

Much has changed since “An Anglosphere Primer” was published on this website in 2002. The author’s thinking has advanced in many ways worth following.

In 2004, James C. Bennett’s *The Anglosphere Challenge* ([table of contents](#)) was published by Rowman & Littlefield. Reading of this book is essential to understand the full implications of British exit from the European Union.

In 2016 Bennett’s ebook, *A Time for Audacity*, appeared on Amazon, intended to encourage a “leave” vote in the referendum for British exit from the European Union (Brexit).

A Time for Audacity provides a reference model for a future commonwealth union, restricted at first to the UK (perhaps only Britain), Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and tells stories to illustrate the differences such a union could make in the lives of individual citizens.

A Time for Audacity is described here, with a link to the ebook on Amazon:

<http://explorersfoundation.org/AU.html>

An Anglosphere Primer

James C. Bennett, copyright ©2001, 2002

Presented to the Foreign Policy Research Institute

Over the past several years, a new term, Anglosphere, has crept into political and social discussion in the English-speaking world. This term, which can be defined briefly as the set of English-speaking, Common Law nations, implies far more than merely the sum of all persons who employ English as a first or second language. To be part of the Anglosphere requires adherence to the fundamental customs and values that form the core of English-speaking cultures. These include individualism, rule of law, honoring contracts and covenants, and the elevation of freedom to the first rank of political and cultural values.

Nations comprising the Anglosphere share a common historical narrative in which the Magna Carta, the English and American Bills of Rights, and such Common Law principles as trial by jury, presumption of innocence, "a man's home is his castle", and "a man's word is his bond" are taken for granted. Thus persons or communities who happen to communicate or do business in English are not necessarily part of the Anglosphere, unless their cultural values have also been shaped by those values of the historical English-speaking civilization.

The Anglosphere, as a network civilization without a corresponding political form, has necessarily imprecise boundaries. Geographically, the densest nodes of the Anglosphere are found in the United States and the United Kingdom, while Anglophone regions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and South Africa are powerful and populous outliers. The educated English-speaking populations of the Caribbean, Oceania, Africa and India constitute the Anglosphere's frontiers.

What Anglosphere Theory Does And Does Not Hold

The Anglospherist school of thought asserts that the English-speaking nations have not only formed a distinct branch of Western civilization for most of history, they are now becoming a distinct civilization in their own right. Western in origin but no longer entirely Western in composition and nature, this civilization is marked by a particularly strong civil society, which is the source of its long record of successful constitutional government and economic prosperity. The Anglosphere's continuous leadership of the Scientific-Technological Revolution from the seventeenth century to the twenty-first century stems from these characteristics and is thus likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Finally, beginning in World War I and continuing into the post-Cold War world, Anglosphere nations have developed mutual cooperative institutions. The Anglosphere potential is to expand these close collaborations into deeper ties in trade, defense, free movement of peoples, and scientific cooperation, all bound together by our common language, culture, and values.

Anglosphere theorists promote more and stronger cooperative institutions, not to build some English-speaking superstate on the model of the European Union, or to annex Britain, Canada, or Australia to the United States, but rather to protect the English-speaking nations' common values from external threats and internal fantasies. Thus, Anglospherists call on all English-speaking nations to abandon Haushoferian fantasies of geographical blocs: on America to downgrade its hemispherist ambitions, on Britain to rethink its Europeanist illusions, and on Australia to reject its "Asian identity" fallacy. Far from a centralizing federation, the best form of association is what I call a "network commonwealth": a linked series of cooperative institutions, evolved from existing structures like trade agreements, defense alliances, and cooperative programs. Rather than despising the variable geometry principle, it would embrace it, forming coalitions of the willing to respond to emerging situations. Anglosphere institutions would be open and nonexclusive; Britain, America, Canada, Australia, and others would be free to maintain other regional ties as they saw fit.

Anglospherism is assuredly not the racist Anglo-Saxonism dating from the era around 1900, nor the sentimental attachment of the Anglo-American Special Relationship of the decades before and after World War II. Any consideration of the Anglosphere concept should indeed include examination of previous attempts to create institutional frameworks for the English-speaking world. However, any comparison of the ideas and times of such Anglo-Saxonists as Sir Alfred Milner, George E.G. Catlin, Cecil Rhodes and Theodore Roosevelt to those of contemporary Anglospherists must also take into account the considerable increase in understanding of the world that has come to pass over those years. Contemporary Anglospherist thought bears roughly the same relation to past Anglo-Saxonism as current evolutionary thought bears to the simplistic Darwinism of Milner's contemporaries.

Anglo-Saxonism relied on underlying assumptions of an Anglo-Saxon race, and sought to unite racial "cousins." It saw the British Empire and the United States (and sometimes also the Germans) as the building blocks of the Anglo-Saxon club, which in most proposed versions was some species

of framework for mediating conflicts of interest between the building blocks. In short, it was a formula by which London and New York might jointly manage their chunks of the world without conflict. The movement was undermined by the First World War and the Great Depression, as well as the opposition to the formula that arose many of its would-be participants. Dublin, Ottawa, and Canberra saw less and less need to defer to London in matters of defense and foreign policy, much less to allow their relationship with Washington to be run through Whitehall. However, the Anglo-Saxonist sentiments and institutions (such as the Rhodes Scholarships and the English-Speaking Union) did prepare the way for the highly effective collaboration of U.S., British, and Commonwealth forces in the Second World War and the Cold War.

Anglospherism is based on the intellectual understanding of the roots of both successful market economies and constitutional democracies in strong civil society; in the understanding of the multigenerational persistence of cultural factors in the success of maintaining strong civil society; and in the awareness of the depth of cooperation possible among such societies to a degree not possible among weaker or nonexistent civil societies.

