From Containment to Global Leadership?

America & the World After the Cold War

Zalmay M. Khalilzad

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PREFACE

This report discusses the importance of grand strategy for the United States in the post–Cold War era. It aims to contribute to the debate on what that grand strategy should be. It should be of interest to policymakers and analysts in the realms of security and foreign policy, future military forces and their roles and missions, alliances, burden sharing, intelligence priorities, and international politics generally.

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PROJECT AIR FORCE

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SUMMARY

This report argues that the United States needs a new "grand strategy" for pursuing national security, economic, and foreign policy interests. It identifies three potential grand strategies, makes the case for choosing one of them, and offers recommendations for how to pursue that strategy.

LACK OF VISION IN THE POST–COLD WAR ERA

During the Cold War, the United States was relatively certain of its objectives. Now it is not. Despite efforts by Secretary Cheney's Defense Department during the Bush administration and pockets in the Clinton administration, no grand strategy has yet jelled. In fact, the United States has been operating without a grand strategy since the end of the Cold War. This failure carries large opportunity costs. The lack of a grand strategy makes it more difficult to decide what is important and what is not, to determine which threats are more serious than others, and to develop coherent approaches to respond to new challenges. It causes policy on many issues to be characterized by ambivalence, uncertainty, and a lack of staying power. Short-term and parochial interests may take priority over the longer-term national ones. And without a broadly agreed-upon architectural framework, it becomes harder to gain widespread bipartisan support for policy. Sustaining popular support and staying the course for particular policies are difficult as well, if the costs of implementation increase but the commitment cannot be explained in terms of a national interest and a strategy on which broad agreement has been achieved.

OPTIONS FOR A NEW U.S. GRAND STRATEGY

The report identifies three options for a new grand strategy and assesses each one.

Neoisolationism. This option would involve abandoning U.S. preeminence and turning inward to face domestic problems. Although this approach could produce significant defense savings and other benefits in the short run, it would most likely increase the danger of major conflicts, require much greater U.S. defense efforts over the long term, and eventually undermine U.S. prosperity.

A return to pre–World War II multipolarity. This option would rely on the balance of power among several nations to preclude the emergence of a preeminent superpower. As in the 19th century, the United States and other global powers would compete and cooperate to avoid hegemony and global war. There could be advantages for the United States in a such a strategy, including a lower defense burden—but less than might be the case with a neoisolationist strategy. The risks, however, could be severe. They include the possibility that the other powers would not cooperate fully; that the United States is likely to face increased competition from other major powers; that a decline in U.S. influence might have negative economic consequences, including a weakening of GATT and the IMF; that the members of such a system would find it too difficult to behave according to its rules; and that such a world could lead to new arms races and even global wars.

Maintain U.S. global leadership and preclude the rise of another global rival and multipolarity. This goal is the most promising for a future U.S. grand strategy. A world in which the United States exercises leadership would be more peaceful and more open to values of liberal democracy, free markets, and the rule of law. Such a world is likely to have a better chance of dealing cooperatively with the world's major problems, such as nuclear proliferation, threats of regional hegemony and lower-level conflicts, and the long-run avoidance of new world wars with their enormous costs and consequences.

STEPS FOR MAINTAINING U.S. GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

For long-term success in realizing the objective this report recommends, the United States should adhere to seven principles, outlined below, as guidelines for its policies.

Maintain and Selectively Extend the Alliance Among the Economically Most Capable Democratic Nations

During the Cold War the United States was successful in integrating Western Europe and East Asia into U.S.-led coalitions and alliances. Given continued unity, this group will be strong enough to overpower any threat from outside its ranks. Thus, this community of nations may be called a "democratic zone of peace and prosperity." Maintaining this zone of peace should be the central feature of American post–Cold War grand strategy.

Prevent Hegemony over Critical Regions

The United States should be willing to use force if necessary for this purpose. There are currently two regions whose control by a hostile power could pose a global challenge: East Asia and Europe. The Persian Gulf is critically important for a different reason—its oil resources are vital for the world economy. In the long term, the relative importance of various regions can change. A region that is critical to American interests now might become less important, while some other region might gain in importance.

Hedge Against Russian Reimperialization and Chinese Expansionism While Promoting Cooperation with Both

Both the United States and the other members of the democratic zone of peace have a substantial interest in helping Russia shed remnants of its imperial leanings, communist-style command economy, and totalitarian politics. In the near term, Moscow is unlikely to pose a global challenge. However, over time it can pose a regional and ul-

timately a global threat if it gets its house in order and moves toward reimperialization. In the case of China, there is a strong tendency to reject U.S. preeminence, implying the need to balance it—but at the same time China wants economic and technological cooperation with the United States to improve its relative position. China is one or two decades away from becoming a serious global rival—either by itself or in coalition with others. The United States should continue to encourage Chinese political and economic integration in the global economy, in the expectation that it would lead to democratization and decentralization. At the same time, the United States should limit technological transfers with military implications and discourage Chinese aggression against ASEAN states and Taiwan by encouraging regional cooperation and helping ensure that these states have adequate defense capabilities.

Preserve U.S. Military Preeminence

For the foreseeable future, this means having the capability for fighting two major regional contingencies nearly simultaneously, e.g., Korea and the Gulf. The United States should also acquire increased capabilities for occasional intervention in lesser regional conflicts, such as humanitarian relief operations, and for countering weapons of mass destruction and ballistic and cruise missiles. For the longer term, it should consider moving toward sizing its forces to be able to defeat the plausible military challenges to critical American interests that might be posed by the two next most powerful military forces in the world—which are not allied with the United States. The United States also needs to remain in the forefront of developing and employing technological advances affecting military effectiveness. In addition to technological superiority, the United States must maintain the quality of its military personnel.

Maintain U.S. Economic Strength and an Open International Economic System, and Reduce the Nation's Social Crisis

U.S. economic strength is essential for U.S. global leadership. To remain the preeminent world power, the United States must enhance its economic strength by improving productivity, thus increasing real per-capita income; strengthening education and training; and generating and using superior science and technology. In the long run,

the nation's economic future will be affected by two other factors. One is the imbalance between government revenues and government expenditure. Second, and even more important to long-term economic well-being, may be the overall rate of investment. Although government cannot imbue Americans with a Japanese-style propensity to invest, it can use tax policy to encourage such behavior. The nation's global standing will also be affected by its social conditions—which are currently unsatisfactory because of the high rate of violence in the cities, the poor state of race relations, and the breakdown in families. Though the United States faces no global ideological rival, and though movements such as Islamic fundamentalism and East-Asian traditionalism are limited in their appeal, the country's social problems are limiting its appeal as a model. If the social crisis worsens, it is likely that over the long term, a new organizing principle with greater universal appeal might emerge and be adopted by states with the power and the desire to challenge the United States.

Be Judicious in the Use of Force, Avoid Overextension, and Achieve Effective Burden Sharing Among Allies

Overextension is a mistake that some past great powers have made. Such a development can occur if the United States is not judicious in its use of force and gets involved in protracted conflicts in various regions—sapping its energies, weakening its military capabilities, and undermining support for its global role. U.S. vital interests are engaged primarily in critical regions where it should be prepared to use force if other means fail. When it comes to lesser interests, the United States, in cooperation with like-minded nations, should rely on nonmilitary options: arming and training the victims of aggression; providing technical assistance and logistic support for peacekeeping by the UN, regional organizations, or other powers; economic instruments such as sanctions and positive incentives; and, of course, diplomacy.

The nation's European and Asian allies must do more to protect common interests in places such as the Persian Gulf, Korea, and East Central Europe. The United States does face a dilemma: as long as it is able and willing to protect common interests, others might be happy to have a free ride, thereby keeping political opposition under

control, accepting no risk for their youth, and continuing to focus on their economies. But the United States also should not want Germany and Japan to be able to conduct expeditionary wars on their own. Therefore, although the United States will probably be willing to bear a heavier military burden than its allies, fairness and long-term public support require that the disproportion not be excessive. A balance needs to be struck and a formula has to be found to balance each country's contribution of "blood and treasure." In the Gulf War, a substantial degree of burden sharing was realized. But the allies should do more in protecting Persian Gulf oil and deterring aggression in Korea, although they are likely to resist and argue that they, too, are cutting back their defense budgets. For the long term, one possible solution is to institutionalize burden sharing among the G-7 nations for the security of critical regions, including sharing the financial costs of military operations. Another is for NATO to enhance significantly its power projection capability for operations in East Central Europe and the Middle East.

