I don’t know how you feel, but in the past couple of years, a number of things have happened that make me feel as if the world is crumbling. I don’t refer specifically to 9/11, although that is part of it. I am not really thinking of the Enron and Worldcom scandals or the dot-com crash either, although in some ways, they are also part of it. I am thinking of things that have happened both before and after 9/11.

I teach marketing and international business at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.—according to the new Department of Homeland Security, nowadays one of the most dangerous places in the U.S. My specialty is global marketing. In the name of “full disclosure,” I used to be a confirmed pro-globalizer, believing in the essential goodness of free trade and open access to foreign markets. I still do, to some extent. But we market globalizers have taken some hits recently, not only from 9/11, but also from usually benign sources.

You could say that I have had three slaps in my face. Anti-marketing campaigns by people I respected was the first blow, one that began in the earnest toward the end of the 1990s. Adbusters, affluenza, energy waste, fattest people on earth, and other headlines attacked marketing as the purveyor of filth and sloth, not customer satisfaction, as our questionnaires recorded.
Then came anti-globalization and Naomi Klein’s *No Logo*, attacking predatory free trade and the dominance of global brands. I thought global marketers were bringing good things to people. Third came the anti-Americanism abroad, fueled by political invective that went counter to all the international sensitivity we taught in the business school. I call these slaps the “three strikes”—the baseball call that you’ve struck out.

Yes, my world has certainly changed from when I first started my career. I liked marketing, I liked globalization, and I liked America. I don’t know how you feel, but I am going to fight this lowdown feeling of mine. Things can’t be all that bad, can they?

**Strike One: Anti-Marketing**

I am looking at a flyer that came in the mail. It’s an advertisement for the Hummer H1, the wide-bodied, high-riding military vehicle from General Motors, adapted for roadway driving. The written copy is personalized:

“Dear Mr. Johansson. There’s a certain feeling that goes along with power. It’s a compulsion that brings together the elements of respect, admiration, and yes, fear. And there’s only one vehicle on the road today that delivers true power: HUMMER H1.

“Parker’s HUMMER invites you to experience this incredible aphrodisiac... We think you’ll agree: Power can be very, very addictive.”

This kind of stuff makes me cringe. I am not a queasy person; I don’t mind a bit of intimidation now and then. Heck, I played ice hockey and lost my front teeth as a teenager, and I tried to bluff my way through Checkpoint Charlie when the Berlin Wall was far from gone. I teach my kids when they drive to point the car so as to leave other drivers in no doubt about the direction in which they are going, and to make sure to take their turn (or better) at stop signs. But this was “over and above.” Why, the Hummer is not simply an obvious step or two beyond the sport-utility vehicles (SUVs)—it’s literally a threat to other drivers. And that, my flyer suggested, is its main attraction.
I have a doctorate in marketing from the University of California at Berkeley. I teach marketing to Master of Business Administration (MBA) students and undergraduates, plus the occasional executive. But it does not take a marketing degree to decipher this stuff. The Hummer—according to newspapers now one of the most popular large, luxury SUVs, and one of the most successful car introductions in the U.S. ever—appeals to the animalistic desire for dominance, sexual prowess, and sheer hedonistic pleasure in people.¹ And these drives are not simply male prerogatives anymore—at least not in the U.S. As casual observation and reports show, a significant percentage of SUV drivers are women, and newer SUVs seem to be the preferred mode of transportation for many of the once weaker sex as well. Another tally mark for the French and their “Vive la difference!”

According to a report by Morley Shafer on the CBS television (TV) program 60 Minutes (broadcast on March 2, 2003), American automakers go to expensive consultants and conduct extensive market research to figure out why people want an SUV or a Hummer. Although I don’t really want to bite the hand that feeds me, I must confess I find the resources spent rather misguided. It does not take much mental effort to understand these basic drives.² The question is whether people should be encouraged through advertising and these kinds of products to indulge their lowest level, instinctual cravings. And, if you really want to be a professional marketer in this mold, why not use some imagination and do a co-branding campaign featuring Hummer H1 and Viagra? There’s no need to research that one, for after all, the target customers for the Hummer are not necessarily the men and

¹. It also got a boost from the war in Iraq. According to Cristina Rouvalis, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, April 23, 2003, p. E1, people flash thumbs-up signs at the civilian cousins of the Humvees they see on TV traversing the sand in Iraq. “It’s a very patriotic vehicle,” says Duane Guthrie, product manager at Wright Hummer in Wexford. “Some of my customers are talking about being patriotic.”