Anglosphere theory examines the reality that on almost any ranking of the characteristics of successful civil societies -- prosperity, political freedom, social trust, new company formation and innovation -- the Anglosphere nations form a significant cluster at the top, accompanied only by the Scandinavian countries and a few outliers such as Switzerland.

Anglo-Saxonists of the early twentieth century were concerned that mass immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe was diluting America's Anglo-Saxon stock with "unassimilable" newcomers, and that over time the population would have less and less in common with British and Commonwealth peoples. In fact, the immigrants assimilated the political values of the Anglosphere quite readily, and do so today despite the attempts of politically correct elites and governments to promote multiculturalism. Today's Anglospherists see immigrants forming a new layer of intra-Anglosphere ties, as the East and South Asian, Caribbean, and Mediterranean origins of immigrants throughout the Anglosphere create new cross-relationships.

Civil Society, Democracy, Prosperity, and the Anglosphere.

Why do some nations do well, and not others, and what does this say about the alignments and associations in international politics that we currently have?

In the past two decades, we have observed such varied phenomena as the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the collapse of the East Asian economic bubble, and the revival of entrepreneurship in Britain in the wake of the Thatcher reforms. These experiences have created a better appreciation of the link between strong civil society and prosperity. In the emerging economy of this next phase of the Scientific-Technological Revolution, these strong civil society values will be even more central to success.

A civil society is one that is built of a vast network of networks. These networks start with the individual and the families, community organizations, religious congregations, social organizations, and businesses created by individuals coming together voluntarily. Continuing up through the local, regional, national, and international networks, the tying together of local organizations creates civil societies, which in turn beget civic states. Such states are based on the notion that authority begins at the local and community level and is gradually built upwards to deal with wider-scale issues. Civic states rely on community assent and a feeling of participation in a local, regional, and national community. Law is generally accepted in civic states, as are the common rules of society. The authority of the state is upheld not by constant exercise of force, but by the willingness of citizens to comply. Civic states are thus opposed to "economic states" in which loyalty is primarily pragmatic and based on expectation of benefits through cross-subsidization.

It is important to make clear that at the root of civil society is the individual. People who define themselves primarily as members of collective entities, be they families, religions, racial or ethnic groups, political movements, or corporations, cannot form the basis of a civil society. Individuals must be free to dissociate themselves from such

collectives without prejudice and reaffiliate with others. Societies that permanently bind individuals under the discipline of inherited or assigned collectives remain bogged down in ethnic, racial, or religious factionalism, nepotism, and economic systems such as the "crony capitalism" so prevalent in East Asia and Latin America.

It is likewise important to make clear that a family in a civil society is a voluntary association, even though it is built on inherited connections. It should not place loyalty to its members above moral obligations to the rest of society, such as fair dealing, and should have no power over its members other than the sanction of withdrawal of help or association. Similarly, its individuals may choose to join associations marked by inherited ties, such as ethnic or religious organizations, but are not penalized for declining to join. The state deals with those individuals independently, rather than as members of that collective. Thus, would-be advocates of civil society are often fooled into seeing family-dominated societies as civil societies, when in fact they are the opposite. Other observers see societies in which the state deals with everyone as members of ethnic, racial, or religious communities (such as the vilayet system of the Ottoman Empire) as civil societies, whereas in fact they are authoritarian societies corrupted by the lack of choice.

The "family values" of a crony society are not the same as the family values of a civil society, nor are the ethnic- or religious-based voluntary associations of a civil society the same as the ethnic or religious compartments of an authoritarian society. One of the quiet success stories of strong civil societies, particularly the United States, has been the manner in which the compulsory family and religious affiliations of immigrants from the Old World were transformed in the New World into voluntary associations of civil society, and the immigrants themselves changed from members of traditional societies into self-actualized individuals. This took place within the same generation in some families and in no more than two or three generations in others.

Most societies have some elements of civil society, but their strength differs greatly from society to society. Some states, generally the most

peaceful and prosperous ones, are civic states, or possess elements of the civic state, but others have little or no civic nature: totalitarian states, personal dictatorships, and kleptocracies. The latter exist primarily to permit the persons in control to steal from those subject to its power. Most of the poorer and strife-wracked states of the world are in the latter category. The relationship between civil society and prosperity, and civic statehood and domestic peace, is not coincidental. However, the causal link has often been misunderstood.

It is now quite clear that prosperous states are rich because of the strength of their civil society, and that peaceful states are peaceful because of the strength of their civic statehood, not the other way around. States that have inherited vast natural wealth relative to their populations have been able to spread wealth around, but this has not generally strengthened civil society or the coherence of the civic state. When the Iraqis invaded Kuwait, the sons of the rich Kuwaitis fled to Cairo, while their parents negotiated the price of Western intervention. This is not a strong civic state.

Also misunderstood are the concepts of democracy and the market economy. Democracy and free markets are effects of a strong civil society and strong civic state, not causes. Over the past century, there has been a misdirection of attention to the surface mechanics of democracy, to nose-counting, rather than to the underlying roots of the phenomenon. We know that a society containing strong networks of voluntary association also develops means of expressing the interests of those networks to the state. It is the need for effective means of expression that gave rise to the original mechanisms we now call democratic. Later, intellectuals in states that did not have a strong existing civil society, especially pre-revolutionary France, looked at states that did, especially England, and attempted to distill an abstract theoretical construct that captured the essence of that experience. These intellectuals called this thing democracy, but they subsequently focused attention on their model (and its misunderstandings) rather than the essence of the thing they actually admired.

England's strong civic state had its roots in the local expressions of civil society in the civic realm, a process that may or may not be traced back to

the era before the Norman Conquest but was certainly well-rooted by the fourteenth century. These include the grand and petit jury systems, the election of various aldermen and other local officials, the quasi-official role of many civil institutions, and the heritage of common law administered by an independent judiciary. Selecting members of the House of Commons was one of many different mechanisms by which local communities gave or withheld their consent to the state.