Obtain and Maintain Domestic Support for a Global Leadership Vision and Necessary Strategy

Will the American people support such a strategy? They might well do so if (a) it was presented to them by the President and supported by the senior members of both the Democratic and Republican parties and (b) the costs and benefits of such a strategy and some alternatives were debated and understood. A global leadership strategy will entail costs—a greater defense effort than might well be the case under some other grand strategy—but those costs have to be compared with the potential risks of alternatives. The costs of the other choices of global role the United States might take can ultimately be higher. Besides, there are economic benefits for the United States from playing a global leadership role. Those benefits have not been illuminated, either analytically or in public debate. Global leadership and efforts to build a more democratic and peaceful world should also appeal to American idealism, a defining feature of the republic. To sustain domestic political support, this appeal might well be as important as the more selfish and material American interests. In fact, such a lofty goal could be a spur to the kinds of social and educational reforms that the country needs, rather than an alternative to them.

Of course, should the public reject such a strategy, the United States would not be able to pursue it. In the long run, American preeminence will not last if the nation turns inward or makes the wrong choices. And as a country it would fail to seize this historic moment. Over time the relative position of the United States would decline, and the world would most likely settle into a balance-of-power multipolar system—and become more dangerous for the United States. The development of a multipolar world is not inevitable. It depends to a significant degree on what this nation wants and does. Even if the development is inevitable, the later it happens, the better.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

With its victory in the Cold War, the United States is now the world's preeminent military and political power. Despite a decline in its relative economic power and significant domestic problems, the United States remains the world's largest economy. It leads the world in many areas of technology. It faces no global rival and no significant hostile alliances. Most economically capable nations are U.S. allies. What about future direction? Where is the United States going?

During the Cold War, U.S. foreign and security policies were guided by the objective of "Soviet containment." Three years after the end of the Cold War, however, no new paradigm or grand design has emerged. Does the country need a new vision and grand strategy? What are the opportunity costs of not having a new grand strategy? What alternatives does the country face? What is the best option and why? And what are the implications of the preferred option for U.S. foreign and security policies and U.S. military forces? These are the questions that this report seeks to answer.

Chapter Two

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURE

With its victory in the Cold War, the United States has become the world's preeminent power. This is the second extraordinary change in the global balance of power in this century—a century that has seen many dramatic developments in the international security environment.

In the first 50 years of the 20th century, there were two world wars and two major revolutions, in Russia and in China. Five empires collapsed: the Ottoman, the Austro-Hungarian, the German, the Italian, and the Japanese. Two other global imperial systems—the British and the French—greatly declined. As a result, the character of the international system changed fundamentally. For several centuries, the international order had been characterized by multipolarity and a balance of power. No single nation was allowed to gain such preponderance that a coalition of other states could not confront it with greater might. The system succeeded in preventing the emergence of a single dominant power, but ultimately it failed and led to World War I, which was followed by a chaotic period, the rise of fascism, and World War II. This was followed by the emergence of a global bipolar system.

The transformation to bipolarity occurred for two reasons. The first was the reduction in the relative power of several key members of the old (pre–World War I) balance-of-power system. Germany was defeated in World War II. Britain and France experienced a significant decline. These developments coincided with the second important change: the concentration of relative power in the United States and the Soviet Union and their active engagement in global affairs. These

changes, which were the result of a complex set of factors, produced a new international system. A special feature of the new system was the fact that the Soviet Union and the United States represented two different value systems and ways of life—and such issues had not driven the conflicts in the multipolar balance-of-power era. Moscow was animated by a revolutionary ideology and a sense of historic mission. After a period of uncertainty, the United States decided to undertake a determined effort to contain the spread of Soviet power. This struggle, the Cold War, took place in the context of the development and refinement of weapons of mass destruction, with the ever-present danger of nuclear annihilation.

The Cold War dominated U.S. foreign policy, national security strategy, and major defense decisions—weapons system acquisition, force sizing, overseas presence, and alliances. Cold War bipolarity required the United States to be prepared to contain the spread of Soviet power on a global basis. This principle affected U.S. dealings with various regions. Developments even in remote areas were perceived to affect relative American power and position in the Cold War, and therefore received U.S. attention and response.

The Cold War ended with the sudden collapse of both the Soviet empire and the Soviet state. The disintegration of the USSR marked the end of the world's last great empire. Although Russia retains the strategic nuclear capability for a massive attack on the United States, at present there is no political motive for using it. Except for its strategic weapons, Russia is no longer a superpower. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russian military power receded some 1,000 kilometers eastward from the heart of Europe—a process that had started with the stunning changes in Eastern Europe in 1989. The independence of Central Asia and the states of the Caucasus removed the "Russian" empire's contiguity with the Persian Gulf states, reducing the worries of some nations about threats to the oil supply from that quarter. The Soviet Union had been the world's second- or third-largest economy; Russia accounted for 60 percent of the total Soviet GNP. Now, Russian GNP has declined dramatically, currently ranking somewhere between fifth and ninth in the world, in a group of economic middle powers such as India, Brazil, France,

Britain, and Italy.[1] According to the World Bank, by the year 2020, the Russian economy might well rank even lower—behind Indonesia, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand.[2] The Russian military establishment continues to deteriorate, and it has lost much of its ability to project power beyond the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Although the reasons for the failure of the Soviet Union are varied and complex, the U.S.-led containment strategy certainly contributed to its demise. It frustrated the Soviets' global designs, forced them to confront their domestic contradictions, and perhaps most importantly, added to their economic difficulties. The Cold War was expensive for both sides, but especially so for the Soviet Union.[3] Ultimately unable to continue to bear the costs, the Soviets began incrementally losing their hold—first on Afghanistan, then on Eastern Europe, and ultimately on the Soviet Union itself. The Cold War ended with triumph for one side and collapse for the other. This took place rapidly and peacefully—an unprecedented development in a bipolar rivalry.

Rhetoric about an American "decline" aside, the relative balance of political and military power has now shifted strongly in favor of the United States. Through the more than four decades of the Cold War, the United States accumulated enormous political status and vast military capabilities. Despite a decline in its relative economic power and significant domestic problems, the United States remains the world's largest economy. It is the world leader in many areas of technology in an age of unprecedented technological changes. In addition, the way the Soviet Union collapsed undermined communism as an economic system and as a global ideology capable of

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[1] *The Economist,* December 25, 1993, p. 39; *Argumenti I Fakty #4,* 1994, p. 4; and *The Economist,* October 1, 1994, p. 4.

[2] *The Economist,* October 1, 1994, p. 4.

[3] In 1985, U.S. defense expenditures as a percentage of GNP equaled 6.4 percent, higher than most of its NATO allies and Japan; by contrast, the Soviet figure for 1985 was 16.2 percent. Sources for these figures are U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States,* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993; and Christopher Mark Davis, "The Exceptional Soviet Case," *Daedalus,* Vol. 120, No. 4, 1991, p. 122.

challenging the popularity of the market economy and liberal democracy. The market economy—relying on free enterprise, market-based incentives, and private property—is now broadly accepted as the best path to prosperity and development. Although less widely accepted than market economy, most of the fundamentals of liberal democracy are being embraced by successful nations. At present, all liberal democracies are market economies, although not all market economies are liberal democracies.

At the moment, the United States faces no global rival and no significant hostile alliances. Most economically capable nations, including those with both high per-capita and high total gross national product, such as Germany and Japan, are U.S. allies. The U.S. success during the Cold War in helping Western Europe and East Asia become prosperous free-market democracies and integrating them into U.S.-led alliances and coalitions—through such generally successful institutions as NATO, GATT, Bretton Woods, and G-7—may in the long run be a greater achievement than the victory against the Soviet Union. The nations of North America, Western Europe, and East Asia (Japan, Australia and New Zealand, and South Korea) shared common values, most importantly democracy and a commitment to free markets. Economically these regions became prosperous and interdependent—doing most of their trade with each other. Under American leadership, war among these nations became "unthinkable," and they pursued a policy of containing the Soviet Union until it collapsed. In the post–Cold War era, it is clear that given continued unity, they will be strong enough to overpower any threat from outside their ranks. Thus, this community of nations may be called a democratic zone of peace and prosperity.[4]

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[4]The concept of a democratic zone of peace was first used in U.S. Defense Department documents in 1992. See Dick Cheney, *Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress,* Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, February 1992, pp. 1–19; and Dick Cheney, *The Regional Defense Strategy,* Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, January 1993. The concept was picked up by Max Singer and Aaron Wildavsky in their 1993 book, *The Real World Order: Zones of Peace, Zones of Turmoil,* Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1993. On the proposition that democracies are less likely to make war on each other, see Bruce M. Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post–Cold War World,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993; and Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs," Part I, *Philosophy and Public Affairs,* Vol. 12, No. 3, Summer 1983. Also see Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man,* New York: Free Press, 1992.

In modern times, no single nation has held a position as preeminent as that of the United States today. Others sought to attain such a position but failed. The push for preponderance was one of the main causes of recurring wars, as others coalesced to block the effort. The fact that the United States achieved it without a war and without spawning a hostile alliance is itself an extraordinary development in history.

Besides America's sole superpowerdom and the existence of a democratic zone of peace and prosperity, there are seven other important features of the current international scene.