². Keith Bradsher’s High and Mighty: SUVs: The World’s Most Dangerous Vehicles and How They Got That Way (Public Affairs), 2002, offers an interesting discussion of the psychology behind SUVs, especially in Chapter 6, “Reptile Dreams.”
women looking to power up their road-rage arsenal, they could also be aged people with doubts about their vitality and a willingness to spend some discretionary income to shore up their sagging confidence. At least that was, I figured, how the Hummer people found me when scrolling through their marketing database.

The marketing threat
Actually, I was glad the Hummer marketer did not simply call me on the phone. Junk mail is less intrusive and annoying than those telemarketing calls at dinnertime—well, not only at dinnertime, as it turns out. Now that I frequently work at home, I have found out that the calls start at 9 in the morning—8 a.m. on Saturdays—and continue throughout the day at hourly intervals. I know this is similar for other people, since I make sure that the talk around the water cooler when I’m in the office explores new devices to stop these calls. For a Christmas gift, my assistant gave me a TeleZapper, which promised to erase my phone number from any computer-assisted call list within two seconds after the first ring, provided I did not speak into the mouthpiece. The problem was that the laser-like beeping designed to incapacitate the computer mainly served to pierce the eardrums of everyone on the line. Whether or not it had any effect on the computer was never clear since the calls kept coming; it did, however, incapacitate one device: our cordless phone unit.

So, I have had to disconnect the TeleZapper, and have gone back to my original strategy. It consists of quickly answering “Hello” when picking up and hanging up within 1–2 seconds if nobody comes on the line. It usually takes a second or so for the telemarketer to get on the line, and even if he or she does get on quickly, the misread “Mr. Jonassen” or cheerful “Mr. Johnson” is enough of a giveaway to justify rejection. The key is never to get into that upsetting conversation that privacy advocates so rightly worry about. And don’t worry about the telemarketer calling back right away; the computer keeps him or her moving to another number in short order. The only ones who will call back are the people you want to talk to, and they will be quicker to speak the second time. I have also, of course, recorded our
phone numbers with the new DoNotCall.com registry, but plan to keep practicing this tried and true strategy. Given past experiences and the telemarketers’ ingenuity, I am not sure how effective such a registry will be.

Yes, we in marketing have surely helped create a society that requires a lot of technical skill and know-how to get through the day. As a consequence of free markets, deregulation, and privatization, we as consumers have free choice of just about everything imaginable—and more. The basic consumer problem might still be to make enough money to be able to afford all the things we want, but that is mainly because there are so many things to want—and new things get added every day. We consumers have to learn new things daily from all the barrage. For example, I recently found out that cell phones now come with FM radio capability, in addition to cameras and Internet access. (I also learned not so long ago that telemarketers can get to me on my cell phone, perhaps hoping to sell me a financial package while hiking in unspoiled wilderness. But then again, why did I bring the phone with me and keep it on?)

Marketing saturation
That marketing infuses most aspects of our daily lives in the U.S. is, of course, not a very novel notion. Neither is it necessarily a force for evil; although its effect is probably not quite as beneficial as my colleagues and I first thought. Still, customer satisfaction questionnaires at hospitals, post offices, public schools, and government agencies probably do more good than harm. Even though they restrict our vaunted academic freedom, innovation, and risk-taking, the teacher evaluation questionnaires at our university have produced more student-friendly classrooms, more organized lectures, and less distant teachers. Movie audience research to determine the most desirable ending to teenage flicks, although seeming to compromise directors and scriptwriters, seems pretty harmless given the profit and semi-exploitative motivations of the producers to start with. The same might be true for the massive marketing efforts made by many megachurches to attract audiences to their gospel.
Nevertheless, I guess even the most pragmatic and accommodating conscience might be forgiven for shuddering at the potential damaging effects from an omnipresent selling perspective. The temptation to shade an uncomfortable message in favor of positive news can compromise professional advice from doctors, lawyers, and, yes, accountants. Hearing that National Public Radio (NPR), probably the single most important non-commercial broadcast news source in the U.S., bases its programming choices on market research aimed to identify target segments likely to contribute operating funds blurs the distinction with commercial stations and throws doubt on assumptions of objectivity. Artistic integrity in art media with ambitions higher than entertaining teenagers is easily compromised when revenues and profits are the only guiding criteria. Robert Altman’s The Player, a movie about moviemaking, cynically illustrates the corruption of artistic integrity by commercialism by ending the in-the-movie movie with Bruce Willis suddenly appearing to save the world. The Hollywood motto seems to be: “Insult the viewer’s intelligence if you have to, but don’t make him or her leave the theatre unhappy!”

