutions, defined and perpetuated US power well beyond what the more limited accouterments of formal diplomacy and military dominance could offer.

These works on global capitalism, culture, and corporate power strongly reflected their early post-cold war moment, in which LaFeber described the historical past as a gradual unfolding of accumulated US power that ultimately consolidated American hegemony. By contrast, the present-day era of a hollowed-out middle class, an increasingly unstable and polarized US political system, a complex multipolar global order, and the almost apocalyptic upheaval of warfare, climate change, and a global pandemic allows no such confidence about the durability of US power, or even American nationhood itself. Where does LaFeber's analysis of technological change, corporate power, mass media, and the globalization of sports fit within a radically changed present-day context? In this essay, we offer an appreciation of LaFeber's late 1990s writings about capitalism, while also suggesting the ways in which the so-called cultural and international turns in historical scholarship, as well as the dramatically reduced circumstances of the United States itself two decades later, challenge LaFeber's findings. In particular, global and transnational approaches now emphasize the need for a more dramatic decentering of US power and recognition of a more fluid set of processes and diffuse centers of gravity at work, defined by the co-creation of US and global orders through the reciprocal give-and-take of exchange.

LaFeber himself had reservations about the international turn in the history of US foreign relations and rightly objected to a historiographical leveling that downplayed vast asymmetries of power between different countries and societies. Yet the revisionists' own emphasis on the limitations of American power invited interpretations that emphasized the agency of parties beyond US borders and the exercise of power from below. Although the United States enjoyed and capitalized upon massive advantages within the international system, thanks to the endowment of a settler colonial empire and its wealth of natural resources, the parochialism of US history and its particular strain of American exceptionalism ultimately overestimated American hegemony.[4] From that standpoint, the globalization of US history does not obscure or whitewash the role of the United States within the international system so much as it explains the intricacies of power within a world of uneven, yet interdependent development. At the end of the day, however, LaFeber was not trying to write global history. Throughout much of his career, he sought to understand the United States and explain how its foreign policy exposed and exacerbated the particular vulnerabilities of the American political system. He sought nothing less than to warn his readers about the ever-contradictory and often tenuous state of American democracy and its aspirations, and on those terms, he eminently succeeded.

LaFeber, the Wisconsin School, and the History of Capitalism

Capitalism as an object of historical study has experienced a remarkable resurgence over the past decade. The 2008 financial crisis gave new urgency to discussions of capitalism's ability to unleash chaos, ruin, and widespread human miseries. Meanwhile, the ever more apparent and alarming effects of global climate change and environmental degradation have raised profound questions about capitalism as a way of life and the impossibility of continuing to

ignore as exogenous the massive physical mobilization and cycling of energy and materials that the present-day global economy requires.[5]

In the midst of these developments, Sven Beckert's *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (2014) and a self-proclaimed movement for a "new history of American capitalism" revived interest in the history of American economic life and made the history of capitalism into a flourishing area of research. Exponents of the new history of American capitalism acknowledged that their research program rested upon ample precedents. As Beckert and Christine Desan observed in a 2018 essay, "disciplinary trends in history, economics, political science, and law," particularly earlier scholarship in economic history, the revelations of the new social history of the 1960s and 1970s, the movement launched in the late 1970s to bring the state back into historical analysis, and more recent investigations of political economy, had all paved the way for a reinvigorated history of capitalism. Surprisingly, however, despite an emphasis on the global as one of the hallmarks of the new literature, Beckert and Desan omitted US foreign relations from their overview.[6] Seth Rockman, in an earlier overview, also identified multiple historiographic lineages as candidates for the field's progenitors. In a long list that included New Left labor history, the scholarship on American political development in the 1980s and 1990s, and William Cronon's stunning meld of economic and environmental history in *Nature's Metropolis*, the Wisconsin School once again went without mention.[7]

Such lacunae did not pass unnoticed. In a lively roundtable in the *Journal of American History*, Peter James Hudson identified internationalism as critical analytical terrain and took historians of American capitalism to task for their blinkered and truncated vision. "Despite the recent turns to diaspora, empire, and transnationalism," he observed, "U.S. history remains provincial."[8] Writing in another forum, Paul A. Kramer similarly welcomed the promise of the

field's breadth and ambition, although he expressed skepticism about "the hype" in which "the 'new history of capitalism' label proved an effective brand." In an incisive, rigorous, and theoretically informed analysis, Kramer went on to highlight the legacy of the Wisconsin school and underscore the need to continue to move historical investigations of capitalism beyond the national frame.[9]

The Wisconsin School itself, Kramer pointed out, emerged from a powerful pre-World War II tradition that had aimed an unsparing critique at US financial imperialism in the Caribbean and at a collusion between corporate interests and government that it held responsible for a disastrous US entry into World War I. In a Cold War era that rendered critiques of capitalism unwelcome and even politically risky, William Appleman Williams and the Wisconsin School unapologetically placed capitalism at the center of historical analysis.[10] For observers in a late 19th century era of sensational economic swings between boom and bust, foreign markets promised the magical solution to surplus production at home and all of its attendant social ills, particularly the economic immiseration and labor unrest that threatened the basic stability of an increasingly urban and industrial society. To those who charged him with indulging leftist ideological dogma, Williams had a ready retort that the desperate allure of markets abroad sprang not from any wild imaginings on his part, but from the preoccupations of tradesmen, businessmen, journalists, labor leaders, politicians, religious leaders, and other writers in the pages of trade journals, popular magazines, personal correspondence, and policy documents throughout the 1890s. One simply could not read basic sources from the time period without being hit over the head by repeated calls for American goods to resolve domestic political problems by finding foreign markets.[11]

