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AFTER THE COLD WAR: A NATIONAL SECURITY VISION  
FOR AMERICA

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by

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## Contents

|   | <i>Page</i> |
|---|-------------|
| DISCLAIMER .....  | ii          |
| PREFACE .....   | iv          |
| ABSTRACT .....  | vi          |
| INTRODUCTION.....                                       | 1           |
| POWER AND INFLUENCE.....                                | 4           |
| Balance of Power .....                                  | 4           |
| Anarchy .....   | 7           |
| Hegemony.....   | 8           |
| Closing Thoughts.....                                   | 9           |
| ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL STRATEGIES .....                   | 12          |
| Neoisolationism.....                                    | 12          |
| Unipolar World .....                                    | 14          |
| Regionalized World.....                                 | 15          |
| Multipolar World .....                                  | 15          |
| Global Leadership .....                                 | 16          |
| Closing Thoughts .....                                  | 18          |
| NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY .....    | 20          |
| Opportunity Knocks.....                                 | 21          |
| Manifest Destiny?.....                                  | 23          |
| Vision for America.....                                 | 24          |
| Closing Thoughts .....                                  | 26          |
| CONCLUSIONS .....                                       | 28          |
| Can the US Fulfill the Role of World Leadership .....   | 28          |
| Should the US Be the World Leader.....                  | 29          |
| Will the American Public Support World Leadership ..... | 31          |
| Final Thoughts .....                                    | 32          |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY .....                                      | 35          |

## *Preface*

There I was, in Air Command and Staff College, a major with a masters degree, fairly well schooled on what makes the world go 'round, when one day I'm given a blue book—the *National Security Strategy for Engagement and Enlargement* (NSSEE)—showing me the plans to running the country. In a way, this was enlightening, because I had no idea there *was* such a document. In another sense, I was disturbed—because I had no idea there *was* such a document, and I thought perhaps I should have known.

In a way, we are fortunate to have the government playing the role of parent to the masses. Our government knows what's good for us—and it's a good thing, too. Most of us don't really understand the most important issue facing this country—that of our national security policy. And that's a bad thing.

The problem with this relationship is that the child never ceases being a child unless he or she gains knowledge and grows to become a contributing citizen. On national security issues, the general public cannot determine the course of our nation because we're too ignorant. Yet, our national strategy requires public support as the most important element in making this whole thing work. How can we support what we don't understand?

This is why the American public wants to cut defense spending and put more money into social programs. They cannot make the connection why US engagement in the international community is important to their lives. Americans are tired of getting

involved in places whose names we can't even pronounce, much less know where they are on the globe, much less relate this to our vital interests. Sometimes it seems like our national leadership is just as clueless.

My mission in this research project was to set out in search of justifying a national security strategy. It didn't matter which strategy, just one that seemed to best do the job for the US while not stepping on the toes of the rest of the world. To my amazement, I found ample justification for the NSSEE as written. This is a great plan! Why then, I wondered, don't we have public support for this strategy?

I believe the answer is because we haven't educated the American public. Why don't our kids get this stuff in school? Why don't we bring this document to the public eye? Why don't we vote on it? If we are to have a national strategy, we must have a national commitment. At present, we don't. And we need to fix this. Right now.

I found it fascinating to learn that our national security policy makes sense. Not only did I learn a lot about international relations during ACSC, but I had fun doing so, especially in my research group on "The Causes of War." A research advisor like Lieutenant Colonel Jim Forsythe is so entertaining, you don't even realize you're learning.

I adamantly believe all Americans need to get involved in national security strategy, starting not later than middle school. National policy needs their backing, and we are all entitled to a national policy we support and know the reasons why. The leaders and followers of the future need to start learning now about the important issues of our national security, what it is that keeps our country free. For the children shall lead.

*Abstract*

This research paper examines the current international environment and how shifts in centers of power since the end of the Cold War affect the national security policy of the United States. The author examines the question of what role America, as the world's sole superpower, should play in international affairs in light of an apparently reduced threat to its security and the increasing competition for non-defense spending. This research establishes conceptual references on balance of power, anarchy, and hegemony, then reviews alternative national security strategies.

This paper discusses the options the US might take—a return to isolationism, deferring to regional security arrangements, or assuming a global leadership role—now that the Cold War is over. The author assesses the direction and applicability of the current *National Security Strategy for Engagement and Enlargement* (NSSEE) and proposes a keystone vision for the US. The author concludes the US should retain a global leadership role in the international community to the maximum extent resources will permit. The US must resist neoisolationist pressures and not only remain engaged in all aspects, but lead the way economically and politically while maintaining the world's most powerful military as insurance for our national security. Finally, the author concludes the NSSEE provides appropriate direction for the US, but the support of the American public, upon which the NSSEE depends heavily, is insufficient due to the lack of public education and involvement in the national security process.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The 20th century has been a period of the most remarkable and rapid change the world has ever known. The century survived two great wars and scores of lesser conflicts, and witnessed the birth of the nuclear age. In spite of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the mutually assured destruction from thousands of megatons of thermonuclear weapons, humanity made it through the Cold War into a New World Order.

In the Cold War days, our charter was clear—prevent the USSR from exporting communism and avoid, if possible, nuclear attack, or at the least, be capable of inflicting as much damage on them as they could deliver against the US and our allies. Now, though, the communist threat has apparently all but disappeared. This presents a new challenge.