Irresponsible marketing?
I tried to shrug off the queasy feeling about today’s marketing. The Hummer was just one more example of the typical American way. But then, what was the American way? The Hummer ad seemed to be one more example of the kind of marketing effort that had produced the fast-food nation, the consumption craze of teenagers, and the most energy-wasting people on earth. It was another of the over-the-top marketing efforts that seemed to be necessary in a completely saturated marketplace, where wants and needs were continuously recreated rather than met. I already

3. The Washington Post, April 12, 2002, p. C01. On the other hand, the financial pressure on NPR is considerable. Accusing NPR of “profound anti-Israeli bias,” the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) demanded that NPR’s foreign editor be removed because of his “long record of partisanship in favor of Palestinian views.” Even though NPR dismissed the accusations after review, at least one station, WBUR (FM) in Boston, lost underwriting funding and listener support.
knew that the U.S. spent vastly more in per-capita marketing expenditures than any other country. For example, in advertising expenditures alone, my own global marketing text showed that in 1999, the U.S. spent about $445 per capita, far ahead of second-place Japan with $262, the United Kingdom with $252, Germany with $230, and France with $157, the same as Canada.4

This big spending apparently has had some effect. I read that Americans have grown fat by eating more calories than their bodies can burn—one reason why bigger cars are attractive.5 U.S. teenagers spent $155 billion in “discretionary income” in 2000 alone, mainly on clothes, cosmetics, and music, and companies have followed suit, increasing their spending on marketing to kids twenty-fold between 1989 and 1999.6 As for energy usage, the American per-capita oil consumption in 1999 was 25 barrels, compared with 15.7 for Japan, and 12.4 for both France and Germany.7

So, what did this all mean to me? Was marketing alone to blame for these things? Weren't free markets and free choice the bases of the capitalist system? Even a judge had this to say: “If a person knows or should know that eating copious orders of super-sized McDonald's products is unhealthy and may result in weight gain ... it is not the place of the law to protect them from their own excesses ... nobody is forced to eat at McDonald's.”8

5. One of many striking statistics in Eric Schlosser's best-selling book, Fast Food Nation (Houghton-Mifflin), 2001, is that while in 1991 only four states had obesity rates of 15% or higher, by 2001, at least 37 states did (p. 240).
6. From Alissa Quart's Branded: The buying and selling of teenagers (Perseus), 2003, pp. xiii, 51.
Strike Two: Anti-Globalization

Like almost everyone I know, I was surprised and taken aback at the violent demonstrations against the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle in December 1999. Just a couple of months earlier, I had finished the second edition of my textbook on global marketing, and everything seemed to be going well—right on course—with the global economy. Even though Japan’s economic malaise still lingered (ruining sales of my co-authored 1996 book on the Japanese way of marketing), other Asian economies, as well as Russia and Latin America, showed strength, having just shaken off some bad financial crises. The Europeans were still moving forward, having introduced the Euro common currency for credit transactions earlier in the year, and getting ready for bills and coins to come on January 1, 2002. The magic of the semi-conductor economy, the Internet, and the dot-coms showed little or no evidence of weakness, and America had lived up to its promise of riches for everyone—especially for those invested in the stock market. The only real worry was the predicted large-scale computer failures with the arrival of the new millennium. But even so, everything seemed to be under control (one of those rare cases where a government-organized effort seemed to have really worked without a glitch).

Of course, the newspapers and other media reports from Seattle focused on the broken windows, the looted stores, and the police ineptitude. Predictably, observers denounced the attacks as being incited by fringe elements, outsiders, and troublemakers, including many foreigners. In my eyes, this was to be expected and did not diminish the impact of the demonstrations. I had been a student at Berkeley in the 1960s and had seen with my own eyes how news reports necessarily play up the sensational elements of an event, however well-organized and peaceful, misleading outsiders. In 1964, in Berkeley, the early allegations were that communists and foreign students inspired the anti-Vietnam demonstrations. The Seattle demonstrators were not denounced as communists, but they were grouped together as “foreigners and radicals.”
One reason why I found the demonstrations significant was that in my global marketing text, I had warned managers against the blind implementation of what many called “the global imperative.” For most of my colleagues, globalization was an imperative: “Go global or die!” As it is, today’s typical management and marketing books still take for granted that the appropriate strategy for most products and services involves international expansion. Growth markets are found abroad. Naturally, an academic textbook has to follow the mainstream line of thought.