At the same time, Williams did not merely follow and report upon his sources. In an era dominated by narrative approaches to US political history, his writings displayed an unusual command of political economy, social theory, and comparative analysis. Critics who accused Williams of economic determinism and Marxist assumptions about the inherent instabilities of capitalism and its inevitable crisis, however, missed the centrality of ideology as the driving force in his conception of US foreign relations. Williams, along with other like-minded historians, sought to challenge a neoclassical overconfidence that naturalized liberal economics as the unfolding of its own internal, inexorable logic.[12] As a corrective, Williams appealed not to a rigid Marxian framework but to the power of ideology and its imaginaries to show how political and cultural orders constructed and maintained economic systems and their folkways. At the root of the American dilemma, Williams argued, lay a 19th-century liberalism that believed that a harmony of interests could emerge from the individual pursuit of economic self-interest.[13] From the *Weltanschauung* of liberal economics came the Open Door as the imagined and hoped-for solution to American problems that would simultaneously enrich the world. Tragedy then ensued from the US refusal to accept others' qualms about liberal economic order, particularly Americans' inability to countenance the legitimacy of alternative ideas and grievances that led to revolution.[14]

Williams' historiographical roadmap paved the way for a generation of scholarship at the University of Wisconsin. As discussed elsewhere in this volume, LaFeber's writings throughout his career bore the imprint of Williams' influence. Williams' strident invocation of the Open Door ultimately proved too blunt an instrument for LaFeber's more subtle and fluid analytical leanings, especially when it came to the Cold War, in which a Manichean ideology of geopolitical struggle decoupled itself from late 19th century economic anxieties and gained a life

of its own. But other topics—the economic developmental aspirations of the United States from the American revolution onward, the economic, strategic, and ideological formulations of US leaders and intellectuals in the late 19th century, American overconfidence in the virtues of liberal order, and the counterproductive nature of American antipathy towards other countries' revolutionary political movements in the 20th century—built upon Williams' ideas to become classic themes in LaFeber's own writings throughout his career. LaFeber also reached beyond political economy to incorporate questions of culture, race, gender, and knowledge-making into his understanding of US foreign policy. All of these themes came together in his efforts in the late 1990s to reckon with what capitalism had become and how it had gotten there.

In late June 1999, days before the official release date of *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, LaFeber delivered his SHAFR presidential address on "Technology and American Foreign Relations." At a time when the vast majority of studies in the history of US foreign relations focused on the post-1945 period, the SHAFR lecture epitomized LaFeber's ability to take the long view on both capitalism and US power. As he pointed out in his opening words, dramatically accelerated economic growth distinguished capitalism post-1750 from the previous thousand years of economic activity in Europe. Although LaFeber boldly declared that "technological evolution drove capitalism," he was no technological determinist. In his telling, technological change constituted a shorthand for the combined force of innovation, novel forms of social organization, and the human ambitions behind the political and cultural currents that made 19th- and 20th-century capitalism possible. Visions of US prowess and American nationhood's world-historical destiny to serve as the model for all humanity in the age of republicanism also drove US nation-building from the beginning. The early leaders of the United States—men such as George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison, or

in the next generation, LaFeber's beloved John Quincy Adams—firmly believed in a glorious future for their country, even as the realities of US weakness relative to European powers required a more modest and tenuous strategy of attempting to navigate a predatory geopolitical order as a neutral trading state. In the 1840s, when then senator and future Secretary of State William H. Seward maneuvered to create a legal and political environment that could maximize the capacities of steam power and rapid communications by wire to support US imperial prospects, he tapped into this already well-established exceptionalist tradition at the heart of American nationhood.[15]

Seward, Root, and Shultz, as embodiments of technologically-savvy foresight and nationalist ambition, provided LaFeber with a framing device to analyze what he defined as three distinct periods of economic and political development in the United States: the first and second industrial revolutions, followed by the information revolution of the late 20th century. Seward recognized early on the transformative possibilities opened by steam power and telegraphy. As he moved in his career from the governorship of New York to the US Senate, he mobilized law and political capital to support railways, telegraphy, and other new technologies as drivers of American commercial expansion and enhanced global political status. Like many of his contemporaries, when he contemplated steam-powered ships, he foresaw an ever-burgeoning trade across the Pacific. As secretary of state, Seward also aggressively pursued American dominance in telegraphy, albeit with mixed success. Although Seward did not live to see the age of US technological dominance and economic preeminence, he grasped what LaFeber eloquently described as the "nationalizing, centralizing, and imperialistic" potential of the first industrial revolution. It took a civil war to reconstitute the political edifice required for those nationalizing

possibilities, but with the transition from the first to the second industrial revolution came a new era of US power.[16]

For LaFeber, Elihu Root personified the late 19th and early 20th century world of the second industrial revolution, in which the age of electricity and the combustion engine amplified to dizzying new heights the scope and scale of globalized commerce and labor migration. According to LaFeber's rendering, Root, who served Theodore Roosevelt as both secretary of war and state among his many notable positions, understood that ever more powerful technologies of communications, industrial production, and warfare, made possible by increasingly purposive efforts to tie scientific research to direct commercial and industrial applications, required the vigorous deployment of governmental authority. Only the federal government could assemble the organizational might to advance national agendas through control of strategic waterways, communications, and access to global markets for American trade and finance. Root and his contemporaries felt keenly the vertiginous pace of the 20th century's global entanglements, which embedded the United States within an intricate web of connections that signaled both opportunity and danger. A technological age of modern capitalism promised progress and unprecedented prosperity. Danger, however, loomed from failures of political imagination, the self-immolating tendencies of imperial power, and the revolutions spawned by the intense instability of modern economic, political, and social life. For Root, the United States had no choice but to live in an ever-changing present in which, as LaFeber put it, "the train of the second industrial revolution was already successfully roaring down the tracks." The ongoing professionalization and bureaucratization of governmental institutions, as in the early 20th-century reorganization of the US military and consular service, along with the strengthening of

the Republican party's alliance with corporate America, constituted key means by which Root sought to meet the challenges of a globalizing era.[17]