- First, there is dramatic economic growth under way in Asia, in places like China, India, Indonesia, and Thailand. The Asian growth rates are likely to slow down. Nevertheless, their continued growth, even at a slower rate, will produce important changes in relative economic power—with important potential geopolitical and military implications.
- Second, significant parts of the rest of the world, such as Latin America, East Central Europe, and the Middle East, are experimenting in market economies and democratic government. Some are likely to succeed and might become members of the democratic zone of peace.
- Third, much of the rest of the world is an undemocratic zone of conflict, harboring dangers of major regional conflicts, attempts at regional hegemony, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them over increasingly long distances.
- Fourth, there is an increasing risk of chaos and fragmentation within states due to political decay and to ethnic, sectarian, and ideological differences—which can produce man-made disasters such as mass starvation and attempts at genocide—with humanitarian and at times consequential geopolitical implications. This means that the United States and other members of the zone of peace and prosperity are likely to be confronted by a significant and perhaps growing number of small wars.
- Fifth, there are important and accelerating technological changes under way with potentially dramatic effects on the global economy and military power.

- Sixth, there is intensified international economic competition among the nations of the democratic zone of peace.
- Seventh, a number of states, such as Iran, North Korea, Cuba, Iraq, China, and Russia, are unhappy with the current global system. Over the longer term—the next twenty years—there is a real possibility of efforts by China or Russia or a coalition of states to balance the power of the United States and its allies.

The interaction of these factors is likely to determine the geopolitical shape of the world in the 21st century.

Chapter Three

THE SEARCH FOR A NEW VISION

Surprisingly, although America's victory in the Cold War is its most important international accomplishment since the end of World War II, it has been largely a silent victory. The country did not celebrate it; there were more festivities for comparatively far smaller events, such as the victory in the Persian Gulf war. There have been no monuments or museums built, no special day designated to mark the country's victory and to honor the sacrifices made to achieve it. Part of the reason for the absence of euphoria and a new grand vision may have had to do with the timing of the victory. It came at a time when the U.S. economy was falling deeper into recession and the country and its political leaders were focused on domestic revival and revitalization. It was regarded as impolitic to worry about a new grand vision and a new global strategy when there was such an urgent agenda at home. If the Soviet Union had disintegrated in 1985—at the high point of the Reagan administration—the reaction might well have been very different. Another part of the reason was Washington's desire to welcome Russia as a potential friend and partner, and it was believed that celebrating victory in the Cold War might undermine that goal.[1]

Despite efforts by both the Bush and Clinton administrations, three years after the end of the Soviet Union, no grand strategy has yet jelled and there is no consensus on overarching national security

[1]Some might argue that we did not celebrate because "we did not win"—although the Soviet Union clearly lost. See Carnegie Endowment National Commission, *Changing Our Ways: America and the New World,* Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1992, p. 2.

objectives. It appears that the country is still trying to get its strategic bearings.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Secretary Dick Cheney's Defense Department put forward a new defense strategy—the "Regional Defense Strategy"—which emphasized keeping any hostile power from dominating a region critical to U.S. interests, strengthening and extending the alliances among democratic and like-minded powers, and helping reduce the likelihood of conflict by reducing the sources of instability.[2] The Regional Defense Strategy did not jell as the nation's grand strategy. There was an intense but brief debate when the two versions of the document were leaked. Although in some of his statements President Bush appeared supportive of the concept, he did not try actively to build political support for it. Given the dangers involved in any systemic shift in power, President Bush managed the disintegration of the Soviet Union extremely well. But because of the deteriorating domestic economy during the last year of his presidency, he did not push for a broad political consensus on a new grand strategy. An election year, moreover, may not be the best time to seek such a consensus.

In July 1994, a year and a half after coming to power, the Clinton administration published its national security strategy document.[3] Like the Regional Defense Strategy of the previous administration, President Clinton's document proposes strengthening and adapting the alliances among the market democracies. But unlike the Bush administration's position, the Clinton strategy favors the strengthening of a European security identity and European military force. Like the Bush strategy, it emphasizes regional threats. However, it goes further in its emphasis on peacekeeping operations, and it highlights the importance of economic issues and the global expansion of democracy and concern about environmental issues. It also emphasizes its readiness to "participate in multilateral efforts to broker settlements of internal conflicts." Similarly, it states that "our forces must prepare to participate in peacekeeping, peace enforcement and

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[2]Dick Cheney, *Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy*, Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 1993.

[3]William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, Washington, D.C.: The White House, July 1994.

other operations in support of these objectives." Other than globalizing democracy, the document does not have a unifying concept. It does not deal with some of the tough issues, such as how to hedge against possible Russian reimperialization and Chinese expansionism. It also does not provide a clear sense of priorities.

Besides the problems with the content of what has been proposed by both administrations and the failure to build a consensus, two other, broader factors have played a role in the absence of a widely agreed-upon grand strategy. One is the fact that American culture is disinclined toward great strategic design. This is exacerbated by the second factor: an underlying and widely held belief that the world is more uncertain now, compared to the Cold War period.

But the assumption of greater uncertainty is only partially and only retrospectively correct. The Cold War world was not truly much more certain than the world of today—at least not to those who were players in the struggle. Even though the enemy was known, it was never easy to predict Soviet behavior or developments around the world. "Kremlinology" was an almost mystical science, and as developments showed, U.S. information about and understanding of what was really happening in the Soviet Union were often well off the mark. Nor was there always a consensus over policy; there were major disagreements about such issues as arms control and Vietnam. Even so, during the Cold War the United States was relatively certain of its overall objectives and the priorities among them. Now it is not. This is the critical difference between the Cold War and the current era.

The absence of a broadly agreed-upon new grand strategy creates several problems. Uncertainty tends to take away the initiative and place the United States in a reactive mode. However, improvisation and a reactive attitude can squander a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Given its power position in the world, the United States is in a position to shape the future to enhance the prospects for freedom, prosperity, and peace. But it cannot succeed in shaping the post–Cold War world unless it knows what shape it wants the world to take and has the strategy and the will to make it happen.

This lack of vision endangers the achievement of even modest tasks. Specific policy decisions cannot be evaluated adequately in the ab-

sence of a framework for guiding policy and setting priorities. Until such a framework is built it will be more difficult to decide what is important and what is not, to determine which threats are more serious than others, and to develop coherent approaches to respond to new challenges. Policy on many issues will continue to be characterized by ambivalence, uncertainty, and a lack of staying power. Short-term and parochial interests are likely to take priority over the longer-term national ones.

Without a broadly agreed-upon architectural framework, it is also difficult to win widespread bipartisan support for a policy. Sustaining popular support and staying the course for particular policies becomes harder if the costs of implementation increase but the commitment cannot be explained in terms of a national interest and a strategy on which broad agreement has been achieved.

Chapter Four

AMERICA'S POSSIBLE VISIONS

Given the opportunity costs, the United States should no longer delay the development of a vision and a national grand strategy. The shift in the tectonics of power confronts Washington with several options. The choice is not only important for setting the country's global direction for this new era, it will also have a major impact on the calculations of others.

As the victor of the Cold War, the United States can choose among several strategic visions and grand strategies. It could abandon global leadership and turn inward. It could seek to give up leadership gradually by reducing its global role and encouraging the emergence of an old-fashioned balance-of-power structure with spheres of influence. Or the central strategic objective for the United States could be to consolidate its global leadership and preclude the rise of a global rival.[1]

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[1]Several RAND analysts have debated and discussed alternative grand strategy for the United States. See Paul K. Davis, "Protecting the Great Transition," in Paul K. Davis (ed.), *New Challenges for Defense Planning: Rethinking How Much Is Enough*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1994, pp. 135–164; and Norman D. Levin (ed.), *Prisms and Policy: U.S. Security Strategy After the Cold War*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1994. Also see "Strategy and the Internationalists: Three Views," *RAND Research Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Summer 1994. The broader community's debate has included: Paul Kennedy, *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century*, New York: Random House, 1993; Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, 1993; Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs: America and the World*, Vol. 70, No. 1, 1990–1991; and the initial draft of the Defense Department's "Planning Guidance," as leaked in *The New York Times*, March 8, 1992, p. 1.

NEOISOLATIONISM

Abandoning predominance and turning inward could result in a significant reduction in defense expenses in the short run—although how much money such a strategy would really save in either the short run or the long run has not been seriously studied. To assess how much money might be saved, the following questions would have to be addressed: Will U.S. defense include the defense of North America or the Americas generally? How far will a defensive perimeter extend in the Pacific and Atlantic? Will the United States need a robust antiballistic missile system?

Abandoning global leadership would also decrease the likelihood of placing American soldiers in harm's way around the world in places like Iraq, Haiti, Bosnia, and Somalia. The reduction in defense spending could help deal with the budget deficit and improve U.S. economic competitiveness, especially since economic competitors would immediately be forced to increase their own defense spending. Ignoring foreign issues might enable the United States to pay more attention to domestic problems.