But, in my own text, I had deviated slightly from this single-minded drive to expand abroad. One reason was that I had doubts about the benefits brought to the various countries entered. As global marketers, my MBA students would be expected to “bring good things to life,” as touted in GE’s oft-repeated advertising slogan. But, in many cases, it was not clear that the products and services they would be selling were needed in the local markets. As Bill Gates found when he went to South Africa after the end of apartheid, personal computers and Microsoft software were not the first, or even the second, priority for the people there.

There was also the question of different cultures. Not all people could be expected to be happy and pleased if fast-food restaurants crowded out local eateries, making traditional specialties harder to find. Of course, these and similar concerns ought to be recognized before trying to introduce new products, but it was clear that the global imperative made such finer points irrelevant. After all, with globalization, all countries would sooner or later need PCs, and people’s eating habits would gradually change. It seemed more important to capture first-mover advantages and to be an inside player as each market took off—as it supposedly would. As any cultural anthropologist will tell you, local traditions and views are not necessarily accommodating to foreigners. I thought of Procter & Gamble’s difficulty in developing the disposable diaper market in Japan with bulky American-style Pampers, boasting convenience for tired mothers taking care of baby “problems.” A Japanese mother stays home; her baby is not a “problem.” And the baby should look
neat, not like a big hulk—factors recognized by local followers Kao and Uni-Charm, which quickly took major market shares.

**The global marketer**

I have always thought of global marketers as the flag-bearers of free trade and globalization. To use a metaphor, they are vassals in the service of capitalism, the first troops to attack when formerly closed markets open. If the chief executive officers (CEOs) of American multinationals were prodding the government and WTO to keep markets abroad open and free, it was the American marketers who launched the assaults, hawking their global brands. Marketing was a people business, people dealing with other people—lots of them—often across cultures. When you saw and felt globalization, it was because marketers had put their brands and promotions in places you would never have expected them, such as on big billboards for Sony in Pamplona’s bullfight arena in Spain. In any case, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), the OECD and WTO attempt to free global investment flows, had already failed a couple of years earlier. The globalization march was clearly spearheaded by the global marketers of products and services, especially the Americans, the Europeans, and the Japanese.

I knew that most advanced marketing tools and techniques had been developed in the U.S. It was only natural that global marketers from the U.S. would be the most aggressive users of marketing when going abroad. In some ways, marketing has always existed. To use a slightly tired but illustrative example, even practitioners of the oldest profession in the world, prostitutes, discovered ways to display their wares. Excavations have uncovered Pompeiian tablets promulgating the advantages of certain medicines. Even warranties were extended—and enforced. When a colleague of mine returned from newly opened China, he reported that in the case of the large cobblestones laid in the Forbidden City, each had the stone mason’s signature engraved on it. He was told that if a stone split, so would the mason’s head, making “the punishment fit the crime.” Today’s marketers might use more sophisticated tools, but the essentials are the same. And in the U.S. in particular, with its diversity, multcul-
turalism, and free-speech protection, the marketing effort has reached new heights every year during my 30-plus years here, and it has become increasingly difficult for any one voice to make itself heard in the overall din.

Having studied foreign markets in the West and the East, I knew that the noisy hard-sell of the American way of marketing might be a potential problem abroad. The Americans were not only armed with the latest weapons in advertising and sales promotion—using the new media, cross-marketing films and merchandise, creating promotional events, and so on—they also had the conviction that globalization more or less meant that the American way was winning. After all, with privatization, deregulation, and the fall of the Berlin Wall, communist and social-democratic alternatives to American capitalism had been conquered. What, with the American tendency to celebrate victories and any “Number 1” status in your face, at least some Americans were likely to show signs of hubris and braggadocio in foreign markets. Some foreign people certainly would be resentful; they would try to put up obstacles to the incursion and display “Schadenfreude” when and if the Americans faltered. I was not surprised to hear that in 1992, McDonald’s was forced by a court to change its styrofoam packaging to more environmentally healthy packaging in Germany, that Indian farmers had ransacked a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) restaurant in 1994, claiming that the chicken was contaminated, and that Nike had created a furor when it became the sole sponsor of the Brazilian soccer team in 1998. But these seemed to be isolated incidents, small bumps in the globalization road. On the whole, throughout the 1990s, the global imperative was pretty much just that, an imperative.