LaFeber then nimbly jumped ahead to George P. Shultz and the post-industrial information revolution of the late 20th century, in which the challenge of political revolutions abroad that had already confounded Root's generation continued to defy US pretensions of order. For Shultz in the 1980s—and for LaFeber at the end of the 1990s—the full implications of digital technology and its informational possibilities were not yet apparent, and indeed, they arguably remain elusive even today. Shultz had pursued a successful academic career for two decades as an economist before joining the Nixon administration in 1969 as secretary of labor. He subsequently served as director of the Office of Management and the Budget and then secretary of the treasury, before returning to private life as executive vice president of the Bechtel Group, a prominent engineering and project management company. Shultz would eventually head the Bechtel Group as its director and president. Already in the 1950s, Shultz began to sense the revolutionary possibilities of computing for American business enterprise. As secretary of state under Reagan, he continued to track developments in computing, satellite communications, and scientific and technological advancement more generally, and he hailed information technology as the basis of states' economic and political power. States would either learn to exploit new technological capabilities, like the rising Asian "tigers," or they could sink into obsolescence and decay, a trend that the Soviet Union was hard put to reverse in the 1980s. Information technologies, Shultz quickly perceived, also portended new foreign policy challenges through their decentralizing potential, which would empower and embolden non-state actors ranging from corporations to terrorists.[18] Shultz sometimes overreached, as revealed by his irrational exuberance in the 2010s for a young entrepreneur named Elizabeth Holmes and

what would ultimately turn out to be the fraudulent claims of unprecedented advancements in blood testing technology by her company, Theranos.[19] Long before disruption became a 21st century watchword in the heady, hyped-up world of Silicon Valley startups, however, Shultz and other apostles of digital technology in the 1980s believed a new age in capitalism and global affairs had already arrived.

Where LaFeber used traditional political elites to explore the co-evolution of technology, capitalism, and US power in his SHAFR address, in *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism* he turned to basketball stardom, the Nike Corporation, and satellite television to foreground culture and US soft power within a novel stage of corporate capitalism's relentless evolution. Americans in the 1990s, LaFeber argued, found themselves living in a new era not because of the end of the Cold War, but because of "the information revolution, the new power of US capital and transnational corporations to drive that revolution, and the reaction—sometimes violent—in the United States and abroad to that revolution."[20] At the center of these tectonic shifts stood the G.O.A.T., the already legendary Michael Jordan.

The transformation of the National Basketball Association (NBA) from fading American sports league into global supercommodity in the 1980s and 1990s epitomized what LaFeber called "the new global capitalism." Although basketball, a quintessential American invention, globalized early and began to travel with Christian missionaries from the United States to Asia and other parts of the world in the 1890s, the NBA throughout most of its early history was an anemic business enterprise that, by the early 1980s, looked destined for bankruptcy. The NBA turned itself around through shrewd business acumen, which tied professional basketball's fortunes to the expanding horizons of the multinational corporation and the new arena of satellite communications. Nike, as an exemplar of multinationals' increasingly agile organizational

structures, blended technological innovation, marketing, and nimble, spatially defused modes of cross-border operation, particularly the exploitation of cheap and well-regimented labor available in Asian factories. As globalization reshaped the geography of manufacturing, it also created new markets and consumerist fantasies. With satellite television, American media corporations developed global audiences and made the NBA into the stuff of excitement, desire, and sociability worldwide.[21] In this dizzying, technologically-driven opening of economic possibility, Jordan's image of show-stopping athleticism and on-court commanding presence provided the currency and cultural capital that generated ever-ballooning profits for Nike and transformed American sports into a global commercial enterprise.

As NBA basketball drew in new viewers and the Swoosh garnered more and more consumer dollars, Jordan himself carefully, albeit not without missteps, tended to his public image and cultivated a strictly apolitical persona. Promoting his brand and maximizing his wealth appeared to be MJ's priorities. As LaFeber observed, Jordan remained conspicuously silent when it came to labor conditions in Chinese factories, a relative dearth of opportunities for African Americans within Nike's corporate structure and the NBA's managerial echelons, and stark episodes in which the consumerist allure of Air Jordan sneakers fomented inner city violence among covetous teens. Jordan also carefully avoided comment on election campaigns that challenged entrenched racism, such as Harvey Gantt's attempt to unseat Jesse Helms in North Carolina's US Senate race in 1990. Although critics might have wished for Jordan to emulate Jackie Robinson, Muhammad Ali, Arthur Ashe, or other African American athletes who transcended the entertainment value of sport with their political commitments, perhaps it could be said that Jordan perfectly embodied the economic values of an evolving neoliberal era. LaFeber grimly noted that in a United States where a third of African American children lived in

poverty, Nike's and Jordan's signature advertising slogan, "Just Do It," rang of empty promise for young people who had to make their way in a post-industrial US economy. Meanwhile, as Nike navigated the era of Title IX by creating sneaker lines for American women, female workers on production lines in Asia suffered from low wages, gendered labor exploitation, and worse.[22]