Furthermore, in some cases, allies whom the United States has been committed to defend either need that help less (e.g., the Soviet threat to Western Europe has disappeared and the threats to Europe are now comparatively much smaller) or should be able to manage on their own (e.g., South Korea has over twice the population and many times the GNP of North Korea). The U.S. defense commitment to its allies may enable them to spend less on defense and focus more on strengthening their economies.

Realistically and over the longer term, however, a neoisolationist approach might well *increase* the danger of major conflicts, require greater U.S. defense effort down the line, threaten world peace, and eventually undermine U.S. prosperity. By withdrawing from Europe and Asia, the United States would deliberately risk weakening the institutions and solidarity of the world's community of democratic powers, establishing a favorable climate for the spread of disorder—in other words, a return to conditions similar to those of the first half of the 20th century. In the 1920s and 1930s, American isolationism had disastrous consequences for world peace. Then, the United States was but one of several major powers; now that it is the pre-

ponderant power, the shock of a U.S. withdrawal from the world could be even greater.

What might happen in the world if the United States turned inward? Without the United States and NATO, the West European nations, rather than cooperating, might compete for domination of East Central Europe and the Middle East. In Western and Central Europe, Germany—especially after its unification—is the natural leading power. Germany might cooperate or compete with Russia for influence over territories between the borders of the two states. German efforts would likely be aimed at filling the vacuum, stabilizing the region, and precluding its domination by rival powers. Britain and France fear such a development. Given the strength of democracy in Germany and its preoccupation with absorbing the former East Germany, European concerns about Germany appear exaggerated. But it would be a mistake to assume that U.S. withdrawal could not result in the renationalization of Germany's security policy in the long run.

The same is true of Japan. With U.S. withdrawal from the world, both Japan and Germany would have to look after their own security and build up their military capabilities. This could result in arms races, including the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons. China, Korea, and the nations of Southeast Asia already fear Japanese hegemony. Without U.S. protection, Japanese military capability would be likely to grow dramatically, to balance the growing Chinese forces and still-significant Russian forces. Given Japan's technological prowess, to say nothing of its stockpile of plutonium acquired in the development of its nuclear power industry, it could obviously become a nuclear-armed state relatively quickly if it chose. Japan could also build long-range missiles and carrier task forces.

With the shifting balance of power among Japan, China, Russia, and potential new regional powers such as Indonesia, Korea, and India could come significant risks of preventive or preemptive war. Similarly, European competition for regional domination could also lead to major wars. If the United States stayed out of such a war—an unlikely prospect—Europe or Asia could become dominated by a hostile power. Such a development would threaten the United States, since the hostile power would be likely to exclude it from the area and threaten U.S. economic and political interests in the region. Be-

sides, with domination of Europe or East Asia, such a power might well seek global hegemony, leaving the United States to face another global cold war and the risk of another world war—even more catastrophic than the last.

In the Persian Gulf, U.S. withdrawal is likely to lead to an intensified struggle for regional domination. Both Iran and Iraq have in the past sought regional hegemony. Without American protection, the weak oil-rich states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) probably would not retain their independence. To preclude this development, the Saudis might seek to acquire, perhaps by purchase, their own nuclear weapons. If either Iraq or Iran controlled the region that dominates the world oil supply, it could gain a significant capability to damage the U.S. and world economies. Whichever state gained hegemony would have vast economic resources at its disposal, which could be used to build military capability as well as gain leverage over the United States and other oil-importing nations. Hegemony over the Gulf by either Iran or Iraq would bring the rest of the Arab Middle East under its influence and domination because of the shift in the balance of power. Israeli security problems would increase and the peace process would be fundamentally undermined, increasing the risks of war between the Arabs and the Israelis.

Already, rogue states such as North Korea and Iran are seeking nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. More states would acquire nuclear weapons if the United States became isolationist. Several states with potential nuclear capability, such as South Korea and Taiwan, have refrained from producing such weapons because of their security ties with the United States. Without such ties, these states and others might reconsider their nuclear posture. Similarly, nations now exercising restraint because they fear possible negative U.S. actions might be emboldened and shift to significant, perhaps overt, nuclear programs.

The extension of instability, conflict, and hostile hegemony in East Asia, Europe, and the Gulf would impact the U.S. economy even in the unlikely event that the nation was able to avoid involvement in major wars and conflicts. Turmoil in the Gulf would most likely reduce the flow of oil and increase its price, thus reducing the American standard of living. Turmoil in Asia and Europe would force major economic readjustment in the United States, because it is likely to

reduce the trading opportunities that have been so important to recent global prosperity, including U.S. prosperity.

At present both mainstream Republicans and Democrats reject isolationism as a national strategy—even though both parties have elements favoring it.[2] It is possible, however, that without a vision and grand strategy the United States might follow policies that result in at least some of the consequences of a neoisolationist strategy.

RETURN TO MULTIPOLARITY AND BALANCE OF POWER

Another option would rely on a balance of power to preclude the emergence of another preponderant power. This approach has some positive features, but it is dangerous as well. Based on current realities, the other potential great powers, besides the United States, are Japan, China, Germany (or the European Union), and Russia. In the future this list could change. New great powers—such as India, Indonesia, or Brazil—could emerge, or one of the existing ones—such as Russia—could decline or disintegrate and cease to be a great power.

Some argue that the world is inevitably heading toward a multiplicity of roughly equal great powers and that the United States should facilitate such a development. This approach starts from the assumption, based on economic indices, that the world already consists of several great powers and that the diffusion of wealth and technology will continue. It is further assumed that over time, the current economic powers will become political and military powers commensurate with their economic strength; they will be obliged to do so because in the post–Cold War world others will not perceive threats in the same way and so would not be willing to run risks for them.[3]

In a balance-of-power regime, NATO would gradually decline in relative importance and ultimately be replaced (or in effect be taken over) by the Western European Union (the military arm of the European Union) or by the individual great powers in Europe. U.S. pres-

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[2]See Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement,* op. cit., and Cheney, *Defense Strategy for the 1990s,* op. cit.

[3]Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy,* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994, p. 809.

ence in Western Europe would end as the West Europeans built up their capability and a balance of power emerged on the continent. The United States could affect the pace of such a development by, for example, announcing that it intended to withdraw from Europe by a specific period—thus creating the framework for a European military buildup to balance Russia.

For such a balance-of-power system to work, either Germany would have to substantially increase its military power or the European Union would have to deepen and become a kind of superstate. The United States would continue to have a vital interest in preventing the domination of Europe—including Russia—by a single power. So if the Germans decided to build up militarily, the United States would play its part by forming alliances with any European country or countries that sought to prevent hegemony and by maintaining adequate forces in the United States and possibly in England. However, problems other than an attempt to establish hegemony over Europe, such as instability in the Balkans, East Central Europe, or North Africa, would be the responsibility of the Europeans alone, and the United States would not get involved militarily in local conflicts in these regions.

Similarly, the United States would be unlikely to get involved militarily on the territory of the former Soviet Union. In general, it would accept those areas as a Russian sphere of influence. However, the other European great powers (and perhaps even the United States) would not want Russia to reincorporate Ukraine, since a combined Russia and Ukraine would have a military potential so much greater than any European power as to threaten to destroy the possibility of a balance of power on the continent. West European powers, especially Germany, and Russia would have interests in East Central Europe and would have to try to work out some rules for regulating their interactions.

In Asia, the United States would similarly become a balancer as Japan built up its capability. In the event of a serious imbalance between Japan and China, it could play a balancing role with forces based in the United States or possibly in some of the smaller states in the region. As in the case of Europe, the United States would seek to prevent the emergence of regional hegemony by shifting alliances; it would cooperate with other powers to protect common interests and

be prepared to protect specific interests in the region, such as the lives and property of American citizens.

In the Persian Gulf, in this framework, the United States and other major powers would oppose the domination of the region by any one power, since such a power would acquire enormous leverage over states that depend on the region's oil. At the regional level, the United States and other major powers could rely on a balance between Iran and Iraq to prevent regional hegemony. Assuming the great powers were willing to pursue a joint policy toward the Persian Gulf, the fact that the United States is relatively less dependent on the Gulf than either Western Europe or Japan would confer a strong bargaining position when it came to allocating the burdens required by such a policy among the great powers. On the other hand, one or more great powers might be tempted to abandon the great power coalition and to support a potential hegemon in the Gulf in return for favorable access to the Gulf's resources and markets. Finally, the United States would have to be the dominant power affecting important security issues in the Americas.

Aside from the question of inevitability, a balance-of-power system would have some advantages for the United States. First, the country could reduce its defense expenditures (though probably not by as much as with a neoisolationist strategy) and deploy its military forces less often to the world's "hot spots," since it would let other great powers take the lead in dealing with problems in their regions. Second, the United States would be freer to pursue its economic interests, even when they damaged political relations with countries that had been, but were no longer, allies—except when this might constrain an alliance with another great power necessary to ward off a bigger threat.