Today we tend to focus on the many ways in which pre-modern England differed from contemporary norms. The restricted franchise, the "rotten boroughs" which elected members of Parliament with a handful of voters, the lack of a party system, and the open purchase of votes for money or favor all seem very undemocratic. But it is a mistake to ignore the many ways in which England's system created a far more effective means of assent and dissent compared to other state systems of the times. The lesson from English history is repeated many times over, up to and including contemporary events in Taiwan and South Korea. When civil society reaches a certain degree of complexity, democracy emerges. Absent that civil society, the importation of mere mechanisms of democracy only creates one more set of spoils for families and groups to fight over at the expense of the rest of society.

Similarly, the market economy requires more than merely the absence of socialism or an overweening government. It is the economic expression of a strong civil society, just as substantive (rather than formulaic) democracy is the political expression of a civil society and civic state. Democratic mechanisms no more create civil society than wet streets cause rain. There is theoretically no reason why democracy needs a market economy, or vice versa -- but in practice they are almost always found together.

Entrepreneurship in business uses and requires the same talents, and often the same motives, that go into starting a religious, nonprofit, or political organization. The society that can create entrepreneurial businesses tends to be the same society that creates the other forms of organizations as well -- often the same individuals start several of each form at different stages in their lives.

The market economy also requires a civil society with general acceptance of a common framework of laws, practices, and manners. Without a general acceptance of fair dealing, an agreement on what fair dealing means, and a system that can adjudicate disputes, a true market economy cannot exist. Just as post-Soviet Russia's politics demonstrated that the mechanics of democracy alone cannot create a civic state, its economy demonstrated that market formulas cannot by themselves create a market economy or a civil society. They are necessary but insufficient conditions in each case.

The Link to Science and Technology

These realizations have immense implications for the next stages of the Scientific-Technological Revolution. It is highly likely that the current information revolution will continue to be a source of innovation for the next stages of growth. They will emerge in an entrepreneurial environment marked by the rapid creation of teams and capitalization through venture money and public markets possible only in a strong civil society. The crucial role of non-company organizations (such as professional and industry associations and informal networks of acquaintance) in creating the Silicon Valley phenomenon also indicates that this form of entrepreneurism is a strong civil-society phenomenon.

Looking at the geography of the next stages of this scientific-technological revolution, it is no accident that it is emerging first in the United States. Strong civil society has its roots in medieval Europe, as a result of the society being built of a mix of tribal, feudal, local, church, family, and state institutions, characterized by the lack of a single, overwhelming power that could impose its will. Gradually the different interests established negotiated relationships of power and influence, none of which involved full submission of one element to another. At first these institutions were for the most part neither free nor voluntary in nature. However, the multiplicity of institutions eventually permitted some liberty, and eventually many individuals to establish a substantial freedom and independence through astute negotiation.

England, by virtue of its being the strongest part of an island at the periphery of Europe, was insulated from many of the more centralizing influences that eventually eradicated the complexity of emerging medieval civil society. In particular, its security from invasion after 1066 and consequent lack of need to maintain a large land army shielded it from the royal absolutism that continental monarchies fashioned in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thus, England was free to continue combining medieval institutions such as Parliament, juries, and corporations into effective forms of complex civil societies. These forms were present throughout Western Europe, but faded or changed into instruments of state power over civil society on the continent, while still flourishing in England.

The colonization of North America happened in such a way that the most useful characteristics of civil society were brought to its soil from England, while many of the less useful remnants of feudalism were left behind. In fact, Anglo-America was a particularly strong civil society from the start, especially in New England and Pennsylvania, where Puritans and Quakers, both of whom were strongly dedicated to the fundamentals of civil society, brought particularly robust institutions. Above all, they elevated the sanctity of contract and covenant to central places in their moral universe, an critical advantage in fostering civil society, and particularly, dynamic entrepreneurship.

The entrepreneurial cultures of the Quakers of Pennsylvania and northern England, the Methodists of northern and midland England and America, and the Calvinists of New England and Scotland seem to have fundamentally contributed to the emergence, development, and continuing dominance of the industrial and information revolutions.

It is important to reject a narrow, triumphalist view of the Anglo-American role in this matter and to stress again that it was the confluence of a number of factors that created this link. This implies that the characteristics that have given the Anglosphere its leadership can be lost as well as acquired, that other cultures can acquire (and to some extent have acquired) characteristics with similar effects. It also implies that these

cultural and institutional characteristics are fairly deep-seated, and changes, negative and positive alike, usually require several generations to take full effect.

As the saying goes, "There is a lot of ruin in a nation." Thus England took more than a few generations to lose the characteristics that sparked entrepreneurial vigor, and when relatively shallow political and institutional changes reversed the climate of decline, entrepreneurial vigor quickly resurfaced there. Conversely, it will take more than "anti-corruption" campaigns in low-trust cultures in the former Soviet states, Latin America, or East Asia to change their deep-rooted cultural biases feeding nepotism in business and government.

If the above historical observations are at all valid, the obvious conclusion is that the new scientific-technological revolution is likely to emerge in a high-trust culture -- specifically, the Anglosphere. Hence, the most important political challenge of the near future is to create close cooperative ties among groups of strong civic states, starting with the Anglosphere nations. These conclusions also suggest that one critical preparation for this process is for Anglosphere nations to gain an awareness of the distinctiveness of their own civilization, not in order to feel superior to others, but to create a realistic basis for addressing the serious problems arising within this civilization.

Finally, we must realize that every advance brought by the next stages of the scientific-technological revolution will bring a serious potential for danger and disruption. The potential solutions to such dangers must come from the strengths of the civilization from which they emerged: the strengths of advanced civil societies.