**Anti-globalization and branding**

Globalization continued to encounter setbacks throughout 2000 and later. In 2000, the annual World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meeting in Washington, D.C. was cancelled. At the 2001 Genoa meeting of the eight leading Western economies,
there were disruptions and one demonstrator was shot and killed.\textsuperscript{10} The WTO meeting in Doha, Qatar in the spring of 2002 bowed to pressure from anti-globalization forces and eased restrictions on the generic production of critical drugs for third-world countries.

It is clear that the demonstrations have increased significantly in the past couple of years and the protests are having an effect. What’s happened? Has the situation gotten much worse? Do protesters have more time? My sense is that the “honeymoon” for globalization in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 is finished. People are tired of waiting for the fruits to be shared. What are global marketers doing wrong? The answer seems to lie in their emphasis on global branding.

Perhaps the most significant marketing development throughout the 1990s was the recognition that for many multinational companies, their major asset was simply their global brand name. As mergers and acquisitions were used to build presence in new markets, company executives and their lawyers needed to assess the financial worth of a potential takeover target. Since this worth was basically the discounted value of future income streams, there was a need to project future sales. Forecasting future sales involved projecting market share based on competitive advantage. A strong brand rather than physical assets and other balance sheet items consistently figured as an important advantage. Gradually, managers and analysts realized that for many global companies, their one key asset was their brand. A company like Coca-Cola found early on that its financial worth was almost entirely summed up by the worth of its brand, in 2002 about $70 billion.\textsuperscript{11}

Building and leveraging brand value became a preoccupation not only for brand managers at middle management levels, but it reached all the way to the top of the organization. And, since


\textsuperscript{11} From Interbrand’s annual ranking of the world’s most valuable brands, \texttt{http://interbrand.com/surveys.asp}
building a brand was expensive, it was more efficient to leverage an existing brand by extending the brand to related products, and by expanding into new markets. Extending a brand to new products carries its own risks. Coca-Cola had been singularly unsuccessful with its efforts to go outside the soft-drink category, and instead expanded further into foreign markets. Global brands came to symbolize the march of globalization.

This brand expansion strategy met with resistance in many places. Anti-globalization had an anti-branding component to it. Global brands, because of their prominence, became convenient targets in anti-globalization attacks. In addition to the McDonald’s outlets attacked in France and the KFC restaurants ransacked in India, there were boycotts of Nike and Disney, for their allegedly exploitative labor practices. I knew that less well-known brands employed similar practices. Levi’s and Starbucks were being disparaged over the global communication networks, apparently for destroying local businesses. And the contamination problems of giant Coca-Cola in Belgium made headlines everywhere. Yes, brand equity had been built for these global giants, and it had come back to haunt them.

Maybe I was biased, but it was striking how these brands were all American. I had done a fair amount of research and writing on Japanese and European businesses and their brand-building efforts. I could see very little antagonism roused against them—nobody hit Sony or Honda; nobody complained about Nokia or Volvo; and even Mercedes and BMW, given the once-over at home in Germany for environmental insensitivity, seemed globally exempt. I knew that some of these foreign companies did bend over backward to be environmentally sound—Honda and its electric car project, for example—and might pay more attention to their workers—Volvo’s plant in Kalmar, Sweden used a team concept to avoid numbingly repetitive tasks. Still, it was a real stretch for me to believe that only American companies did bad things.

Anti-Americanism was probably part of the anti-globalization package even before the Bush administration took office. The frequent allegations reported in the news media that the WTO, the
World Bank, and IMF were all puppets dominated by the U.S. only confirmed this. It also helped explain why my American colleagues—and I—seemed less cognizant of the anti-globalization issues and movement. We had chalked it up to the anti-Americanism inspired by the now sole superpower. We were the natural bully and our brands could be attacked, while the others were underdogs, and thus attacking those brands would be counterproductive. I could see this in another way: There were few or no attacks against other American brands such as Burger King, New Balance, Wrangler, and Pepsi. You attack the biggest, not the lesser brands, unless you want to risk a sympathy backlash.

**No generation gap?**

Another striking point was that there seemed to be no gender difference, and no generation gap, in the anti-globalization movement. I thought there would not be many highly educated people involved. Educated people tend to gain the most from globalization’s demand for knowledge workers, and global business puts a premium on language and communication skills. Still, it was clear that the anti-globalization forces did not lack in intellectual power—quite the contrary. In addition to college students and union members, their ranks included a range of well-educated people from scientists and academicians to managers and professionals. These were not simply people who were thrown out of a job, but people who seemed genuinely alarmed about the environment and other globalization negatives.