LaFeber was not the first writer to cover these intertwined developments, but as a historian of US foreign relations, he tied the dynamics of late 20th century capitalism, new technologies, and sports-based consumerism to American globalism in the form of soft power and US cultural hegemony. As commodities, NBA basketball, Nike sneakers, and Jordan's image of transcendent athletic prowess added up not merely to a multi-billion dollar industry. Combined they captivated foreign consumers across global ideological fault lines with American popular culture's universalist messages of energy, innovation, and abundance. Jazz and Hollywood films in the 1920s, or the "Coca-colonization" of the Cold War had already long served US interests, but "the power of that popular culture," LaFeber contended, "multiplied with the technological marvels" that appeared in the 1960s and 1970s. The globalized power of media, combined with ever-more sophisticated marketing and advertising techniques, shaped "the language, eating habits, clothes and television watching of peoples around the earth."[23] But even as critics in the 1980s and 1990s, like their predecessors earlier in the 20th century, indulged in endless hand-wringing about American cultural imperialism, LaFeber also identified the ease with which new communications technologies would defy centralized control and US dominance. In his postscript to the book's post-9/11 edition, he pointed to the expanded reach of global terrorism as evidence of the limits of American consumer culture to win allegiances abroad. In addition, he highlighted the deft ability of Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network to

exploit satellite phones, the internet, traditional Islamic financial systems largely invisible to big corporate banks and to governments, and a global media environment more diverse and less penetrable by US capital than most Americans acknowledged.[24] The promise of US soft power ultimately gave way to the more open-ended, multivalent proclivities of global capitalism itself.

Culture, Knowledge, and the Decentering of US power

LaFeber's approach to technology and foreign relations focused on a United States always ready to capitalize upon innovation as a means of building and maintaining hegemony, while his account of global sport assumed that economic and cultural power radiated inexorably outward from an American core. In both cases, he wrote within a US-centered tradition of historical writing, in which the global constituted an ecosystem in which US leaders strategized and American power flowed. Other societies either accepted or resisted the American juggernaut, but the extent to which they actively shaped the form and direction of technological systems, knowledge production, popular culture, or global capitalism remained largely unexamined territory.

More recent scholarship on US foreign relations has challenged such US-centric narratives and analytical framings. Historians have increasingly sought to decenter the United States in favor of globalized conceptions of power that emphasize local agency and the complex dynamics by which ideas, goods, economic conditions, and political relationships evolve through reciprocal interchanges, rather than top-down, unidirectional impositions or diffusion from metropolitan centers. The new social history of the 1960s and 1970s, with its concern for the rich texture of everyday lived experience and agency from below, did more than simply expand the range of historical actors who attracted scholarly attention—it upended assumptions about

the hegemonic nature of power. For example, where historians of chattel slavery had once taken for granted the helplessness and powerlessness of persons subjected to involuntary servitude and systematic violence, Eugene Genovese's path-breaking study, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, lavishly described a social world rife with deliberate obfuscation and other forms of resistance. The enslaved subverted authority at every turn, whether by maintaining spiritual traditions, celebrating the virtues of the trickster, denying remunerative labor to slaveholders, attempting escape, or otherwise contesting the totalizing aspirations of a brutal institution.[25] A decade later, James C. Scott's influential *Weapons of the Weak* similarly emphasized peasants' challenge to the self-proclaimed logics of markets and modern state power not just through formal political organization, but everyday acts of resistance.[26] Such writings made it increasingly difficult to insist on either the top-down power of the state or the overweening influence of a global superpower within the international system, when resistance, creative adaptation, and the resilience of local folkways shaped the nexus between state, society, and international relations even amid massive asymmetries of power.

By the 1990s, right around the time that LaFeber was tackling Michael Jordan and global capitalism, other scholars increasingly appealed to cultural encounter and cross-pollination as analytical alternatives to cultural imperialism, in which symbiotic processes of give-and-take made foreign and local parties both actants and acted upon. For example, one important intervention in the field, *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (1998), stressed the blurred boundaries, messy exchanges, and local remaking of meanings that defined the US cultural presence in Latin America, even as the United States undeniably possessed and mobilized unmatched economic, political, and military resources. The challenge, as the volume's editors put it, required recognizing "the unequal

nature of Latin America's encounter with the United States" while simultaneously offering "a history that is culturally sensitive, multivocal, and interactive."[27] Rumors in the Dominican Republic about worm-infested "gringo chicken," for example, suggested on the one hand the dominance of American style production methods in the Dominican poultry industry, but on the other hand, they also connoted Dominican resistance to agri-business and its globalizing, homogenizing threat to the locally raised patio chickens that betokened home, family, and Dominican identity.[28]

By the late 1990s, anthropological studies of big-name American brands and their reception abroad also focused on how locals made their own meanings out of novel cultural experiences. The writers in James L. Watson's edited volume *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia* (1997) uncovered a broad range of responses to fast food burger consumption that had little to do with corporate executives' imagined marketplace or the ability of US corporate capitalism to Americanize foreign consumers. In a 1990s Beijing still adjusting to the corrosive novelty of global capitalism, McDonald's encompassed diverse meanings: a worldly dining experience that created a fictive and vicarious sense of travel to foreign capitals, an encounter with Western-style modernity for parents anxious to acquaint their children with a new economic future, or a clean, well-lit, and wholesome site for long dates by young people. Even local appetites responded differently to the same number of calories. The *xianbing*-like burger, with a bun rather than rice, constituted a mere snack that left one hungry for a full meal afterwards.[29] Such localized findings suggested that whatever it may mean for people in East Asia to eat a McDonald's hamburger, they are not simply falling victim to a homogenizing Coca-colonization. From this perspective, a cultural study of Nike sneakers, basketball, and NBA superstardom might look very different in a close ethnographic study of consumption, adaptation, and

localization than it did in LaFeber's account of American-driven market penetration and the unidirectional emanation of US cultural power. A soft power so malleable that it is endlessly transmutable and transmissible may, in the end, not be power at all.