It is possible that in a balance-of-power system the United States would be in a relatively advantageous position compared to the other great powers. Given the relative distance of the United States from other power centers, it could try to mimic the former British role of an offshore "balancer." As in the 19th century, the United States and other great powers would compete and cooperate to avoid hegemony and global wars. Each great power would protect its own specific interests and protect common interests cooperatively. If

necessary, the United States would intervene militarily to prevent the emergence of a preponderant power.

But this approach also has several serious problems. First, there is a real question whether the major powers would behave as they should under the logic of a balance-of-power framework. For example, would the West European powers respond appropriately to a resurgent Russian threat, or would they behave as the European democracies did in the 1930s? The logic of a balance-of-power system might well require the United States to support a nondemocratic state against a democratic one, or to work with one undesirable state against another. For example, in the Gulf, to contain the power of an increasingly powerful Iran, the United States would have to strengthen Iraq. At times the United States has been unable to behave in this fashion. For example, after the Iraqi victory against Iran in 1988, the logic of balance of power would have demanded that the United States support strengthening Iran. But because of ongoing animosity in U.S.-Iranian relations, the nature of Iran's regime, and moral concerns in U.S. foreign policy, Washington could not implement such a strategy. There are many other examples. Therefore, a grand strategy that requires such action is probably unrealistic.

Second, this system implies that the major democracies will no longer see themselves as allies. Instead, political and military struggles among them would become legitimate. Each would pursue its own economic interests much more vigorously and might well weaken economic institutions such as GATT and the liberal world trade order. Such a development would increase the likelihood of major economic depressions and dislocations.

Third, the United States would be likely to face more competition from other major powers in areas of its interest. For example, other powers might not be willing to grant the United States a "sphere of influence" in the Americas, but might seek, as Germany did in World War I, to reach anti-U.S. alliances with Latin American nations. As noted earlier, another great power might support a potential hegemon in the Persian Gulf.

Finally, the system might not succeed on its own terms. The success of the balance-of-power system requires that the great powers maintain it without provoking war. Great powers must signal their depth

of commitment on a given issue without taking irrevocable steps toward war. This balancing act proved impossible to perform even for the culturally similar and aristocratically governed states of 19th-century Europe. It is likely to prove infinitely more difficult when the system is global, the participants differ culturally, and the governments, because of the increasing influence of public opinion, are unable to be as flexible (or cynical) as the rules of the game would require. Thus, there could be miscalculations on the state of the balance that could lead to wars the United States might be unable to stay out of. The balance-of-power system failed in the past, producing World War I and other major conflicts. It might not work any better in the future; and war among major powers in the nuclear age would surely be devastating.

U.S. GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

U.S. global leadership and deterring the rise of another hostile global rival or a return to multipolarity for the indefinite future is the best long-term guiding principle and vision. Such a vision is desirable not as an end in itself, but because a world in which the United States exercises leadership is one that has the most preferable attributes. First, the global environment will be more open and more receptive to American values: democracy, free markets, and the rule of law. Second, such a world has a better chance of dealing cooperatively with its major problems, such as nuclear proliferation, threat of regional hegemony by renegade states, and low-level conflicts. Finally, U.S. leadership will help preclude the rise of another hostile global rival, enabling the United States and the world to avoid another global cold or hot war and all its dangers, including a global nuclear exchange. It is therefore more conducive to global stability than a bipolar or a multipolar balance-of-power system.

Precluding the rise of a hostile global rival is a good guide for defining what interests the United States should regard as vital. It is a good prism for identifying threats and setting priorities for U.S. policy toward various regions and states, for military capabilities and modernization, and for intelligence operations.

To succeed in realizing this grand vision, the United States would have to adhere to the following principles as guidelines for its policies:

- Maintain and strengthen the democratic "zone of peace" and incrementally extend it.
- Prevent hostile hegemony over critical regions.
- Hedge against Russian reimperialization and Chinese expansionism while promoting cooperation with both.
- Preserve U.S. military preeminence.
- Maintain U.S. economic strength and an open international economic system.
- Be judicious in the use of force, avoid overextension, and achieve effective burden sharing among allies.
- Obtain and maintain domestic support for U.S. global leadership and these principles.

Why are these principles important, and how can the United States pursue them effectively? The remainder of this report will focus on these issues.

Maintain, Strengthen, and Extend the Zone of Peace

Maintaining, strengthening, and extending the democratic zone of peace should be the central feature of American post–Cold War grand strategy.[4] Maintaining the zone of peace requires, first and foremost, avoiding conditions that can lead to "renationalization" of security policies in key allied countries such as Japan and Germany. The members of the zone of peace are in basic agreement and prefer not to compete with each other in *realpolitik* terms. But this general agreement still requires U.S. leadership. At present there is greater nervousness in Japan than in Germany about future ties with Washington, but U.S. credibility remains strong in both countries. The credibility of U.S. alliances can be undermined if key allies such as Germany and Japan believe that the current arrangements do not deal adequately with threats to their security. It could also be undermined if, over an extended period, the United States is perceived

[4]The Clinton administration has adopted the selective spread of democracy—called enlargement—as a central feature of its national security policy. See Clinton, op. cit., p. ii.

as lacking either the will or the capability to lead in protecting their interests.

In Europe, besides the need to balance Russian military might and hedge against a possible Russian reimperialization, the near-term security threat to Germany comes from instability in East Central Europe and to a lesser degree from the Balkans. For France and Italy, the threats come from conflicts in the Balkans and the danger of Islamic extremism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic and cruise missiles to North Africa and the Middle East. For example, at present the Germans fear that conflicts and instability in East Central Europe might "spill out" or "spill in."[5] Such crises could set the stage for a bigger conflict and/or send millions of refugees to Germany. The Germans are divided on how to deal with the threat from the East. For now, however, they are focused on integrating the former East Germany and favor a U.S.-led alliance strategy—NATO expansion to East Central Europe—rather than filling the vacuum themselves, as indicated by their substantial defense cuts. This is in part because of the confidence they have in the United States and the perception of common values and interests among allies, and in part because an alliance-based policy is cheaper for Germany than a unilateral approach. But should the Germans come to believe that the alliance will not or cannot deal with threats to their interests, they might well consider other options.

In East Asia, too, Japan favors alliance with the United States to deal with uncertainty about Russia, future Chinese military capability, including power projection, and the threat of nuclear and missile proliferation on the Korean peninsula. For the same reasons as Germany, Japan currently prefers to work with the United States. But the loss of U.S. credibility could also change Japan's calculations. An issue that will test U.S. credibility in Japan is how it ultimately deals with North Korea's nuclear program.

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[5]Ronald D. Asmus, Richard Kugler, and F. Stephen Larrabee, "Building a New NATO," *Foreign Affairs*, September–October 1993; Zalmay Khalilzad, *Extending the Western Alliance to East Central Europe: A New Strategy for NATO*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, IP-107-AF, May 1993; and John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," in Sean M. Lynn-Jones (ed.), *The Cold War and After: Prospects for Peace*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991.

As long as U.S.-led allied actions protect their vital interests, these nations are less likely to look to unilateral means. This implies that the United States needs a military capability that is larger than might be required based on an isolationist or balance-of-power-based definition of U.S. interests.

U.S. power and a willingness to lead in protecting vital joint interests in Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East are necessary to preserve the zone of peace. In Europe these interests can be best served if NATO remains the primary entity to deal with the security challenge coming from instability and conflict in the south and the east and possible revanchism in Russia. To perform this role NATO must adapt by maintaining a robust military capability as a hedge against Russia's going bad and taking over countries such as Ukraine and the Baltic states, by preparing for the eventual membership of East Central European nations in the alliance in coordination with EU expansion, and by developing the capability to deter and defeat threats from the south. To perform the security functions needed, NATO must increase significantly its power projection capabilities. The United States would need to maintain for an indefinite period a significant military force on the continent—both because of military needs and to demonstrate its commitment and resolve. At the same time, the allies need to do more to protect common interests in the Middle East and East Central Europe.

Asia has no NATO-like multilateral alliance. The core security relationships are the U.S.-Japanese and U.S.-South Korean ties. Maintaining security ties with Japan is important for both nations, even though trade relations between the two countries have a greater potential to create mutual antagonism than U.S.-German trade relations. As long as North Korea remains hostile and militarily powerful, and in order to hedge against uncertainties in Russia and China, the United States needs to maintain enough forces stationed in the region to deter and, with reinforcements, defend critical American interests with limited risks. At present the main military threat is a possible North Korean attack against South Korea. This could change quickly if North Korea collapses and the two countries become one.