The lack of a generation gap was most puzzling. On the surface, I would have expected the anti-globalization appeal to be stronger among the older generations. It was simply that laid-off workers tend to be older, that folding businesses are likely to be old and are known to protect locals, and that older people are generally less open to innovation and change. Also, from a marketing perspective, one would expect anti-commercialization sentiments to be stronger among older people. Protection of the local culture would seem an older person’s concern, the intense promotion of global brands for younger people would be noise to older people, and younger people would be happy about the excitement brand marketers create.
Judging from photos and newspaper reports, why were so many of the anti-globalization demonstrators so young? Was it simply a matter of energy and time—they had nothing better to do and needed to get rid of pent-up energy? Anyway, the young have always been against their parents and the “establishment.” This seemed the favored explanation among many conservative observers. The fact was that many young workers, especially those less skilled, were also among the laid-off from firms under pressure from global competitors. Because of this, they did have time and energy, if not money. And they were likely to be single, not constrained by family obligations as married couples might be.

This could not be the whole story, however. For the fact was that many of these young people seemed very sincere, sometimes religious, and were still in high school or college. In many ways, they were prime beneficiaries of globalization benefits, used to ethnic and racial diversity and able to move easily in different cultures. They were the kind of people able to use modern communication tools—mobile phones, e-mail, and the Internet—to help organize demonstrations and coordinate activities. They also traveled light, and were thus able to cheaply travel to the different places around the world where the demonstrations occurred, including the huge January 2002 gathering in Porto Alegre, Brazil—not the easiest location to reach. And they were communicating using all available media, including music, the traditional avenue for protest.

My older daughter played for me a track on a CD with the music of a band from one of the many private high schools in the Washington area. The lyrics of the track, entitled “The STOP Song,” advocated a rejection of the shopping and consumption lifestyle stimulated by the typical brand marketing messages. “Stop eating at McDonald’s, stop drinking Coca-Cola,” and so on. Judging from my 18-year-old daughter and her peers, the song reflected how at least some in the younger generation viewed globalization. There was apparently a nagging sense that the affluence of their lives came at the expense of suffering elsewhere, and despite the assurances that globalization was a win for all, the failings in third-world countries were too obvious to ignore. The “in-your-face”
style of branded products and messages grated on teenagers at the front line of the brands’ attacks, who were bombarded by advertisers and tired of the one-upmanship of their peers.

Strike Three: Anti-Americanism

Outside my office door at the university, I have a glass-covered posterboard where I can put up messages to my students. Because e-mail has pretty much eliminated the need to post class notices outside the office, I have taken to using the posterboard as more of a newsstand, putting up magazine headlines and articles relevant to my courses. Since I mainly teach global business and marketing, most of the postings refer to international developments, including anti-globalization news. Since 9/11, however, most of the clippings have dealt with the political fallout from the terrorist attacks. And, to put it bluntly, most of them are now even more anti-global than the anti-globalization postings they replaced.

In-your-face politics

One posting described the 2001 U.S. rejection of the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, which had been signed on America’s behalf by then-Vice President Gore. Because of strong environmental sentiments, this agreement had been particularly important to Germany and France, two key partners in Europe. President Bush was well aware of this importance, but refused to address their concerns, simply stating that the protocol was flawed and the U.S. would in time (no promised deadline, though) propose its own version of an agreement. Another newspaper clipping dealt with Bush’s revocation of then-President Clinton’s signing of the charter for the International Criminal Court in The Hague, justified by the fear that American soldiers and their superiors might be prosecuted by politically motivated foreigners. In logical consequence, I also posted news of the detention of suspected Al Qaeda terrorists in the Guantanamo Bay military base without legal recourse.
The postings suggested that the American administration was willing to thumb its collective nose at international allies in other ways as well. Any free trade commitment of the government vanished as new tariffs as high as 30% were imposed on steel imports from Europe, New Zealand, and other countries. Not unexpectedly, the WTO ruled the tariffs illegal under its trade rules. The American agriculture industry received steep new subsidies, thoroughly compromising the efforts to help third-world countries reap some gains from globalization (although here, the Europeans were surely also to blame). A less depressing, but still relevant, clipping was a tongue-in-cheek column from *Time* magazine by Joel Stein about the 2002 World Cup in Japan/Korea, in which America’s lack of interest in the “rest-of-the-World Cup” tournament was blamed on weak marketing and zero brand tie-ins.12

These decisions set the stage for the confrontations we all saw leading up to the Iraq war. I did not post any clippings from that period. They seemed redundant since all news sources focused on the United Nations (UN), France, Germany, Tony Blair, and the anti-war demonstrations anyway. The UN was derided and ultimately bypassed by the Americans. Leading representatives of the U.S. government made a point of scorning disagreeing allies, exacerbating diplomatic friction, and creating more international tension.