Some visionaries advocate a world government in hopes that it would control such hazards. Such a government (unless it is a disguised empire of the major powers imposed on the rest) would have to be constructed on a lowest-common-denominator basis to include a substantial collection of hapless dictatorships, rotten oligarchies, and shabby kleptocracies. It may be more useful to construct a framework for cooperation starting with a

small number of significant strong civil societies and to work on improving constitutional structures which can restrain harmful use of power, whether political or technological, while preserving safeguards against political abuse.

Any such institution would have to draw on the civil society's strengths of openness, voluntary consent and compliance, inclusion, constitutional restraint of authority, and flow of participation from the fundamental levels of society to the top. Any other approach to solution is unlikely to be effective in its goals or tolerable to its citizens.

An understanding of the success of market economies and democratic government will lead inevitably to skepticism about ambitious, broadly inclusive international or transnational institutions. International cooperation will be essential to meet the challenges of the next stages of the scientific-technological revolution. But the first challenge of organizations is to attempt to link those civic states that already have much in common. If we cannot make such forms work, there is no hope whatsoever for institutions hoping to link across different cultures, except in the most superficial ways.

Thus, the first challenge is creating the institutional ties to parallel the economic realities of the convergence within the English-speaking economies. Since the changes sparked by the Thatcher reforms, some signs of entrepreneurial takeoff can be discerned in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. But other areas of the world displaying creativity and entrepreneurship are, not surprisingly, strong and relatively open civil societies themselves, such as Scandinavia and the Netherlands. It is no accident that Linus Torvalds -- who created the phenomenally successful Linux computer operating system -- is a Finnish citizen. It is also noteworthy that he eventually moved to the English-speaking world -- in this case Palo Alto, California -- in order to further his dreams.

By contrast, such high-tech entrepreneurship as does emerge in the core European or Japanese economies tends to be content-related and based on local knowledge inherent in language or location. These are classic

strategies of follower economies, and, although they are intelligent strategies, English-speaking countries do not adopt them. Rather, they tend to compete in the mainstream, taking advantage of regulatory arbitrage, such as Ireland's low taxation or Canada's more rational technology export laws, and pursuing global, not regional niches.

The problem is not any lack of creativity, energy, or entrepreneurial drive among non-English-speaking people. The problem is that when creativity does arise and ventures start, the prevailing set of social, economic and political institutions retards their growth. In corrupt and undemocratic countries with weak civil societies, family networks permit entrepreneurs to get around these obstacles, up to a point. But they cannot expand easily beyond that point.

In stronger civil societies such as Germany, which have high-trust characteristics but lack openness and flexibility in their political and social systems, ventures are frustrated by bureaucratic barriers. Thus, while in America computer industry start-ups draw heavily on South Asian programmers and entrepreneurs, a German proposal to give visas to Indian programmers prompted the slogan "Kinder statt Inder" -- "(our) Children, not Indians."

This resistance may change, but not overnight. The European Union will likely go through one or more rather severe crises before it broadens its purview, and the Japanese system is even more rigid. The decades it will require for these changes to take place will also be the critical decades of the next stages of the scientific-technological revolution. In the short term, therefore, it is likely that the Anglosphere nations will continue to pull away from Continental Europe and Japan.

Many young continental Europeans use their EU rights to relocate to Britain, whose entrepreneurial culture and freedom they seek. Free movement has been reported as a triumph of EU principles, but it is very much a one-way street. Young continentals move to Britain and Ireland, suggesting the continual attraction of the English-speaking world for the smart, talented, and ambitious. The real "French Silicon Valley" does not lie

in any of the planned technology centers created by the French state, but stretches instead from Dover to London, where thousands of young French men and women have relocated to pursue their dreams without the high taxes and social burdens prevailing on the continent.

Becoming A Self-Aware Civilization: The Anglosphere Perspective

An Anglosphere perspective differs from any of the lenses through which our societies have been viewed in the past. It could not have arisen at an earlier point in time. Although aspects of the perspective may seem familiar, they are applied in new ways and combined into new synergies. The principal characteristics emphasized by the Anglosphere perspective include the following:

- Historical continuity. The Anglosphere is a relatively old social construct among human societies, with a tangible continuity reaching back at least twelve centuries. Although substantially transformed by each human wave added to the whole, and by each invasion of ideas which have affected development for good and for bad, the Anglosphere is recognizably evolved from Alfred's kingdom. Americans or Australians who long for depth of historical perspective ought properly to find it in the Anglosphere identity. The better we understand history, the more we understand that the voyage to those countries was more continuity than re-creation. This perspective has substantial consequences on our understanding of political, social, economic, military, and technological history.
- Memetic, rather than genetic, identity. Richard Dawkins popularized the concept of the meme, the equivalent of a gene in the process of evolution of information. This has proven to be a useful concept. Memes reproduce, spread, and evolve far faster than genes, and thus human societies are far more affected by memetic than by genetic evolution. (The classic example: it is far quicker to evolve the concept, or meme, of the corrective lens and spread the use of eyeglasses worldwide, than it is to wait for genetic evolution to weed out the near-sighted.) A century ago, proponents of English-speaking

political unions had a primarily genetic view of the English-speaking world and sought to reunite the British with their cousins in America. This vision failed, partly because so many Americans were already of non-British descent by that time. In contrast, the Anglosphere is a memetic concept. Those who come to use the language and concepts of the Anglosphere (and further their evolution) are the memetic heirs of Magna Carta, the Bills of Rights, and the Emancipation Proclamation, whatever their genetic heritage. "Innocent until proven guilty" now belongs to Chang, Gonzales, and Singh, as well as Smith and Jones.