Preclude Hostile Hegemony over Critical Regions

A global rival could emerge if a hostile power or coalition gained hegemony over a critical region. Therefore, it is a vital U.S. interest to preclude such a development—i.e., to be willing to use force if necessary for the purpose. A region can be defined as critical if it contains sufficient economic, technical, and human resources so that a hostile power that gained control over it could pose a global challenge. Although this could change in the future, two regions now meet this criterion: East Asia and Europe. The Persian Gulf is very important for a different reason—its oil resources are vital for the world economy. In the long term, the relative importance of various regions can change. A region that is critical to U.S. interests now might become less important, while some other region might gain in importance. For example, Southeast Asia appears to be a region whose relative importance is likely to increase if the regional economies continue to grow as impressively as they have done in the past several years. The Gulf might decline in importance if its resources became less of a factor in world prosperity because some new energy technologies come to provide cheaper alternatives.

At present, the risks of regional hegemony in Western Europe and East Asia are very small. This is due in large part to the alliance of the key states of these regions with the United States, endorsing the presence of U.S. forces and the credibility of U.S. commitments. It is vital that U.S. alliances in Europe and East Asia be maintained—but adapted to the needs of the new era. During the Cold War, the U.S. role in these two regions not only deterred threats from the Soviet Union but also contained rivalries. In Europe, it is not in U.S. interests for the EU either to become a superstate or to disintegrate. The former could ultimately pose a global challenge—Western Europe's economy becoming bigger than that of the United States; the latter could encourage mutual suspicion and contribute to renationalization—a possible repeat of the first half of the 20th century.

At present, the United States is the preponderant outside power in the Persian Gulf. Its position there can help discourage the rise of another rival and, should one arise, will be conducive to competition. U.S. preponderance serves the interests of the members of the zone

of peace, since because of it they do not face the threat of interruption of oil supplies from the region. But the threat of hostile regional hegemony remains. The United States, with support from allies, needs to maintain adequate military capability to deter and defeat the threat of regional hegemony from Iraq or Iran. The United States should seek greater contribution from NATO allies and Japan in meeting the security challenge in this region. Washington and its allies must also encourage regional cooperation among the GCC states and help them cope with the contradictory pressures—liberal and fundamentalist—for domestic change. Given the recent progress in the Arab-Israeli peace process, Israel, the dominant regional military power and one that has strong security ties with the United States, should also help in meeting security challenges in the Gulf. Cooperation between the United States, Israel, the GCC states, Turkey, and NATO generally should be the cornerstone of the U.S. approach for the Gulf.

Hedge Against Reimperialization in Russia

Russia is still struggling to find a place for itself in the world. Although it is still weakening militarily and economically, Russia, the heir to the Soviet strategic nuclear arsenal, is capable of conducting an all-out nuclear attack on the United States. Remaining a "nuclear superpower" is a key Russian objective. Compared to its economic capability, Russia's military might is very great. The country's size, its location, and its potential economic and military capability add to its importance. Consequently, it requires special attention under any circumstances. In the near term—10 years—Moscow is unlikely to pose a global challenge. But even in the near term, Russia can pose a major regional threat if it moves toward reimperialization. This scenario has been dubbed "Weimar Russia," i.e., the possibility that, embittered by its economic and political troubles and humiliations, Russia may attempt to recover its past glory by turning to ultranationalist policies, particularly the reincorporation of—or hegemony over—part or all of the old "internal" empire. In the aftermath of the last parliamentary elections and the show of support for Zhirinovsky, Russian statements indicated a strong preference for the reincorporation of the so-called "near abroad"—the states on the territory of the former Soviet Union. But more recently, concerns about costs and negative international reaction have resulted in a

shift in favor of hegemony—Russian geopolitical and economic domination of weak but nominally independent states.

To avoid Russian hegemony over the "near abroad," to say nothing of creating the groundwork for future cooperation on a whole range of international matters, the United States and the other members of the democratic zone of peace have a substantial interest in helping Russia become a "normal" country, i.e., one that is not an empire and is unburdened by a communist-style command economy and totalitarian politics. Ideally, Russia would become a prosperous, free-market, Western-style democracy—cooperating with the United States in meeting current and future challenges. Whether Russia will succeed in becoming a normal state is difficult to predict, but the stakes justify a major Western effort. Nevertheless, the key determinant is Russian domestic politics, over which, under the circumstances, the West can have limited influence.

As Russia is encouraged to join the zone of peace and to cooperate on specific issues based on common concerns, it is in the U.S. interest that Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the other independent states are able—with outside support—to make any attempts to recreate the empire very costly, and thereby deter them. And should deterrence fail, such an approach would also help sap Russian energies, undermining its prospects for becoming an effective global challenger. This should not mean that the United States wants hostile relations between these countries and Moscow. Good economic and political relations between Russia and its neighbors are not inconsistent with U.S. interests.[6] But discouraging the emergence of a robust Commonwealth of Independent States, and consolidating Ukrainian, Kazakh, and Uzbek independence and reducing their dependence on Russia—and this goes for the other newly independent states as well—should be the primary U.S. objective in dealings with these countries. Helping consolidate the independence of the new states is only in part a military matter. The key for Ukraine and others is to carry out economic and political reforms to increase internal stability and reduce their vulnerability to Russian interference and domination. The United States, the EU countries, and Japan have a

[6]Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," *Foreign Affairs,* March–April 1994, pp. 67–82.

stake in helping Ukraine and others adopt significant economic reforms. To encourage such a development, the G-7 states should be willing to meet some of the costs of transitioning to a market-oriented system. The United States and its allies have lost some opportunities here, as economic problems in Ukraine and some of the other newly independent states reduced support for their independence.

To discourage Russian military reincorporation of Ukraine and the Baltic states, NATO must make it clear to Russia and must convince its own publics and parliaments, including the U.S. Congress, that such an action would lead to a cutoff of economic assistance to Russia, to NATO membership for the nations of East Central Europe on a much faster track—perhaps immediate—than would be the case otherwise, to possible material support to Ukrainian and other resistance movements, and to Russian isolation from the West. Without such preparations now, there is danger that in the face of a possible Russian takeover of Ukraine, NATO expansion to East Central Europe would not have political support because it would appear to be too provocative. Unfortunately, at times in the past we have understood our stakes too late to express them clearly enough to deter an aggressor.[7] A clear and strong Western posture now should also strengthen those Russians who do not consider reimperialization to be in their country's interests.

Discourage Chinese Expansionism

The People's Republic of China is another major power that might, over the long term and perhaps sooner than Russia, emerge as a global rival. China's economic dynamism, now also being reflected in its military development, ensures that—if domestic turmoil can be avoided—China will become an increasingly important player on the global scene in coming decades. The country has had dramatic economic growth. Between 1978 and 1992, its GNP increased by 9 percent annually. In 1992, that rate increased to 12 percent. Its foreign trade increased from $21 billion in 1978 to $170 billion in 1992. Ac-

[7]Paul K. Davis, "Improving Deterrence in the Post–Cold War Era: Some Theory and Implications for Defense Planning," in *New Challenges for Defense Planning*, op. cit., p. 197.

cording to the International Monetary Fund, Chinese output may have exceeded $1.6 trillion dollars in 1992. The World Bank gives even a higher estimate: $2.3 trillion.[8] If China continues to grow at a higher rate than the United States, at some point it could become the world's largest economy. Such a development might well have important implications for the global balance of power. Militarily, China has been increasing its power projection capability—both naval and air—in part by purchasing advanced equipment from Russia. It has also been importing Russian military scientists to help with increasing domestic production of sophisticated equipment.

However, China faces many uncertainties in its domestic politics, including a possible succession crisis on the death of Deng Xiaoping and the centrifugal tensions unleashed by differential economic growth among the provinces. Indeed, Chinese weakness, not excluding a possible civil war that could disrupt economic prosperity and create refugee flows, may cause significant problems for its neighbors and the world community.

But China is an ambitious power. Among the major powers, China appears more dissatisfied than the others with the status quo. Beyond Hong Kong and Macau, which will be ceded to China by the end of the century, it claims sovereignty over substantial territories that it does not now control—such as Taiwan, the Spratly Islands and the South China Sea generally, and the Senkaku Islands between China and Japan. Although China has abandoned communism as a global ideology and seems to have accepted the economic imperative of the global economy, it is still seeking geopolitically its "rightful" place in the world. How will China define its role as its power grows beyond its territorial interests? China appears to be seeking eventual regional predominance, a prospect opposed by Japan, Russia, India, Indonesia, and other regional powers. Even without regional domination, it might become interested in becoming the leader of an anti-U.S. coalition—based on a rejection of U.S. leadership generally or as that leadership is expressed in such policies as nonproliferation and human rights. This is evident in China's assistance to the Pakistani and Iranian nuclear programs. It is also clear that China is not as opposed to the North Korean nuclear program as the United States is.

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[8] *The Economist*, November 28, 1992.

Chinese writings on strategy and international security express hostility to U.S. preponderance and imply the need to balance it. But China recognizes the importance of the United States, as a market for Chinese goods and a source for technical training and technology. Without U.S. help, China is less likely to achieve its economic and military objectives.