The list of anti-international actions is daunting for someone like myself who makes a living teaching young—and not-so-young—people to adopt an international and tolerant outlook. This is not the kind of behavior that I have taught my students. I am not against politics again taking on a more prominent role than economics and free trade in international affairs. And I am not necessarily against conservatives on political grounds. But these actions, increasingly legitimized on the basis of the 9/11 attacks, were carried out with a unilateral and arrogant zeal—the kind of “in-your-face” attitude that reminded me of an athlete’s “trash talk.” Most of these actions had reasonable and reasoned justifi-

cations that could and should have been articulated. The evidence was that some of the early decisions—the rejection of the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court, for example—might well have been chosen by Clinton as well, but that the diplomacy would have been much less “in your face.” It was clearly unnecessary to engage in the kind of belligerent attitude that was evidenced. From where did this attitude emerge?

Anti-American fallout

My research assistant checked out the data on anti-American fallout. As one could have predicted, the indicators of how others viewed the U.S. and its policies showed a dramatic drop. The Pew Research Center, in its large-scale survey of global attitudes, showed that in numerous countries, the U.S. image dropped precipitously between summer 2002 and March 2003 (Table 1.1). The countries included in both years show the following percentages of favorable respondents:

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2002</th>
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<td>Britain</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Turkey</td>
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The average decline is from 61% to 30%, a precipitous drop, especially considering that Britain, Spain, and Poland officially supported the war. Equally striking is the reflection in American

attitudes toward traditional allies. Between February 2002 and summer 2003, the Pew data (Table 1.2) show the following changes in the Americans’ evaluation of the three countries for which comparable data are available:\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
Country & 2002 & 2003 \\
\hline
Britain & 90\% & 82\% \\
\hline
France & 79\% & 29\% \\
\hline
Germany & 83\% & 44\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Percent of Americans Favorable Toward Foreign Countries}
\end{table}

The average drop among the Americans is from 84\% to 52\%. These are sobering figures to say the least. Sure, public opinion is not what wins wars, and what people think can change quickly. But, in another sense, military victories can be hollowed by resentment, and some of these sentiments are not necessarily just temporary. Most likely, the overseas reactions involved some emotions and beliefs that were rekindled by American belligerence. One can think of events such as the exoneration of the American fighter pilot in the Italian alps, who caused the death of some 20 skiers in 1998,\textsuperscript{15} the reluctant remorse of the submarine commander who accidentally rammed a Japanese fishing vessel

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p. T-132.

\textsuperscript{15} The pilot was acquitted of manslaughter, but sentenced to six months in military prison for destroying a videotape shot during the flight. The navigator was dismissed from the Marines after pleading guilty to a similar charge regarding the videotape’s disappearance. Charges were dropped against the two backseat crewmen. Italians were incensed at the judicial outcome. Then-Premier Romano Prodi said it was an “earth-shaving flight,” a “terrible act,” and an Italian parliamentary investigative commission concluded the American airmen had acted as criminals. Since then, the families of each victim, all European, have received about $1.5 million in compensation, 70\% from the U.S. government and 30\% from the Italian government, said Werner Pichler, a spokesman for a group formed by the families. Doug Simpson, “Canadian Bombing Incident Parallels Marines’ Deadly Italian Ski-Lift Flight,” The Associated Press State & Local Wire, January 23, 2003.
in 2001, killing nine on-board, and the initially covered-up rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl outside an American base on Okinawa in 1995. These and other events might in some ways be unavoidable given American military presence abroad; but nevertheless, they give glimpses of a national character that is not always as pure as its public pronouncements suggest. As a Canadian said after the Northeast blackout in August 2003, “Have you ever seen the United States take the blame for anything?” Other countries might not be much better, but these transgressions are made worse by the way they are typically handled in America. Initial denial and aggressive defiance—“talk to my lawyer”—make belated shows of sincerity and remorse seem hypocritical and shameless. Benjamin Franklin’s concept and promotion of America’s unique moral standing in the world can easily be corrupted by sanctimonious and pompous rhetoric.