Global histories and their decentering ethos have remade historical understandings of knowledge production as well. In his SHAFR address, LaFeber presciently accorded knowledge production a central role in his account of technology and US power, and he did so at a time when historians of science had only just begun to go beyond traditional intellectual history approaches to incorporate society, politics, and global power relations into their analyses. History of science originally imagined the field as studying the unfolding of an analytical architecture of scientific ideas according to their own internal logic of discovery, and with a premium placed on understanding the emergence of key concepts, such as Newtonian mechanics, Darwinian evolution, or Einsteinian relativity theory. The sciences of state and empire—mapping, navigation, mineral and botanical surveying, and early ethnography—did not rate highly according to traditional tastes. When LaFeber pointed to the work of Lucile Brockway and Lewis Pyenson on science, technology, and global imperialism, he was referencing important early contributions in what has become a burgeoning field in the two decades since.[30]

Questions about expertise, scientific knowledge production, alternative ways of knowing, and their interplay with systems of power now occupy center stage within the history of science, and they are commonplace in histories of capitalism and of US foreign relations as well. Moreover, the old notion that innovations in scientific knowledge simply spread outward from metropolitan European centers in the early modern period and 19th century, or from the United States and other major powers in the 20th century, has been replaced by decentering tendencies, which emphasize the contact zones and emplaced cultural encounters in diverse parts of the

world that reshaped scientific understandings.[31] Postcolonial analyses, for example, have stressed that the forms of modern science associated with colonial rule grew not from the introduction by self-proclaimed advanced societies of enlightened order on unruly nature and alien peoples, but out of the cultural encounters in which novel mixtures of peoples and places coalesced to generate new ideas.[32] Historical studies of natural history, taxonomy, and empire have also shown how projects of classification inevitably relied upon local knowledge of species, particularly the traditional names and cultural markers attached to them, even as the creation of universalized knowledge through taxonomical practice demanded the erasure of vernacular understandings.[33] The much-vaunted internationalism of science itself, as one of us has written, arguably has less to do with an intrinsic universalism of scientific knowledge than it does with global geopolitical conditions that either facilitate or obstruct flows of knowledge.[34] As with culture, scientific knowledge, too, moves through intricately dispersed entanglements and cross-currents of ideas, information, and constructions of meaning.

From the standpoint of more recent scholarship, LaFeber's depiction of a new global capitalism and American consumerist fantasies emanating outwards from a US center of Jordan-esque prowess and US corporate clout overlooked multiple sources of agency and myriad contestations at work. The rapidity with which the edifice of post-cold war, American-driven capitalism and consumerism has crumbled perhaps suggests that its claims of power were no more than a façade in the first place. In 2019, in response to pressure from the Chinese government and business counterparts in China, the NBA hastily disavowed the tweets of the Houston Rockets' general manager in support of protests against a Chinese crackdown on political freedoms in Hong Kong.[35] China's 21st-century capacity to actively shape professional basketball, and not merely buy into it, was nowhere on the horizon in LaFeber's depiction of a

Jordan-centered economic and cultural juggernaut twenty years earlier. The power to enter new markets, however, is also the power to be consumed by them.

Turning Outward and Returning Inward: The US in the World, and in the United States

Amid the decentering impulses of 1990s scholarship, LaFeber's account of capitalism and US cultural relations remained decidedly American-centric, as did almost all of his work. The most prominent exception came with *The Clash*, in which LaFeber relied on translators, including one of the co-authors here, in order to wrestle with Japanese-language sources and explore on level terms both countries' intertwined histories of engagement and imperial expansion within a complex, ever-shifting global order. As Anne L. Foster and Andrew Rotter have elaborated elsewhere in this volume, the approach opened LaFeber to opprobrium from East Asia experts. His earlier studies of Latin America, by contrast, focused more exclusively on US power and the human suffering it inflicted. Consequently, as Lorena Oropeza and James F. Siekmeier have noted in this collection, Latin Americanists sometimes took issue with *Inevitable Revolutions* and *The Panama Canal* for denying agency to the peoples, societies, and governments of the region. One-way depictions of cultural expansionism also risk neglecting all of the ways in which individuals and societies do not act as passive recipients of popular culture, but instead create new meanings out of everyday cultural encounters. As one of us has shown in a study of baseball, for example, Japanese people made "America's game" into their own.[36] More recently, Japan's championship roster in the 2023 World Baseball Classic, which sported five "Japanese" US Major Leaguers, including half-Dutch American Lars Nootbaar and half-Iranian Darvish Yu, illustrates how attempting to engrave "nationality" into cultural formations is fundamentally a fool's errand.

One can therefore lament the limitations of US-centered approaches and take issue with how they overestimate the level of US power and control in shaping global structures, institutions, and processes. Yet as much as LaFeber acknowledged and admired the enlarged scope of US international history, its increasingly multi-archival, multilingual, globe-trotting source base, its willingness to engage race, gender, and culture in novel ways, and its openness to contemplating power from below, he also remained, at heart, a US historian.[37] As he unabashedly declared in the tenth edition of *America, Russia and the Cold War,* his work, "unlike part of some recent, so-called trans-national historical approaches. . . examines the United States not as part of larger trans-national movements . . . but it sees the United States as the major world power which often unilaterally decides much else, including on a large scale, who lives and who dies."[38] LaFeber hewed to this line throughout his career because, at the end of the day, he believed that understanding capitalism and its imperatives was not an end in itself, but rather a means for interrogating the basic viability of the United States as a political project.