Given China's economic potential and its strategic ambition, it is the most likely candidate for global rival. China, however, is decades away from becoming a serious global rival either by itself or in coalition with others. This provides the United States with ample strategic warning. For the near term, economic considerations are likely to be dominant in Chinese calculations. Chinese economic success could go two ways: it could increase the Chinese potential for becoming a global rival, or it might produce democratization and decentralization and a cooperative China.

Even in its current state, China (by itself or as the leader of a coalition of renegade states) could increase the global proliferation problem in key regions such as the Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia. So it is not in U.S. interests to cut off ties with China or to isolate it. The United States should continue to pursue economic relations with China and encourage its integration in the global economic, political, and security regimes. The leverage of economic relations, which are important to the Chinese, is a tool that should be used continually to ensure cooperation on the goal of restraining nuclear and missile proliferation in places like Korea and Iran. But Chinese cooperation is likely to remain limited. As economic relations develop with China, the United States should be cautious about transferring technologies that can have important military implications. It should ensure that Chinese neighbors such as Taiwan and the ASEAN states have the means to defend themselves, and also encourage regional cooperation among the ASEAN states. These steps can discourage possible Chinese expansionism. The United States should also support moves to reduce Taiwanese international political isolation. Working with other powers, especially Japan, Korea, and Indonesia, the United States should preclude Chinese regional hegemony by maintaining adequate forces in the region. Without U.S. presence in the region, as Chinese power grows, some states in the region are likely to appease China and move closer to it, while others, such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and Japan, would seek to balance it.

Preserve American Military Preeminence

A global rival could emerge for several reasons. Since the main deterrent to the rise of another global rival is the military power of the United States, an inadequate level of U.S. military strength could facilitate such a development. Military strength should be measured not just in terms of the strength of other countries, but in terms of the U.S. ability to carry out the strategy outlined here. The danger that military capability could be cut to below this level is real: historically, the United States has made this error on several occasions by excessive downsizing. It faces the same danger again for the longer term. Already there is a serious question as to whether the United States will indeed have the necessary force structure to fight and win two major regional wars (Korea and the Persian Gulf) nearly simultaneously—the core requirement of current military strategy.

The issue is not only how much resources are spent on defense but on what, for what, and how they are spent. For America to maintain its military preeminence, in addition to meeting possible major regional challenges, it needs specific capability in three areas.

First, besides maintaining a robust nuclear deterrent because of concerns about Russian and Chinese nuclear attack capabilities, the United States needs to acquire increased capability to deter, prevent, and defend against the use of biological, chemical, radiological, and nuclear weapons in major conflicts in critical regions. The deterrence requirements might well be different from those with regard to the Soviet Union during the Cold War, owing to the distinct character and motivations of different regional powers. U.S. ability to prevent use and defend against use is currently very limited. In the near term, therefore, to deter use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against U.S. forces and allies, the United States may have to threaten nuclear retaliation. It is questionable whether such a posture is desirable. It may well lack credibility. But the United States may have no choice.

To counter the spread of WMDs and ballistic and cruise missiles, the United States should seek to develop increased capability for locating and destroying even well-protected facilities related to biological, chemical, radiological, and nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. It will be equally important to have greater capability to de-

fend against the use of these weapons, including both active and passive defense. Deploying robust, multilayered ballistic and cruise missile defenses is important for protecting the United States, its forward-deployed forces, and its allies, the last task helpful in gaining allied participation and cooperation in defeating aggression in critical regions. There is bipartisan support for increasing U.S. defense against missiles.[9]

Second, the United States needs improved capability to have a decisive impact in lesser regional crises (LRCs)—internal conflicts, small wars, humanitarian relief, peacekeeping or peacemaking, punitive strikes, restoring civil order, evacuation of Americans, providing security zones, and monitoring and enforcement of sanctions.[10] Given the end of the Cold War, the United States can be more selective in its military involvement around the world. It has not been selective enough during the past few years, and those involvements have dominated the actual use of U.S. forces. Getting involved in too many LRCs can erode U.S. capabilities for dealing with bigger and more important conflicts. The country needs clearer guidelines for engagement in LRCs. Nevertheless, some LRCs may occur in areas of vital importance—e.g., in Mexico or Saudi Arabia—and others might so challenge American values as to produce U.S. military involvement. The United States might also consider participating with allies in some LRCs because of a desire to either extend the zone of peace or prevent chaos from spreading to and destabilizing critical regions.

At present, LRCs are treated as lesser included cases of major regional conflict—much in the way that some thought about regional conflicts in relation to a global conflict during the Cold War. The United States "underestimated and misestimated [regional conflict]

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[9]However, the Clinton administration has reduced significantly resources for both theater missile defense (TMD) and national missile defense (NMD)—the former by 1/3 and the latter by 4/5 compared to that planned by the previous administration. More resources need to be dedicated to TMD and NMD if we are to reduce our vulnerability in the near future.

[10]Carl Builder, "Nontraditional Military Missions," *American Defense Annual,* 1994 edition, New York: Lexington Books, 1994, pp. 225–237; David Kassing, *Transporting the Army for Operation Restore Hope,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1994; R. Lempert et al., *Air Force Noncombat Operations: Lessons From the Past, Thoughts for the Future,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1992.

requirements during the Cold War."[11] Now it would be a mistake to treat LRCs the same way, especially since future U.S. forces will be much smaller than in the past and provide far less slack. Even small LRCs can impose substantial and disproportionate demands on the support elements of U.S. forces—such as AWACS, SEAD, airlift, and communications. To be prepared for MRC commitments and some increased LRC capability, the United States needs more airlift and changes in the training and organization of the forces relevant for LRCs.

Third, it is essential to retain a mobilization base to "reconstitute" additional capability in a timely fashion if things go badly in any major region. Without such a capability the United States is unlikely to be able to take timely action, given the probability of little strategic warning.

However, to discourage the rise of another global rival or to be in a strong position to deal with the problem should one arise, the current Korea-and-Gulf-focused approach, plus increased ability for LRC and counterproliferation operations, is inadequate for force sizing. Over time, North Korea will probably disappear and other larger threats may emerge. As an alternative, the United States should size its forces by requiring them to have the capability to defeat nearly simultaneously the most plausible military challenges to critical U.S. interests from the *two* next most powerful military forces in the world—who are not allied with the United States. Such a force should allow the United States to protect its interests in Asia, Europe, and the Persian Gulf—i.e., provide the United States with capability to successfully deal with a European and Asian, or Asian and Middle Eastern, or European and Middle Eastern major regional conflict. Such a force-sizing principle does not mean that U.S. forces have to be numerically as large as the combined forces of these two powers. It does mean that the forces should be capable of defeating the enemy in relatively specific areas and in nearly simultaneous scenarios of great importance to the United States. Such an approach would

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[11]Kevin N. Lewis, "The Discipline Gap and Other Reasons for Humility and Realism in Defense Planning," in Davis (ed.), *New Challenges for Defense Planning*, op. cit., p. 103.

give the United States a flexible global capability for substantial operations.[12]

To attain the desired capability, U.S. superiority in new weapons and their use would be critical. Therefore, the higher priority should go to research on new technologies, new concepts of operation, and changes in organization—with the aim of U.S. dominance in the military revolution that may be emerging. The Gulf War gave a glimpse of what is likely to come. The character of warfare will change because of advances in military technology, a realm in which the United States has the lead, including the related concepts of operation and organization structure. The challenge is to sustain this lead and not fall into complacency. Would-be rivals are likely to be very motivated to explore new technologies and ways to use them against the United States. A determined nation making the right choices, even one with a much smaller economy, could pose an enormous challenge by using technology to erode the effectiveness of more traditional U.S. military methods.

For example, post–World War I Germany made astute technical choices and adopted innovative employment concepts, and thereby was able to make a serious bid for world domination. At the same time, Japan, with its relatively small GNP, was at the forefront in the development of naval aviation and aircraft carriers. These examples indicate that a major innovation in warfare provides ambitious nations an opportunity to become dominant or near-dominant powers. U.S. domination of the emerging military-technological revolution, combined with the maintenance of an adequately sized force, can help discourage the rise of a rival power, as long as potential rivals believe that catching up with America is a hopeless proposition, and that if they try they will suffer the same economic wreck that befell the Soviet Union.

Although, based on the strategy proposed here, the United States needs more capabilities in some areas, it can cut back elsewhere and do things differently to free up resources for them. The country still has too many bases. Nor does it have the most effective process for making informed decisions on resource allocation for various types

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[12]Some of the points here regarding military challenges of the new era are also discussed in Davis (ed.), *New Challenges for Defense Planning*, op. cit., 1994.

of force elements—i.e., forces required for current and future objectives and operational requirements. As things currently stand, there is too much duplication in some key areas, as well as capabilities that are not as relevant now as they once were. This is especially true in the maintenance and support area. For example, the Navy, the Air Force, and industry all provide maintenance for military aircraft engines. Greater centralization here could save significant resources. The Department of Defense is still being forced to buy weapon systems that it says it does not need and will not need under the proposed strategy. The current acquisition system is very costly, and streamlining it could save resources.

