In recent years, the number of publications focusing on “Empire” has been skyrocketing. Since the arrival of the “unipolar moment” following the fall of the “Evil Empire” in 1991, the term has been usually associated with the United States and its expanding sphere of influence. One notable exception, of course, is Michael Hardt’s and Antonio Negri’s much publicized perspective on Empire as a radically new paradigm of authority and control that cannot be reduced to American power—a “new global order” composed of a series of national and supranational organisms that supersede old, nation-state-centered forms of sovereignty. But the enormity of the Al-Qaeda attacks and the ensuing belligerent response that the Bush administration was bent on waging, what former Central Command’s General John Abizaid calls, the “long war on global terror,” brought the public discourse on Empire back to the role of America in the world—sparking the process over whether the world’s irate “hyper-power” had embarked on a “new imperialism.” Soon, the post-September 11 cacophony over American Empire merged with long-standing high-profile debates on “globalization” to form narratives that explored the meanings and normative implications of what I have referred to elsewhere as “imperial globalism.”

To take but two recent examples, Chalmers Johnson and Jan Nederveen Pieterse have argued that rapid growth of the American military-corporate complex has been a powerful impetus for the rise of imperial globalism after September 11. Similarly critical of the role
of American Empire, these prominent social scientists nonetheless disagree on one fundamental point. Johnson thinks that September 11 spelled the beginning of the end of globalization by encouraging the Bush administration to shift from neoliberal “economic imperialism” to neoconservative “military imperialism.” Conversely, Pieterse holds that globalization constitutes a dynamic of far greater significance and historical duration than American Empire. In his view, the current “imperial moment” represents the most recent yet passing phase in globalization’s glacier-like evolution over centuries, if not over millennia. Hence, we ought to consider whether globalization and empire are clashing dynamics or perfectly capable of integration in hybrid constellations that contain features of both market globalism and militaristic Empire.

Though conceding the possibility of Empire, overwhelming market globalism, my response leans toward Pieterse’s perspective. Indeed, this chapter analyzes the ongoing American public diplomacy strategy of winning hearts and minds around the world—especially in the Middle East—as one concrete face of “imperial globalism” embedded in the evolving dynamics of globalization. I argue that post-September 11 American public diplomacy has been based on a unilateral and unidirectional model of communication to which I refer in this chapter as “monologue of Empire.” This singular communicative process has been designed to win the hot war on terror by “branding” so-called “American values,” such as liberty, opportunity, and democracy, as premium commodities for global consumption. Thus, this ideological discourse merges traditional war propaganda with cutting-edge marketing techniques developed by the corporate advertising industry in its drive to “go global.” Ignoring even the most basic dialogical principles, American public diplomacy fails to engage in genuine cultural exchanges that take seriously the values of pluralism and human dignity. In my view, the monologue of Empire is a perfect example for the hybrid nature of American empire—a constellation Pieterse calls “neoliberal empire.” As he notes,

Neoliberal empire twins practices of empire with those of neoliberalism. The core of empire is the national security state and the military-industrial complex; neoliberalism is about business, financial operations, and marketing (including the marketing of neoliberalism itself).

Unfolding within the discursive parameters of market globalism, the monologue of Empire does not spell a sudden death for neoliberal