Questions about the state of American democracy and society were never far from LaFeber's thoughts. Indeed, they formed the heart and soul of his scholarly endeavors. In *The New Empire* (1963), US expansionism in the late 19th century emerged precisely from the economic dilemmas of an industrial society and the desperate hope that trade abroad could preserve political institutions at home. Four years later, the first edition of *America, Russia, and the Cold War* flagged the disturbing trend towards concentrated executive authority and expansion of Presidential power.[39] At a raw moment on 12 May 1970, when LaFeber spoke at Cornell's Bailey Hall to advocate publicly on behalf of the Hatfield-McGovern Amendment just days after the Kent State killings, he led not with foreign policy disasters, but with "the onrushing problems of racism and poverty in American society." Racism and poverty, he

declared, were the first and foremost of three "historical forces…bearing down upon us" that together endangered the cohesiveness of American society and a better future in the United States. "[R]acism, poverty, inequality, and injustice," he warned, "threaten over the long-run to wound this society more deeply than the Indo-China War itself." Notably, when LaFeber updated the essay four days later, he referenced not Kent State, but the deaths of two Black students shot by the National Guard at Jackson State College in Mississippi on May 15.[40]

The inseparability of the nation's foreign policy from its domestic political trajectory became increasingly explicit in LaFeber's writings in the 1980s and 1990s. In response to "Marking Time," Charles Maier's famously critical analysis of the state of diplomatic history as a research field, LaFeber in 1981, rather than embracing Maier's call to internationalize the study of US foreign relations, doubled down on the need to focus on the United States. He pointed first to the reality of asymmetries of power and cautioned, "What he [Maier] terms 'international history'…will be misleading if all parts of the 'system' are considered to be roughly equal, or if the influence of that system on the United States is assumed to be as great as the American influence on the system."[41] That observation, however, was mere prologue to LaFeber's primary concern with understanding foreign relations in order to comprehend the US political system's prospects at home. US diplomatic historians rightly kept the United States at the center, he argued, because "[t]he United States is the only nation in the 20th century that continually exercises power globally while maintaining a liberal system at home. The parts cannot be separated, and Americans have increasingly believed that the exercise of their power overseas is necessary to keep their domestic system functioning."[42]

The need to reckon with the imbrication of foreign and domestic, moreover, constituted a political imperative and not a matter of mere intellectual interest. LaFeber contended that amid

an already visible decline in US power, scholars faced "an additional responsibility," namely, the need "to examine how a liberal domestic system arose within, and became an integral part of, the global empire, and how the liberalization and individual freedoms can be protected as national power suffers a relative, inevitable decline." This central problem, LaFeber concluded, constituted mission enough: "To trace the rise and relative decline of a three-century-old-empire, while relating its story to a unique political experiment in self-government, is a sufficient agenda for any discipline."[43]

This preoccupation with the meaning of empire abroad for democracy at home, which LaFeber explained so eloquently in his response to Maier, became increasingly urgent for LaFeber as the years went by. It drove his indignation and anger over American coercion and hideous violence in Central America in *Inevitable Revolutions*, and it expressed itself in more measured form in his textbook, *The American Age*, with the expansion of presidential power as one of the book's key themes. Hence his 1999 SHAFR address hinted at the challenges that the information revolution posed for political systems, while *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism* concluded with an acute sense of uneasiness about what late 1990s capitalism would mean for political life in the United States and its democratic experiment.

In his SHAFR presidential lecture, LaFeber previewed what he called "the Tocqueville problem." As Richard Immerman and Eric Alterman discuss in their contribution to this volume, LaFeber would explicate this conundrum more fully several years later in his final book, *The Deadly Bet*. In his preliminary examination, he concentrated on George Shultz's perspective to convey the sense that although the information revolution undermined states that sought tight control over the flow of ideas, its decentralizing tendencies also exacerbated the unwieldy free-for-all that characterized democratic societies. As Tocqueville observed, democracy's fractious

nature militated against the political consensus necessary for a nation to pursue an effective foreign policy. But technology, LaFeber speculated, offered a potential end run around the restraints of a fickle and unruly citizenry that could be goaded by the unifying forces of warfare and national security crises but easily turn impatient in the longer term. "The Raytheon Doctrine"—that is, the ability to engage in asymmetric warfare by using air power rather than risking American lives on the ground—promised to "make fighting certain wars from thirty thousand feet sufficiently effective, and safe for the society deploying the weapons, that domestic politics are rendered less important."[44]

Meanwhile, in the Michael Jordan book, LaFeber closed his account of a first post-Cold War era that rode the giddy wave of global, basketball-fueled capitalism and other frenzied manifestations of American consumerism with a sober note about markets and politics. The end of the cold war had allowed free market ideology to run riot, but skepticism about the necessity of liberal political institutions to market economies was already brewing in Russia and China. Americans, too, had qualms about the market as a basis of a viable social order. LaFeber quoted financier and philanthropist George Soros on this point: "We can have a market economy, but we cannot have a market society."[45] The limits of consumerism and the market as a way of life and foundation for a cohesive, functional society would only become more and more apparent over the next two decades. As LaFeber himself observed in a 2007 email to James F. Siekmeier, if he were to revise the book, he would "make the anti-globalization points sharper" and focus even more closely on the disruptive social and political effects of late 20th and early 21st century globalization.[46]

Alongside profound and disturbing economic shifts, US militarism also loomed as an existential threat to American democracy. As LaFeber observed in the book's expanded edition,

the terrorist attacks of 9/11 replaced post-Cold War complacency with novel opportunities for US misadventurism in the world and its attendant risks for domestic political order. The George W. Bush administration's war on terror demanded that Americans accept heightened secrecy, broader governmental latitude, and reduced state accountability. By whipping up the politics of fear, LaFeber wrote, the White House "triggered a crisis for US democracy in the aftermath of September 11." He explained, "Having developed new technologies that had entranced much of the world, Americans had to begin surrendering a right to know what their soldiers were doing on battlefields, and what their government was doing in its policies. The new global capitalism that Americans had taken for granted as their fast-food, sports-obsessed culture penetrated other nations, had turned to threaten some fundamentals of American democracy itself."[47] Combined with the technological and organizational capacities of the new global capitalism, elevated state power now put democracy at further peril.