The “In-Your-Face” Spin

By now, I really felt a need to try to put the anti-marketing, anti-globalization, and anti-American movements in perspective. These were challenges to what I had believed for a long time. I had left my native Sweden for graduate school in America, sponsored by the Ford Motor Company. I stayed on not because the country seemed to offer more freedom and opportunity—to me, Sweden in the 1960s was ahead of the U.S. on both counts, believe it or not. No, I stayed on because this country was more fun. Compared to Sweden, it was—and is still—young, doing things was more important—and still is—than reflecting on them, and energy still beat brains, even among professionals. Actions spoke louder than words—and still do, and a lot of energy was—

16. The families of 33 people who were aboard the Japanese fishing trawler agreed in 2002 to a reported $13 million compensation package from the U.S. Navy. Chris Weelock, “U.S. Navy Completes Final Settlement in Ehime Maru Incident,” CNN.com, February 1, 2003.

17. Toronto mayor Mel Lastman, after the blackout also reached Canada, as reported by Time, August 25, 2003, p.17.
and still is—wasted, all in the name of excitement, challenge, and fun, fun, fun. All this was very attractive.

Of course, being a professor also seemed a pretty good job judging from the activists on the Berkeley faculty in the 1960s. Plus, with all the excitement, marketing was something that America was good at. When Japan showed in the 1980s that it could do even better, I spent a lot of time “doing Japan,” watching it turn to global marketing as globalization progressed through the 1990s. If there is a sense of opportunism here that goes badly with what professors should be about, I confess to that. Teaching in a business school involves staying in touch with economic (and sometimes political) developments, and colors what one ends up researching.

Now reality had checked all of that. Here I was in America, writing about global marketing and the value of a global power brand, while at the same time activists (and my daughters’ schoolmates) trashed the brands. I was teaching budding marketing students how to get into foreign markets and establish “beachheads,” drawing on their competitive advantages over domestic producers to penetrate local markets. I taught case studies on how Levi’s became the leading jeans-maker in Japan by positioning itself as the “original” American cowboy gear, how McDonald’s brought its arches to Russia after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and how Nike moved aggressively into sponsoring popular sports overseas, like soccer, which Americans seemed to have little interest in. Were these just benevolent strategic efforts, which although they surely helped the companies’ bottom lines, also provided great benefits for the customers in the different countries? Or, were they just efforts from an increasingly unilateral American attitude to dominate foreign markets?

It all seemed so much “in your face.” In a way, I liked the expression, since it signified an irreverent attitude, a confrontation against some opponent, a challenge to authority. It represented a stance against someone, overcoming a real or imagined foe. The “We’re number 1” sign used by athletes is one early version. It’s associated with the face-to-face confrontation one sometimes sees between athletes trash-talking each other’s game.
In earlier and more sentimental days, in-your-face behavior was associated with the underdog confronting a supposedly stronger foe. In this sense, Mickey Rooney, the perky film comedian, who could be accused of always playing in-your-face roles, was also embraced by audiences partly because of his short stature. By contrast, in-your-face attitudes by individuals who had the advantage were always punished. One can think of the countless German officers in World War II films whose dire fate was preordained as they “in your faced” some allied prisoner of war. Today, of course, such niceties are gone. Airs of superiority by advantaged players not only go unpunished, any negative connotations of arrogance and bullying attached to such behavior have given way to approval and supportive smirks. Good sportsmanship has gone down in direct proportion to athletes’ paychecks going up.

Today there is more to the in-your-face attitude. It reflects an unwillingness to accept an opponent as an equal, and a rejection of any claims on his or her behalf. That is, “I am right and you are wrong.” There is no need for a dialogue; there is actually no need for me to listen to you. If one recognizes some of the typical teenager’s slant to this, as most parents would, it is clear that the in-your-face attitude reflects an immature and insecure personality. Complexities and uncertainties are ignored and denied. Things are black and white; there are no gray areas. It is, of course, not a very long step to the fundamentalism of various religious cults.

It was this aspect of in-your-face airs that made me cringe when seeing the Hummer ad. It played directly to the kind of infantile feelings that presumably many people have overcome. “Get this car and get in other people’s faces” was the message conveyed. The copy was not simply in my face; it exhorted me to be in other people’s faces—and to enjoy it. The advertising was an insult to me because of the product appeal used—plus it exhorted me to be insulting to other people. Was this what I had been teaching all these years?