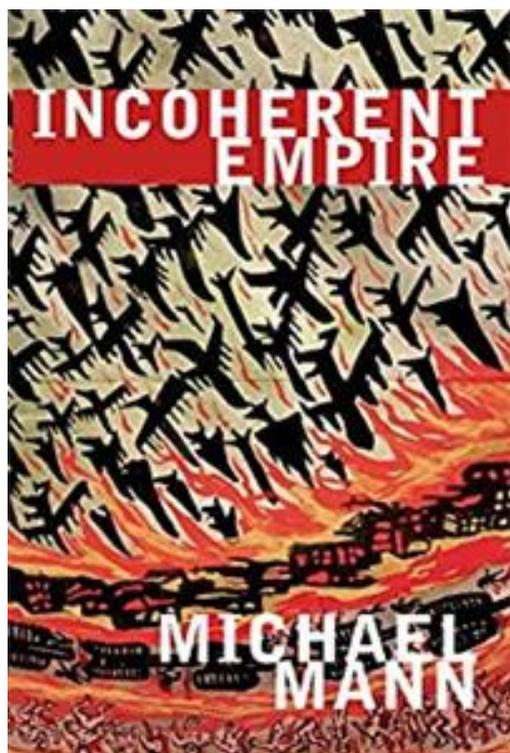


Incoherent Empire *by* Michael Mann pdf



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In this book, noted sociologist Michael Mann argues that the “new American imperialism” is actually a new militarism. Dissecting the economic, political, military and ideological resources available to the US, Mann concludes that they are so uneven as to generate only an ‘incoherent empire’ and increasing world disorder. The US is a military giant, though it is better at devastating than pacifying countries. It is a political schizophrenic, its personality split between multilateralism, unilateralism and an actual inability to rule over foreign lands or to control its own supposed client states. It is only a backseat driver of the global economy. It cannot steer it, but it prods poorer countries toward an unproductive and unpopular neo-liberalism.



Reviews of the **Incoherent Empire** *by* Michael Mann PDF

Tansino

I just finished reading this book and I could not wait to write my humble review about it. This work by Prof. Mann presents such a rational and powerful analysis of what is happening in the world today that it is difficult to understand how some people fail to see the obvious consequences of the military adventures the American government undertakes.

Apart from the fact that US foreign policy is sometimes based on very simplistic views and a lack of understanding of cultures and aspirations of the rest of the world ...it also assumes that the US has the right to judge and impose its ways...The American people, good, honest, hard working and very patriotic, but almost always misinformed, can not see, that maybe some of those displayed by the US media as fanatic terrorists view themselves also as patriotic and nationalist fighters...We must go further and deeper and examine what causes their unrest and if in fact they are enemies of the US or if they feel it is the other way around...The results may surprise you...

Terrorism MUST end...and the best way is to end what causes it...and most of the time the cause is state repression and inequality...when the causes are gone, the evil minds that harm innocent people would be unable to justify their actions.

Risinal

Mann's background in the history of colonial empires gives him a highly realistic perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of the USA as a superpower. Although his assessment is over ten years old, most of his insights remain relevant, especially concerning the counterproductivity of unilateral force in controlling other nations.

Qucid

And I thought that at one point what was needed in the Mann book was a true strain of Marxist critique; however, Negri's 'Empire' has that and it still isn't any good. Now about the Mann book, to be precise:

For those who run the US empire, I highly doubt that the sum of all the parts is so incoherent. Look what all that militarism has got them--bigger and bigger military, intelligence and security budgets (like wow, if you add in all the supplementary budgets since 9-11)and two wars to keep them busy spending all that money. And this is why this elite, right down to its upper working class whites who provide the personnel, is so hermetically sealed from any critique or even a sense of crisis from within. So long as the budgets increase and the federal contractors get their money, they will keep selling militarism and mercantilism as the American way.

Like the Chalmers Johnson book, I'm not really sure just what Mann is trying to save from itself. It isn't a system that has gone out of whack and too far out. It's a system that was inherently so from the very start. Right-wing libertarians kid themselves if they think Jefferson would oppose Bush.

Dakora

Michael Mann's "Incoherent Empire" is a good addition to the recent raft of books shining a much-needed light on America's descent from republic to empire. However, I found it flawed in its tone, and in its easy acceptance of Leftist dogma. More seriously, its historical perspective is too short. To his credit, Mann does a fine job proving his thesis (articulated on page 13), that the employment of military unilateralism by the Bush Administration is not the policy of "realism" it's made out to be. With his thorough focus on ongoing and potential military threats and ample documentation of global, especially Middle Eastern, opinions of American actions, Mann proves that we're not winning any friends worldwide. Indeed, burdened as we are with a particularly parochial viewpoint, "Americans, insulated within their self-censorship, do not even know how isolated they are" (p. 261). Worse, many Americans who do recognize this don't seem to care.

This is where I think Mann's tone comes into play. His casual deployment of Leftist smear-words (describing the 2000 election, for example, as "a neo-conservative chicken-hawk coup" [p. 252], as just one example), or constant mis-identification of America's mercantilist trade policy as "capitalism" or "free trade," no doubt endear him to a certain segment of his readership. But it undermines what I think is a far more important mission: helping potentially sympathetic audiences (even conservative ones) see the strengths of his arguments. In this area, Chalmers Johnson's recent "The Sorrows of Empire" is a much better work.

The other area where Johnson's book is far stronger than Mann's is in his long-term historical perspective. Mann is too quick to paint the new militarism as a product of a neo-conservative cabal. Unquestionably, the neo-cons play a major role in the growth of the Empire, especially the current emphasis on military unilateralism. But Mann writes as though the "Incoherent Empire" was conceived in Defense Department memoranda during Bush the Elder's term, and midwived by Bush the Younger following 9/11. In fact, Johnson makes an almost ironclad (in my opinion) case that the roots of Empire sink far back into America's past. The old cliché about Rome not being built in a day has a literal, and precise, application here.

And if Rome wasn't built in a day, it won't be burnt in one either. Mann writes on his last page that the "political solution" to the situation he describes is to "throw the new militarists out of office" in November 2004. But to turn out the neo-cons and replace Bush the Younger with someone different (and the differences between Bush and Kerry are much smaller than either man would have us believe), would simply mean changing the Emperor. The apparatus of imperial power would remain in place.

Mann's book is a good start, but I believe he needs to widen his field of vision somewhat. This is about far more than a few "chicken hawks."

LiTTLe_NiGGa_in_THE_CribE

When Vice President Cheney staffed the Bush Administration, he gave jobs to many of his neoconservative friends. The neoconservatives want to establish an American Empire, using American military might. Now that they have given us a war in Iraq, they would like to invade Syria and Iran as well.

So Michael Mann took time out from his scholarly work to give us a clear and concise analysis of American Imperialism. Since his specialty is the history of empires of the past, he is well equipped to tell us about the American empire of the present.

His conclusion: The US government has military power, but does not meet any of the other requirements for establishing and keeping a successful empire. If you want to know the details, buy and read his book.

If it were put to a vote, I would vote against American imperialism. So would Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams, if we could bring them back from the grave.

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