One can ask whether LaFeber overreached in trying to tie Al Qaeda's version of global terrorism to global capitalism and a struggle of "capital versus culture."[48] His more fundamental concern with the anti-democratic tendencies of US foreign relations, however, requires consideration. If we, the co-authors of this essay, have chosen to decenter the United States in our own work, it is because we have sought to move away from American exceptionalism and explore instead the commonalities in states' navigation of globalized political, economic, and cultural relations. LaFeber, however, wanted to understand what was distinctive about the United States, particularly the struggles of a nation that from the beginning portrayed itself as a new kind of self-governing society, yet time and again pursued policies and ways of being in the world that empowered authoritarianism abroad and placed liberal democracy at home in jeopardy.

At one level, this tension may be innate to a settler colonial nation that aspired to be an "empire of liberty" in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, or a United States that thought it could forestall political crisis at home by pursuing empire abroad in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, only to discover that it could not have a liberal economic order without illiberal interventionism. The steadily accumulating tendency toward expanded executive authority and its resistance to oversight, especially when it came to foreign policy, further eroded democratic possibility and stymied democratic practices throughout the 20th century. Yet, the suspicion of centralized power at the heart of LaFeber's work is also characteristic of US political culture, especially for someone who grew up with the instinctive populism of the Midwest. He cautioned that despite the seductive manifestations of US soft power courtesy of Microsoft, Nike, and Michael Jordan, and the perennial appeal of economic and military hard power, Americans could not sustain a global empire without incurring its costs, both for themselves and for others. That, in the end, is the dilemma not just of Tocqueville, but of American exceptionalism.

Endnotes

[1] Email, Sandy LaFeber to Jessica Wang, 13 February 2023 (on LaFeber's basketball-playing days and her first visit to Walkerton); email, Anne L. Foster to Jessica Wang, 14 February 2023 and Lloyd Gardner to Jessica Wang, 14 February 2023 (on Cornell football); email, Richard Immerman to Jessica Wang, 13 February 2023 and Lloyd Gardner to Jessica Wang, 14 February 2023 (on the OAH baseball outing); email, Suzanne Kahl to Jessica Wang, 19 February 2023 (on the 2015 playoff game).

[2] Email, Suzanne Kahl to Jessica Wang, 19 February 2023.

[3] See, for example, Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

[4] As Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu has succinctly emphasized, historians need "to appraise the nature of American power in international relations in a less America-centric way," and to understand "'American expansionism'…as a local instantiation of global patterns and processes." Guthrie-Shimizu, *Transpacific Field of Dreams: How Baseball Linked the United States and Japan in Peace and War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 4-5.

[5] For a good introduction to the Anthropocene and its analytical counterpart, the Capitalocene, see Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *The Shock of the Anthropocene* (London and New York: Verso, 2016, originally published as Editions du Seuil, *L'événement Anthropocène: La terre, l'histoire et nous*, 2013).

[6] Sven Beckert and Christine Desan, "Introduction," in *American Capitalism: New Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 1-32, esp. 6-9, 13, and 31n53 (quotation on 9).

[7] Seth Rockman, "Review Essay: What Makes the History of Capitalism Newsworthy?" *Journal of the Early Republic* 34 (Fall 2014): 439-66, on 441-42.

[8] "Interchange: The History of Capitalism," *Journal of American History* 101 (September 2014): 503-36, on 535.

[9] Paul A. Kramer, "Embedding Capital: Political-Economic History, the United States, and the World," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 15 (2016): 331-62, quotations on 333.

[10] Kramer, "Embedding Capital," 339-40.

[11] Consider the opening chapter of *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, in which Williams mined the commercial and industrial press in order to reconstruct the economic anxieties of the 1890s and the search for foreign markets as a critically necessary outlet for US surplus production. William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, Fiftieth Anniversary Edition* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009; originally published Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1959), ch. 1.

[12] E. P. Thompson's magisterial study, *The Making of the English Working Class*, constituted not just a path-breaking work that helped to launch the new social history, but an incisive critique of neoclassical economics. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966; originally published 1963). Gabiel Kolko's *The Triumph of Conservatism* also attempted to denaturalize American industrial and finance capitalism by stressing the political circumstances, particularly a corporate liberal alliance between business and political elites, that undergirded the evolution of the US economy in the early 20th century. Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

[13] Kramer, "Embedding Capital," 333-34.

[14] Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 93-94, 104-07.

[15] Walter LaFeber, "Presidential Address: Technology and U.S. Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 24 (January 2000): 1-19, quotation on 1; LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad since 1750* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989), 18-21; George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 14-16).

[16] LaFeber, "Technology and U.S. Foreign Relations," 3-7, quotation on 6.

[17] LaFeber, "Technology and U.S. Foreign Relations," 8-12, quotation on 10.

[18] LaFeber, "Technology and U.S. Foreign Relations," 12-17.

