

America's Secret Mission as Embedded in Special Providence

TRADE for PEACE: How the DNA of America, Freemasonry, and Providence Created a New World Order with Nobody in Charge by **Dr. Patrick Mendis** (New York: iUniverse, 2009), \$33.95, 624 pages with illustrations and photos

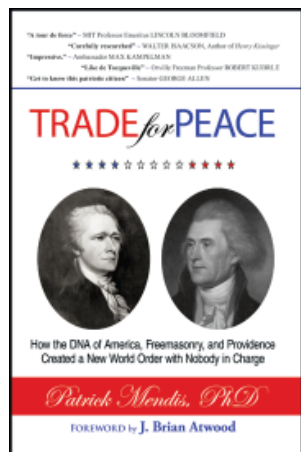
Reviewed by Timothy Giblet*

Over the past decade, an assortment of books has been written in a wide range of perspectives about American history, politics of foreign and trade policy, and even the influence of Freemasonry in the founding of our nation. Seldom have we found a book that connects the dots to tell a story not only of our heritage but also the future of American history.

Even more remarkable of Dr. Patrick Mendis' latest book, *TRADE for PEACE: How the DNA of America, Freemasonry, and Providence Created a New World Order with Nobody in Charge*, is that he has interwoven his native Sri Lankan background, Minnesota upbringing, and working in Washington, D.C., to reveal the Founding Fathers' concealed mission in the world.

Dr. Mendis, who served at the U.S. Department of State under both Secretaries of Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell, was formerly a military professor through the University of Maryland in the NATO and Pacific Commands. An American history enthusiast in Sri Lanka, Professor Mendis was a former AFS exchange student to Minnesota and later taught at the University of Minnesota as well as the Leningrad State University in the former Soviet Union and the Northwester Polytechnic University in China as an American visiting professor. He also worked in the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the United Nations, and the World Bank. With his diverse resume, he has written this book for every nation to appreciate the American Experiment, for which former U.S. Ambassador Michael Retzer writes: "Like Alex de Tocqueville, Dr. Mendis writes about the promise of America and the wisdom of our Founding Fathers."

Professor Mendis, who completed this 624-page tome while serving as a visiting scholar in foreign policy at the



Johns Hopkins University's Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). Yet he began his American odyssey – and thinking about writing this book – when he first met his American mentor, Ambassador Harlan Cleveland, the founding dean of the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota in 1984. The book is dedicated to his late mentor. Professor Brian Atwood, the current dean of the Humphrey Institute, who wrote the foreword to the book: "Patrick Mendis, an award-winning alumnus of the Humphrey Institute and a protégé of Harlan Cleveland during his tenure as dean, describes the 'third try' and the concept of rising expectations through a unique dimension of American history. His journey is a relevant one, from a mud house with water buffalos in Sri Lanka to working with the United Nations, the World Bank, and the U.S. Government. Mendis' personal experiences give him a unique perspective on America's mission in the world."

A Minnesotan by mannerism, Professor Mendis has been living in Virginia. Former U.S. Senator and Governor George Allen describes the Commonwealth citizen: "When Patrick Mendis grew up in Sri Lanka, he dreamt about America and was inspired by great Virginians: James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and Patrick Henry. Patrick Mendis – now himself a proud Virginian – and former American diplomat and military professor, writes about our

great foreign policy traditions – primarily on Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian worldviews – and explains how our commercial history could become a prism to see the American destiny. Get to know of this patriotic citizen and award-winning American educator through his unique analysis of the founding ideas of freedom, capitalism, and our Founders' enduring gifts to the world."

Ambassador Shaun Donnelly, former U.S. envoy to Sri Lanka and the World Trade Organization (WTO), who worked with Professor Mendis at the State Department, summarizes the book this way: "Dr. Patrick Mendis, one of our most original thinkers on global economic issues, has produced another timely and very interesting volume on International Trade and the American experience. I learned shortly after meeting him that any time spent with Patrick Mendis or with any of his books or articles is always time very well spent. Patrick's unique perspectives build on his immigrant experience in the U.S., his Sri Lankan roots, and his impressive experiences as a scholar, a U.S. diplomat, and a world-traveling professor to give us new understanding of the interrelationships among history, economics, culture, and international relations."