Preserve American Economic Strength

The United States is unlikely to preserve its military and technological dominance if its economy declines seriously. In such an environment, the domestic economic and political base for global leadership would diminish and the country would probably incrementally withdraw from the world, become inward looking, and abandon more and more of its external interests. As the United States weakened, others would try to fill the vacuum.

To sustain and improve its economic strength, the United States must maintain its technological lead in the economic realm. This will depend on the choices the nation makes. Such world historical developments as the agricultural and industrial revolutions produced fundamental changes, enhancing the relative position of nations that were able to take advantage of them and damaging those that did not.[13] Some argue that the world might be at the beginning of another transformation, shifting the sources of wealth and the relative position of classes and nations. If the United States fails to recognize the change and adapt its institutions, its relative position will necessarily worsen.

To remain the preponderant world power, U.S. economic strength must be enhanced; components of this goal include further improvement in productivity, thus increasing real per-capita income; strengthening education and training; and generating and using su-

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[13]Joel Mokyr, *The Lever of Riches*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

perior science and technology. In the long run, the economic future will be affected by two other factors. One is the imbalance between government revenues and government expenditure. The other, even more important to long-run economic well-being, may be the overall rate of investment. Although the government cannot imbue Americans with a Japanese-style propensity to invest, it can use tax policy to encourage such behavior.

Another key factor affecting the global standing of the United States is its social crisis—the high rate of violence in the cities, the unsatisfactory state of race relations, and the breakdown in families. Though the nation faces no global ideological rival, and though movements such as Islamic fundamentalism and East Asian traditionalism are limited in their appeal, social problems are limiting the stature of the United States as a model. If the country's social crisis worsens, it is likely that over the long term a new organizing principle with greater universal appeal might emerge and be adopted by states with the power and the desire to mount a challenge.

Obtain and Maintain Domestic Support for U.S. Leadership

Some might argue that, given the costs of maintaining global leadership, the American people would not support such a role for the United States. It might also be argued that the public might not support the level of defense expenditure required because domestic priorities are competing for the same dollars. Public opinion polls indicate that the American people are focused on domestic concerns. Such a perception discouraged a serious debate on national security issues in the last presidential election.

However, according to a recent poll on American public attitudes, the population appears to support (90 percent) active U.S. involvement in world affairs. At the same time, 84 percent believe that the nation should pay less attention to international problems and concentrate on problems here in the United States. A majority of Americans support peace "through military strength."[14]

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[14]Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, *The People, The Press & Politics*, Washington D.C., September 21, 1994, p. 37.

Whether the public would in fact support a global strategy—as outlined here—is not known. Support might well be forthcoming if: (a) the strategy was presented by the President and supported by the senior members of both the Democratic and Republican parties and (b) the costs and benefits of such a strategy and some alternatives were debated and understood. A global leadership strategy will entail costs—a greater defense effort in the near term than would be the case under some other grand strategy—but those costs have to be compared with the potential risks of alternatives. The costs of alternative approaches can ultimately be higher. At present the burden imposed by U.S. defense spending, approximately 4 percent of GNP, is lower than at any time since before the Korean War. The burden will decline further as the economy expands, but it can increase if the world situation deteriorates—for example, if China builds up its military capability and becomes expansionist. The costs of leadership can perhaps be kept at a sustainable level by avoiding overextension and by more effective burden sharing among the members of the zone of peace. But should the costs ultimately prove too high, the United States can adopt a different grand strategy.

Overextension is a mistake that some past great powers have made.[15] Such a development can occur if the United States is not judicious in its use of force and gets involved in protracted conflicts in various regions—sapping its energies and undermining support for its global role. U.S. vital interests are engaged in critical regions where it should be prepared to use force if other means fail. And when it uses force, the preference should be to have U.S. allies and friends go in as well—which means pressing those allies and friends to do their fair share. Having the capability to protect U.S. vital interests, unilaterally if necessary, can facilitate getting friends and allies to participate—especially on terms favorable to the United States. It is possible that if the United States cannot protect its interests without large-scale participation by allies, it might not be able to protect them at all. For example, in the run-up to the Gulf War, several allies did not favor the use of force to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait. If their military participation had been indispensable to military

[15]Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, New York: Random House, 1987.

success against Iraq, Saddam Hussain's forces might still be in Kuwait, and Iraq might now possess nuclear weapons.

When it comes to lesser interests, the United States should rely on nonmilitary options—especially if the military costs do not justify the possible benefits. There are many options here: arming and training the victims of aggression; providing technical assistance and logistic support for peacekeeping by the UN, regional organizations, or other powers; economic instruments such as sanctions and positive incentives; and, of course, diplomacy.

Within these constraints, it is in the U.S. interest and the interests of other members of the zone of peace that the zone ultimately encompass the whole world. The reason for favoring such an evolution is that prosperous democracies are more likely to cooperate with the United States and are less likely to threaten its interests.[16] Unfortunately, this is not a near-term proposition. Many regions and states are not ready. The United States should seek to expand the zone selectively and help others prepare for membership.

The most important step that the United States and the other prosperous democracies can take is to assist others in adopting the economic strategies that have worked in North America, Western Europe, and East Asia and are being successfully implemented in parts of Latin America and elsewhere in Asia. Economic development and education are the most effective instruments for solving the problems of the nations in the zone of conflict.

The members of the zone of peace have a common interest in the stability of Europe, North America, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf. Japan, for example, imports oil from the Gulf and exports to and invests in the other critical regions. The same is true of Europe. The U.S. global role benefits the United States and these other members. There is a danger that the other members of the zone of peace will not do their fair share and perpetuate free (or cheap) ridership. This was a problem during the Cold War, and it is unlikely to go away. It could become a bigger problem if, because of the absence of the Soviet threat and the lack of a common objective, burden sharing declines. It is clearly an important U.S. political issue, and there is a

[16]Clinton, op. cit., p. ii.

real dilemma: as long as the United States is able and willing to protect common interests, others might be happy to rely on that protection, thereby keeping political opposition under control, accepting no risk for their youth, and continuing to focus on their economies. But the United States also should not want Germany and Japan to be able to conduct expeditionary wars on their own. Therefore, although the United States will probably be willing to bear a heavier military burden than its allies, fairness and long-term public support require that this disproportion not be excessive. A balance needs to be struck and a formula has to be found to balance each country's contribution of "blood and treasure." In the Gulf War, a substantial degree of burden sharing was realized. But the allies can do more, although they are likely to resist and argue that they, too, are cutting back their defense budgets. For the long term, one possible solution is to institutionalize burden sharing among the G-7 nations for the security of critical regions, including sharing the financial costs of military operations. Questions of out-of-area responsibility are important in peacetime, both on a day-to-day basis and in times of crisis and war. Effective burden sharing will also place some constraints on U.S. policy. It will mean that the United States would have to pay greater attention to the views and concerns of other nations and be willing to put American lives at risk to protect common interests. Effective burden-sharing steps would not obviate a significant and perhaps disproportionate U.S. military role in major crises in critical regions, but this is a price the United States should be willing to pay.

A global leadership role serves U.S. economic interests. For example, it can facilitate American exports, as in recent U.S. contracts with Saudi Arabia for the sale of aircraft and the modernization of Saudi telecommunication systems. As we have seen, the costs of other stances the United States might take to the world can ultimately be higher. Rather than undermining domestic prosperity, such a role can in fact facilitate it. The economic benefits of U.S. leadership have not been articulated, either analytically or in the statements made to the public.

Global leadership and building a more democratic and peaceful world should also appeal to American idealism, a defining feature of the republic. To sustain domestic political support, this particular appeal might well be as important as the more selfish and material

American interests. In fact, such a lofty goal could be a spur to the kinds of social and educational reforms that the nation needs, rather than an alternative to them.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION

As a nation, the United States is in a position of unprecedented military and political power, and it enjoys a unique leadership role in the world. The United States should recognize and celebrate this achievement. It should build a national museum that documents the sacrifices of the Cold War, the challenges faced, and the victories achieved. Similarly, a day should be designated to celebrate the "Victory in the Cold War." This would encourage schools, the media, and the national leadership to focus on the momentous challenges of the Cold War and the factors that contributed to its end.

The United States should also resolve to maintain its position of global leadership and preclude the rise of another global rival for the indefinite future. It is an opportunity the nation may never see again.

The question is whether the United States will accept responsibility, for reasons of self-interest and historical need, and meet the challenge of global leadership. Accepting will mean having the vision and the strategy and a willingness to bear the costs. Should the United States fail to seize this historic moment, over time its relative position is likely to decline, and the world is likely to become a balance-of-power multipolar system—and become more dangerous for the United States. The development of a multipolar world is not inevitable. It depends to a significant degree on what this nation wants and does. Even if the development ultimately takes place, the later it happens, the better.

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