[19] On the Theranos story, including both Shultz and Henry Kissinger's enthusiasm for Holmes, see John Carreyou, *Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018). Holmes was ultimately convicted on fraud charges, and in May 2023, she began to serve an 11-year prison sentence. Bobby Allyn, "Elizabeth Holmes has started her 11-year prison sentence," National Public Radio, 30 May 2023, https://www.npr.org/2023/05/30/1178728092/elizabeth-holmes-prison-sentence-theranos-fraud-silicon-valley (July 2023).

[20] Walter LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, new and expanded edition (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002; originally published 1999), 13.

[21] LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, 47-48, 54-74.

[22] LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, 50-51, 90-94, 144, 147-48.

[23] LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, 18, 19.

[24] LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, ch. 7.

[25] Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

[26] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).

[27] Gilbert M. Joseph, "Close Encounters: Toward a New Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations," in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 3-46, quotation on 15.

[28] Lauren Derby, "Gringo Chicken with Worms: Food and Nationalism in the Dominican Republic," in *Close Encounters of Empire*, 451-93.

[29] Yunxiang Yan, "McDonald's in Beijing: The Localization of Americana," in *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia*, ed. James L. Watson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 39-76.

[30] Here LaFeber cited Lucile Brockway, *Science and Colonial Expansion: The Role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens* (New York: Academic Press, 1979); Lewis Pyenson, *Cultural Imperialism and Exact Sciences: German Expansion Overseas, 1900-1930* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985); and Pyenson, *Civilizing Mission: Exact Sciences and French Overseas Expansion, 1830-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). Brockway's study was particularly ahead of its time and garnered mixed appraisals upon publication. In one of the few unreservedly positive reviews, Susan Sheets-Pyenson notably described the book as offering "an exciting alternative to studies

of modern science that ignore the 'world system' of capitalism." Sheets-Pyenson, review of *Science and Colonial Expansion*, in *Isis* 72 (September 1981): 495-96, quotation on 496. The book experienced a second life after its republication by Yale University Press in 2002, and it is now recognized as a classic work on natural history, colonialism, and state power.

[31] The classic and now much-maligned "diffusionist" argument comes from George Basalla, "The Spread of Western Science," *Science* 156 (5 May 1967): 611-22.

[32] See, for example, Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650-1900* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; originally published Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2006).

[33] Geoff Bil, "Indexing the Indigenous: Plants, Peoples and Empire in the Long Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 2018); Kathleen C. Gutierrez, "The Region of Imperial Strategy: Regino García, Sebastián Vidal, Mary Clemens, and the Consolidation of International Botany in the Philippines, 1858-1936" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2020), ch. 5.

[34] Jessica Wang, "Knowledge, State Power, and the Invention of International Science," in *Knowledge Flows in a Global Age: A Transnational Approach*, ed. John Krige (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 31-73.

[35] Daniel Victor, "Hong Kong Protests Put N.B.A. on Edge in China," *New York Times*, 7 October 2019, updated 21 October 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/07/sports/basketball/nba-china-hong-kong.html (January 2023); Jordan Valinsky, "How one tweet snowballed into the NBA's worst nightmare," CNN Business, 11 October 2019, https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/09/business/nba-china-hong-kong-explainer/index.html (January 2023). On the intertwined history of the NBA and China, see Brook Larmer, *Operation Yao Ming: The Chinese Sports Empire, American Big Business, and the Making of an NBA Superstar* (New York: Gotham Books, 2005).

[36] Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu, *Transpacific Field of Dreams*.

[37] On his understanding of the state of the field, see, for example, Walter LaFeber, "The World and the United States," *American Historical Review* 100 (October 1995): 1015-1033, on 1027-31.

[38] Walter LaFeber. *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2006* (New York, McGraw Hill, 2008), xii.

[39] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1966* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967), esp. 60, 77, 79, 92, 104, 168, 182, 197, and 258.

[40] Walter LaFeber, "The Indochina War," typescript, "Speech Delivered by Professor Walter LaFeber of Cornell University, May 12, 1970, at Bailey Hall (Revised and expanded, May 16)." Accessible at forthcoming SMU CPH URL.

[41] "Responses to Charles S. Maier, 'Marking Time: The Historiography of International Relations,'" *Diplomatic History* 5 (Fall 1981): 353-82, on 362. LaFeber made a similar point more than a quarter of a century later, when he warned that "A major problem with transnational history or, as many job descriptions now call a variation, international history, is that, in the effort to be inclusive, the realities of power are too often avoided. Those realities are sometimes sacrificed to the illusion of perspective." Walter LaFeber, "Some Perspectives in U.S. Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 31 (June 2007): 423-26, on 424.

[42] "Responses to Charles S. Maier," 363.

[43] *Ibid*, 363 and 364.

[44] LaFeber, "Technology and U.S. Foreign Relations," 14, 18-19. Interestingly, although LaFeber referred directly to "the Tocqueville problem" in his SHAFR address, and it constituted a throughline in his famous lectures in his survey course on US foreign relations, he did not use the phrase in *The Deadly Bet*.

[45] LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, 164.

[46] Email, Walter LaFeber to James Siekmeier, 18 November 2007.

[47] LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, 183.

[48] LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, 162. For an example of another perspective, Middle East historian James L. Gelvin has suggested that al-Qaeda had more in common with anarchism than with any kind of ideology of civilizational struggle, and that its anti-globalization leanings appealed "to those alienated not only from the current global economic and state systems, but from non-anarchist alternatives to amending those systems as well." Those sources of alienation, he contended, were not primarily about the stultifying homogenization of an Americanized global culture of consumerism, but reflected the real material deprivations of late 20th- and early 21st century globalization. On this point, he also expressed regrets about some of his own earlier writings on globalization and al-Qaeda. Gelvin, "Al-Qaeda and Anarchism: A Historian's Reply to Terrorology," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20 (2008): 563-581, quotation on 577.