Indeed, this interdisciplinary book is compelling, entertaining, and enlightening. He has taken a full advantage of his appreciation for American history and Freemasonry to create an enjoyable reading experience. By doing so, he is able to convey to the reader, in an unsettling and insightful way, the relationship between the politics of trade policies and national security to promote healthy foreign relations with other countries.

As I was reading *TRADE for PEACE*, it reminds me of the author and philosopher Charles de Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), who observes "... peace is the natural effect of trade ..." Our first diplomat and scientist, Benjamin Franklin, with his

conviction as a Freemason like George Washington, confirms: "No nation was ever ruined by trade."

Professor Mendis, who was honored with the State Department's Benjamin Franklin Award, is not a Freemason; however, his understanding of the tradecraft is impressive. The long subtitle of the book, *How the DNA of America, Freemasonry, and Providence Created a New World Order with Nobody in Charge*, caught my eye and compelled me to understand the subtle meaning of his esoteric explanations as to how each of these factors could play in the concept of trade for peace.

The author does not stop there; he reveals the so-called "secret" architectural layout – the celestial and terrestrial connection as George Washington and other Freemasons believed – and the designs of the national capital that represent in American Providence. His interpretation of astrological knowledge as the Founding Fathers and Freemasons understood is thought provoking and refreshing. (The next book by Dan Brown is reportedly focused on this aspect of the nation's capital as he did with *Angles and Demons* that implicated the Vatican).

Professor Stephen Trachtenberg, 33° Freemason and President Emeritus of the George Washington University, describes: "Patrick Mendis is a native of Sri Lanka and now an American. He has somehow managed to blend these two sources of insight to create both an insider and an outsider perspective. He is at once capable of seeing America through the eyes of the other while also seeing it concurrently with the eyes of a local. This is quite remarkable and gives his work a special quality. Particularly interesting is his observation and review of Freemasonry, its contributions to the commercial origins of America and, of course, his understanding of the work of Adam Smith. Moreover, he writes with clarity and lightness of touch that is rarely found in books of such serious academic purpose. I thoroughly enjoyed reading his work even as I learned from it, and I recommend it heartily." Both George Washington and Benjamin Franklin were 33° Freemasons.

The Aspen Institute Presi-

dent, Walter Isaacson, a revered author of *Benjamin Franklin*, characterizes Professor Mendis, a former Socrates Fellow at the Institute, in this manner: "Patrick Mendis, in this carefully researched book, seeks to explain how trade is encoded in the DNA of the United States and expressed in its Constitution. He provides an interesting approach for analyzing the nation's commercial roots."

It is no wonder that an eclectic group of twenty-one distinguished Americans – both Democrat and Republican persuasions who praised Professor Mendis's book – has essentially united to appreciate the story, which is essentially told by an immigrant from Sri Lanka. His former academic advisor, Robert Kudrle, Orville Freeman Professor of International Trade and Investment Policy at the Humphrey Institute and the Law School of the University of Minnesota, who knew Mendis as a graduate student since 1984, writes: "Patrick Mendis extends a long tradition of insightful writing about America sparked by a perspective acquired abroad. Like de Tocqueville, Mendis sees cultural connections that those born in the U.S. often overlook. This fascinating book places international trade – domestic and foreign – at the heart of the American vision of a harmonious world. Economic nationalists who see themselves opposed to cosmopolitans will be forced to think again."

Professor Mendis, who did not speak English when he first came to the United States, would still find some improvements to his book in both editorial and structure. Overall, it must be read by every American to appreciate the Great American Experiment and its possible future through an eye of a model immigrant and the vision of the Founding Fathers. In short, the book is written in a fashion that would be enjoyable to a broad spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds, especially those young American leaders who would continue to cherish America's mission as a commercial republic. ■

*Timothy Giblet is former Deputy Director of the White House's Mail Analysis in the Office of the Presidential Correspondence under President George W. Bush.