- Networked, rather than hierarchical, structure. The first expression of a vision of unity was the coining of the term "Great Britain" by James I, king of Scotland and England alike. The unity of the United Kingdom, formalized finally in 1707, was contested many times by Scots and Irish, and rejected altogether in Philadelphia in 1776. The second vision, that of Rhodes and Milner, was of a co-dominion jointly run from London and Washington. The high-water mark of this vision was the Anglo- American high command of World War II, which merged the two militaries far more than a mere alliance. But this relationship was diluted into NATO and the United Nations, and as a vision, dissolved. The third vision, the plan of Harold Wilson and Lyndon Johnson for a North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement, was waylaid by the politics of the day and the suspicion that it would have ended in an American hegemony made obnoxious by the Vietnam War and the shadow of the Suez crisis. The network commonwealth vision is thus the fourth iteration of Anglosphere cohesion. It is polycentric and collaborative, befitting an era in which the network, not some plan, is the ruling paradigm. Coalitions of the willing, variable geometry, and multiple, overlapping political ties, rather than One Union, One Parliament, and One Capital, are the characteristics of the Network Commonwealth approach.
- Emphasis on similarities and recognition of differences. Narrow racial and nationalist narratives have emphasized the differences among Anglosphere nations and deemphasized similarities. At the

same time, a superficial universalism has suppressed appreciation of genuine differences between the Anglosphere and other civilizations. This has led to the facile and futile attempt to impose the surface mechanisms of the Anglosphere on cultures with none of the background of slow evolution of strong civil society. Kosovo cannot be turned into Kansas or Kent in two years. An Anglospheric perspective concentrates on tending and perfecting our own garden first, on creating deep and strong ties between highly similar nations and cultures, and seeking to help other nations by serving as an example (and sometimes, as a caution). It does not impose solutions on nations that cannot benefit thereby.

The English-speaking peoples are now at the threshold of the perception stage. To move forward, new mental categories must be given name and definition and brought to general attention. As noted above, there is no concise term for the category of "English-speaking nations." Even that clumsy phrase is imprecise, as it focuses excessively on the linguistic aspects and ignores the much wider set of shared legal, constitutional, and social values which these nations hold in common. Hence the term "Anglosphere," which is concise, goes beyond mere linguistic commonality, and has no racial overtones. However, it is not clear that it will become the term of the future since it still has overtones of "Anglophile," which is a value not universally considered positive in the Anglosphere. In California "Anglo" is a term identified with "Non-Hispanic Whites"; in Canada "Anglophone" has come to mean "non-French whites." In Ireland, it carries overtones of ancient British oppression, rather than English-speaking civilization as a whole. An Anglospheric Perspective reclaims the term from narrow usage and connotation.

Time will tell whether this neologism will endure. Although "Anglosphere network commonwealth" is a convenient shorthand to discuss such things, the formal title of such an entity may be more prosaic -- a "Community of English-Speaking States," for example -- or it may reach for a more poetic form; a "League of the Common Law," perhaps. It will depend on the temper of the times that bring it forth.

More generally, what is needed is an explicit recognition of a status that is "not a countryman, yet not a foreigner," but rather a fellow member of a network civilization.

The Sinews of the Network Commonwealth: Evolving New Forms from Existing Elements.

Network Commonwealths will emerge evolutionarily, like most viable political mechanisms, growing from, altering, and redefining institutions and developing in the era of economic states until these institutions become a new thing. When the history of Network Commonwealths is written, the current time will be seen not as the start of the process, but as perhaps a halfway mark in the building of the Network Commonwealth.

1. Common Economic Spaces: Trade and Transmigration

As I discussed previously, common market areas for trade in goods have blossomed over the past half-century, the successes sparking numerous imitations. A Network Commonwealth will have a set of free trade agreements as one of its fundamental ligatures. It would differ from existing common markets in focusing on facilitation of informational trade, services, and the free flow of people and interpersonal cooperation.

The mental model of the European Union as a "harmonized" trade area (to use the European Union's jargon for area-wide uniform standards) could be illustrated by the example of a group of corporations throughout Europe being able to manufacture an airplane jointly, coordinating tens of thousands of workers producing fuselages in France, wings in Germany, and tail assembly in Spain. The mental model of a Network Commonwealth is illustrated by a set of arrangements permitting a software company incorporated in Bermuda to use programmers, marketers, and financiers in California, Australia, India, and Ireland to put together a Web-based product in cyberspace and sell it worldwide. At the same time, they would enjoy adequate intellectual property protection and have the ability to resolve disputes in the process fairly and expeditiously.

It is relevant that the harmonizations needed to enable the European example took decades to create, and imposed substantial transition costs on the citizens of the member-states. Most of the harmonizations needed for the latter example already exist: common language, common software standards, and a common law and understanding of business practices. The Network Commonwealth places a greater emphasis on creation of a common business space for information businesses than on the elimination of traditional barriers like tariffs or quotas. International processes such as the World Trade Organization are already effecting many of the needed changes in such areas. A NAFTA-EU free trade agreement, such as has been proposed, which would reduce trade barriers between those areas, could carry the process further and deeper.

In the Network Commonwealth, future trade will be more dominated by informational goods and services than by physical goods. In these areas, it is more important to avoid the creation of new barriers than to eliminate existing ones. Instead, such a trade regime would focus on resolving issues such as the different treatment of state-generated intellectual property by the US and the Commonwealth countries. In an era in which the US software industry is economically more important and generates more jobs than the US auto industry, these are the types of issues whose resolution ought to have priority. Similarly, a Network Commonwealth emphasis would ally Anglosphere nations, with their more open, competitive industries, in international decision-making forums such as those on radio spectrum allocation, where Britain today undercuts its own interests in the name of European solidarity.

In creating common trade and economic spaces, agricultural and manufactured goods issues would have the lowest priority, both because they will be of declining economic importance and because they tend to have substantial entrenched protectionist lobbies. There is no need to hold back the creation of fully free markets in some areas because they cannot be had in all areas. More important are agreements providing for free entry throughout the community's economic space in the communications and transportation sectors. Universal flat- or low-rate communications and fully

competitive air transportation should be the end-goals of these agreements.

2. Sojourner Provisions: The Human Element of Trade and Cooperation

I place substantial emphasis on immigration ties and "sojourner" status: a right to travel to, reside in, and do business within all the member-states of the Network Commonwealth on an equal and reciprocal basis. The European Union has effectively implemented such a status as of 1993; US-Canadian agreements have moved in a similar direction. Sojourner status is important because the critical ties within a Network Commonwealth are not, as with the European Union, hierarchy-to-hierarchy relationships between large corporations, but rather person-to-person relationships between the enterprising individuals who will create the businesses, civic organizations, and personal networks of the future.

Sojourner status is also important because the Network Commonwealth model incorporates a new model of transnational personal movement appropriate to the era of Internet, cheap jet travel, and worldwide media. The Machine Age model was fundamentally one of immigration. In that model, individuals were citizens of one nation-state and resided, worked, and paid taxes within that state. The only way to change that status was to give up citizenship in one nation, move to a new nation and adopt residence, employment, and citizenship there. The immigrant who adopted the identity and customs of the new nation and fit himself into that structure, rarely if ever returned, lost contact with home country media, and communicated with his previous home and family slowly through mails, or not at all.

The Network Era model of transnational personal movement is sojournership. A sojourner is one who moves from one country to another to reside and engage in economic activity, but does not give up his previous identity, returns to previous countries of residence frequently, and remains in constant communication with his home network. This sojourner is an essential element of transnational cooperation, making possible entrepreneurial activity on a wide scale with an extremely low cost of entry.

The sojourner often serves to cross-pollinate activity from place to place, accelerating ties begun or continued via Net and Web. As humans cease to be inhabitants and economic actors solely of physical space, we begin to have an "amphibious" existence split between physical space and information space. Each space has its own rules and realities, and the sojourner is the person who helps tie the two together by combining cyberspace and physical-space contact.

Existing immigration law is poorly adapted to such activity. The levels of state benefits attached to citizenship have risen to such levels during the Machine Age that an immigrant's slot becomes a valuable prize, particularly for persons from poorer countries. Yet the sojourner does not seek to fill a citizen's slot. The immigration machinery and provisions of most of the world's industrialized states are designed to ration these entitlements by rationing citizenship. Sojourners face the choice of trying to fit the immigrant's slots or to abuse tourist, student, or temporary worker provisions, none of which are appropriate to their needs.

Similarly, national borders create other obstacles to effective sojourning. Consider the situation among English-speaking nations. Despite the similarity in the legal, financial, and business systems of the English-speaking nations, and the transparency of credit records due to common language, it is difficult for an ordinary sojourner to obtain credit or secure loans across the borders of the English-speaking nations. At a minimum, credit checks in the US require a Social Security number. But to gain a Social Security number is to stake a claim on numerous benefits, none of which were things the sojourner sought to begin with. Yet the would-be sojourner cannot renounce those benefits to get a Social Security number merely for the purposes of gaining credit status. Network Commonwealth agreements could reduce such burdens with a substantial net gain to financial institutions as a result of an expansion of the common economic space.

A sojourner agreement among English-speaking nations would create a reciprocal right of sojourning for citizens of the adhering nations, permitting those citizens to travel to, reside in, and to perform economic

transactions in all member nations. Sojourners would not be eligible for state benefits and would pay core taxes, but not taxes earmarked for state benefits. Thus, a Briton sojourning in America would pay tax supporting basic governmental functions, but would not make a Social Security contribution nor be eligible for Social Security benefits, unless the U.S. chose to include sojourners in the system on a voluntary basis. Similarly, an American sojourner in the UK would pay basic tax, but not support the National Health Service or be eligible for those benefits.

Although it would be generally beneficial to permit sojourners to hold employment, concerns about competition for formal employment slots may create a barrier to agreement. More important, and less controversial, would be a provision permitting sojourners to conduct business, including acting as contractors and consultants. As such, they would be in line with the emerging economic trends. They would not have political rights in the host nations, though there is a reasonable argument for giving long-resident sojourners who pay local sales and property taxes a vote in local elections, as the European Union does.

Most importantly, sojourner status would not be rationed; it would be freely available to any applicants, subject to a basic check for criminal record. Misbehavior of a sojourner in a host nation would be dealt with primarily by expulsion; similarly, need for welfare services would be dealt with by repatriation. Countries could remove sojourners from the competition for state benefits and insulate host citizens from potential problems caused by their presence. They could make grant of status dependent on strict reciprocity and ensure that sojourners come primarily from countries within the network civilization of the host nation (thereby minimizing interpersonal transaction costs). This would deliver many of the benefits of immigration. It would also minimize the commonly ascribed costs to the host nation and its people.

Despite the theoretical availability of a sojourner-like status throughout the European Union, young Britons and Irish have made relatively little use of it. Large numbers of both nations' young (and those of the other principal Anglosphere nations) come to the United States to live and work, often by

abusing immigration statuses designed for other purposes. Sojourner status would turn current violators into constructive economic participants.

A sojourner agreement would create a powerful incentive for active, entrepreneurial persons in all parts of a network civilization, particularly the young, to support the creation of the Network Commonwealth. It creates a direct and visible benefit to individuals from the creation of the Network Commonwealth.

3. Collaborative Organizations in Science and Technology

The European Union was seen as the outgrowth of the European Coal and Steel Community, which evolved gradually into the European Economic Community, then the European Community. However, the EEC was only one of several elements from which the European Union was forged. Also important were a group of organizations for joint scientific and technological cooperation, including the European Atomic Energy Agency, and the European Space Agency. These programs had two important functions. The first was a pragmatic one, of permitting European nations to participate in scientific and technological projects beyond their individual means. Second was the symbolic function of demonstrating that a united Europe could remain competitive in science and technology, at a time when the USA and the USSR seemed destined to dominate those fields.

The cooperation model for European scientific-technical organizations was, as in nearly all pan-European programs, one of top-down negotiated relationships between national hierarchical structures. Programs are composed under the rule of "juste retour" — money is spent in each member-nation in proportion to the percentage of funding contributed by that nation.

Nations benefit from these programs to the degree their national economic and technical structures are organized in a top-down, state-directed hierarchical structure; and their political systems can generate the bureaucratic and funding stability needed to properly support such

programs. France and Germany are good examples of such nations; the United Kingdom has historically been a poor example; not surprisingly. The United Kingdom has tended to get the worst of the deal in most European cooperative science and technology programs in which it has participated.

A Network Commonwealth would find cooperative science and technology programs similarly useful in creating added leverage for national expenditures in those fields. Highly visible programs, like space exploration, would yield similar benefits in producing a visible source of pride in cooperation for accomplishment. However, such cooperative programs would be conceived and structured quite differently from the Machine Age structures of the European Union.

As with all Network Commonwealth efforts, its science and technology programs would seek to exploit the deeper cooperation possible among persons with similar cultural backgrounds. The universality of English as the world language of science would seem to reduce the value of Network Commonwealth commonalties. However, it is not the difficulties of interpersonal communications among scientists that is the barrier to international cooperation; scientists are often capable of forming effective transnational teams. The problem lies in the way that the conflicts of their sponsoring states often intrude into the possibilities of further cooperation once initial work has produced promising results.

Consider the invention of the World Wide Web: although developed by two researchers (one of them English) at CERN in Switzerland, a pan-European scientific research institution, its benefits were first and most widely reaped by Americans, who neither participated in the CERN consortium nor were present at the creation of the Web. The incompatibilities of the CERN member-states and the slowness of state-to-state cooperation made it unlikely that any of the member-states would be able to exploit this breakthrough, as indeed they did not. By aligning nations with similar and more compatible political systems; and by encouraging person-to-person and institution-to-institution rather than state-to-state cooperation, a Network Commonwealth is likelier to promote

effective science and technology cooperation than international structures created on other bases.

4. Security Organizations: Sailing With the Fast Convoy

Permanent security alliances rank high among the institutions that can evolve into building blocks for the Network Commonwealth. Since its founding, NATO has become more than a military alliance: it is now an elaborate set of permanent structures and institutions which have had a profound effect on the military, political, and economic life of the nations which have joined them. One need only look at the importance of NATO membership to Spain, Greece, Turkey and now, the states of Eastern Europe in stabilizing and democratizing them to see that permanent alliance structures have become one of the central building blocks of transnational institutions.

It is also instructive to note the failures in building or maintaining security alliance structures. The U.S.'s unsuccessful attempts to replicate NATO's success in CENTO and SEATO and the immediate collapse of the Warsaw Pact with the fall of communism, demonstrate that permanent structures require substantial alignment of interests and values. Perception of immediate threats can create an incentive to join an alliance, but when the perception of threat changes, (or the perception that resistance, rather than accommodation, is the effective way to meet it) that incentive disappears, and the alliance collapses.

Just as the transition to the Machine Age made mastery of manufacturing the key to success in warfare, so will mastery of information be the key to success in Information Revolution warfare. Already, the predominance of the US military is due more and more to its superior information technology.

Information war is war directed not against persons or things directly, but against the information that controls and affects both. That information war will become a major new form of warfare, on three levels: state vs. state; state vs. individual; and individual vs. individual. This will lead to a

transformation of the nature of privacy, with new winners and losers. Individuals and small groups careful to master the new information technology can gain a level of privacy vis-à-vis governments and other individuals unthinkable during the Machine Age; those who ignore these developments will have far less privacy, both from the state, and from private eavesdroppers. The great powers of the new age, to the extent there are great powers, will be those nations that possess a high degree of information-age literacy, a vigorous software industry, and the ability to develop the political-military doctrines to exploit its advantages.

The US prevailed in the Machine Age because of its general mastery of machinery, its enormous industrial base, and its ability to find and give command to generals such as Dwight Eisenhower. Eisenhower and his peers understood how to use these assets to win in the face of clear German superiority in weapons, morale, and training throughout most of the war. Germans had, for most of the war's length, better tanks, planes, and guns -- the U.S. had better trucks. It also had the only army where almost every draftee knew how to drive, and most how to fix motor vehicles, from civilian life.

The dominant powers of the future will be those who have a strong domestic software capability, potential soldiers who are comfortable with use of computers, and the ability to generate political-military strategies to exploit the new technologies properly. The Network Commonwealth provides a means for today's economic states to minimize the loss of defensive potential as they undergo devolutionary pressures and fiscal constraints as their previous ability to divert large percentages of their GDPs diminishes. Those who can effectively implement it will retain substantially more power than those who don't .

The balance of power has already begun to change as a result of the increase in the rate of transition from the Machine to the Information Age. Powers like Russia, which dominated the Machine Age because of their ability to cover square miles with medium-tech tank battalions, have lost capability. Ironically, powers such as Britain and France, which had fallen to the middle rank of military capability, today have returned to the rank of

top powers precisely because of their greater ability to master the cutting edge of today's information-based technologies.

The centrality of information technology, combined with organizational and weapons-technology innovations, constitutes what has become known as the "Revolution in Military Affairs" (RMA, in defense-wonk shorthand). The U.S. has already begun to consider the issue of how to cooperate with its NATO and other principal allies in using the "Grid" -- the dense network of information, using Internet-like techniques, that links information-gathering sensors, command and control centers, and weapons and men in the field. The defense sinew of Network Commonwealth ties will center around cooperation in the use of the Grid by the core alliance. NATO has built a series of standards, such as a common rifle caliber, making it easy for units of NATO member nations to cooperate in the field. A Network Commonwealth defense alliance would be built primarily around common standards in information.

A Call For Civilizational Construction

The next stages of the Scientific-Technological Revolution will require a great deal of flexibility if nations are to respond creatively to new technologies and the unprecedented individual and social options they will provide. The history of the developed world since the onset of the scientific-technological revolution has been a search for a new equilibrium following the creative destruction of the Medieval order. The search has been long and bloody, and has led down many fake paths. But we may now be able to avoid, after such bitter experience, all utopian temptations and construct an adapted civilization firmly on the roots of the strong civil society we have inherited. The twentieth century saw many failed attempts at ideological social construction; we live yet among their ruins. It also saw many attempts to reinstitute the values of previous eras, or (in many cases) imagined versions of previous eras. None of these returns to the past was successful, although new generations often look back to previous generations' revivals as nostalgic models.

The call for an Anglosphere network commonwealth is neither utopian nor nostalgic, but simply a response to the challenges likely to be posed in the next stages of the scientific-technological revolution. It is a call to repair the weakened roots of civil society and to construct civic states to replace the failing institutions of the economic state. Doing so will require civilizational self-awareness, to be won not by creating a new civilization, but by appreciating the value of those that have already emerged.

These tasks will no doubt seem tame to those who long for exotic and wholly novel forms of human society. However, the construction of a society that can lead humankind through the challenges of the next stages of the scientific-technological revolution without repeating the disasters of the twentieth century is not a trivial piece of work. Rather, it is a task that will dominate even the long lives of today's young people and future generations. For those whose lives have been occupied with preventing or repairing the disasters of failed utopian visions, the turn to construction, rather than opposition or remediation, will require a major change of mentality. Above all, it requires in young and old alike the recovery of self-assurance. It requires the knowledge that we are the standard-bearers of a civilization that has defeated much evil (including that generated by our own wrong paths) and now stands poised to lead the Anglosphere, and someday the world, to the stars.

A Note on Sources

The following books are among the principal works of scholarship and thought on which I have drawn in proposing the idea of the Anglosphere perspective; their influence underlies the entire book. My describing them as "Foundational Anglosphere Works" should not be taken to imply that their authors endorse or agree with the arguments of my work in part or in full, credit or blame for which is entirely mine.

Fischer, David Hackett: *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in North America*, Oxford University Press, 1989. Fischer's work challenges effectively one of the central myths of American exceptionalism: the Turner's frontier thesis. He argues convincingly that American culture exhibits great continuity

from the British Isles to the New World, and that differences between American regional cultures are overwhelmingly the product of the differences between regional cultures of the British Isles. Turner's theories of a transformation through the frontier experience is effectively disproved, particularly in light of a continual evolution of the Anglosphere cultures through ongoing frontier experiences within the British ideas and subsequently. Fischer's picture of Anglosphere continuity is consistent with the Anglosphere exceptionalism whose English roots are shown by Macfarlane to be deep, and whose overall characteristics are shown by Véliz to be wide and distinct when viewed through a comparative lens. Together, they add up to an Anglosphere culture that is persistent and pervasive over many generations, distinct throughout its history from other European-origin civilizations around it, and bearing for its time a particularly strong variety of civil society.

Fukuyama, Francis: *Trust: The Social Virtues & The Creation of Prosperity*, The Free Press, New York, 1995. One of the most important books for thinking about, and comparing and contrasting cultures and subcultures, and particularly about the role of high trust in successful civil societies.

Macfarlane, Alan: *The Origins of English Individualism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1978. One of the critical foundation books of modern Anglosphere thought. It refutes in detail the prevailing Marxist assumption that England had been just another European peasant society before the modern era and the Industrial Revolution. Macfarlane makes a strong case for the distinctness of English-speaking civilization and its unique social mode reaching back to at least the fifteenth century, and possibly well before. Rather than a product of the Industrial Revolution, Anglosphere individualism may have been one of the leading causes of it.

Phillips, Kevin: *The Cousins' Wars: Religion, Politics, and the Triumph of Anglo-America*, Basic Books, New York, 1999. An excellent and comprehensive treatment of the three principal internal conflicts of the Anglosphere -- the English Civil War, the American Revolution, and the American Civil War. Phillips mentions the prospect for closer Anglo-American collaboration at the end of the book, but fails to elaborate.

Véliz, Caludio: *The New World of the Gothic Fox: Culture and Economy in English and Spanish America*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994
An extremely erudite and impressive survey of the contrasting natures of the “Gothic Foxes” of the Anglosphere and the “Baroque Hedgehogs” of the Hispanosphere. Professor Véliz, a Chilean who has lived much of his life in Australia, England, and America, knows both spheres intimately.

.oOo

Much has changed since “An Anglosphere Primer” was published on this website in 2002. The author’s thinking has advanced in many ways worth following.

In 2004, James C. Bennett’s *The Anglosphere Challenge* ([table of contents](#)) was published by Rowman & Littlefield. Reading of this book is essential to understand the full implications of British exit from the European Union.

In 2016 Bennett’s ebook, *A Time for Audacity*, appeared on Amazon, intended to encourage a “leave” vote in the referendum for British exit from the European Union (Brexit).

A Time for Audacity provides a reference model for a future commonwealth union, restricted at first to the UK (perhaps only Britain), Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and tells stories to illustrate the differences such a union could make in the lives of individual citizens.

A Time for Audacity is described here, with a link to the ebook on Amazon:

<http://explorersfoundation.org/AU.html>