It is clear the world's power relationships are changing in the aftermath of the Cold War. No longer is world power polarized between the US and the USSR, with third world countries hosting an ideological battleground. World War II transformed the US from a nation of isolation into the preeminent world power. Indeed, this transformation may be the single most important factor in the survival of the free world. Communism was held in check, and by the 1980s, the US was on the offensive in the Cold War. The

Evil Empire, unable to restrain its uncooperative satellites, fell apart at the seams. This singular event would seem a harbinger of a new age of peace.

However, the state of nature is a state of war, and war may at any time break out.<sup>1</sup> Since 1945, the world has seen an average of 20-25 third world conflicts yearly.<sup>2</sup> With the fall of the USSR and the collapse of our ideological nemesis, what does the future demand of US leadership as we enter the twenty-first century?

With the disintegration of the bipolar world, we can expect the world of the next century to be unlike that of any other period of history. The United States—unarguably the world's leading power—will be faced with difficult decisions regarding the role it will play in international affairs as resource limitations and domestic pressure erode our superpower status. Is war becoming a thing of the past, and does the US have a responsibility for world leadership? The role we strive for will drive the extent of US engagement in working towards our national objectives.

This paper will examine the importance of US engagement in the international community. We will first look at conceptual issues of balance of power and the implications of imbalance; anarchy in international relations; and the pros and cons of hegemonic influence. This will set the stage for a review of alternative national strategies, tendencies towards isolationism, and possible repercussions for the international community if the US does not continue a global leadership role. Each alternative strategy might increase or decrease the likelihood of interstate wars.

A review of these conceptual factors is necessary to understand the evolution of the *National Security Strategy for Engagement and Enlargement* (NSSEE) and will help explain the relevance of our strategy is relevant in today's international environment.

Several key issues must be addressed to determine whether the US can execute the strategy outlined in the NSSEE:

1. Is the US capable of continuing in a position of world leadership in the dynamic post-Cold War international environment?
2. Is it in the best interests of the US to assume a world leadership role?
3. If a policy of engagement and enlargement is in our best interests, are we as a nation willing to make such a commitment?

The degree to which the US exerts influence according to its national objectives can be a significant factor in deterring war and resolving conflict. This influence is affected by balance of power relationships, the anarchy that results from each state pursuing its own national security policies, and resistance to hegemonic regimes.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (McGraw Hill: New York, 1979) 102.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander M. Walczak, *Conflict Termination: Transition from Warrior to Constable: A Primer* (Carlisle Barracks PA: Army War College, 15 April 1992), 1.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Power and Influence**

With the crumbling of the Former Soviet Union (FSU), the US finds itself as the undisputed global power as potential for conflict shifts from a global to a localized emphasis. This establishes a unique tone for international relations. For the first time since World War II, the US does not have a global military and ideological rival. Is America's role in international affairs, then, no longer of great importance?

Before attempting to answer this question and examine possible national strategies the US might pursue in the new world order, we will discuss conceptual issues that affect not only the US, but the rest of the world, in reducing the potential for and magnitude of war. Of particular importance are the issues of balance of power, anarchy, and hegemony.

#### **Balance of Power**

Power is relative, and there is a finite amount in the world, i.e., a zero-sum equation. If international states gain power, it comes at the expense of other states. As stronger states become less willing to use military power as an instrument of foreign policy, the unused power in effect transfers to the weaker states. We see different embodiments of the distribution when we estimate the relative power—military, diplomatic, and economic—of international states. We recognize the US and England at the top of the

military power pyramid; the US, Japan, and Germany with economic strength; and the US leading the way in diplomatic strength. However, in the United Nations, the one-state, one-vote arrangement favors weaker state coalitions.<sup>1</sup> By this arrangement, the relative power of stronger states is offset, with the strongest states having more to lose. Thus, a stronger state will be more motivated to act unilaterally in pursuit of self-interests, first because it must, and second because it can, if its actual or perceived strength offsets the combined power of the coalition opposing it.

Traditional balance of power theory has come under stress in the new world order. There are many potential sources of conflict and challenge to US dominance. We can look at this issue from two perspectives—how the US views the world, and how the rest of the world might view the US.

First, from the US point of view, we no longer have the military and ideological competition marked by the Cold War. As long as the USSR existed, national defense took priority. The US extended its nuclear-backed power to shield our allies from Soviet domination and fought for control of nonaligned states to halt the spread of communism in our national security interests. During the Reagan years, it was US policy to not only stop the expansion of the “Evil Empire,” but to regain territory as well for the democratic side. With the end of the Cold War, the task of exporting democracy should be easier.

How do other nations view US dominance, though? Surely, democratic states feel more secure without the threat of communism and global nuclear holocaust. However, less developed nations dealing with internal strife may not particularly care about US military superiority. For some states, any change to a power hierarchy may be a threat. The US, essentially unopposed, could exert its influence against nondemocratic states,

destabilize those governments, and threaten power bases. Those who hold power undemocratically are most at risk of losing it through a democratic process and are generally disinclined to give it up without a struggle.

Communist China has moved toward a market economy, at least in the coastal regions. However, remembering the recent past—the harshly suppressed demonstration in Tiananmen Square and the show of force near Taiwan—we know the Chinese government is far from abandoning its communist philosophy. It remains to be seen how Hong Kong, thoroughly contaminated by Western market economics and democratic ideas, will be assimilated into the Chinese Bloc in July 1997, or how Chinese policy will affect Taiwan.

China is not yet able to present a global challenge to democracy, but the influence of over 1 billion Chinese will surely continue to grow in the Asian sphere. Chinese writings on strategy and international security have expressed hostility to US predominance and imply the need to balance it, but they recognize the importance of US markets, technical training, and technology.<sup>2</sup>

If states simply wished to maximize power, they would join the stronger side, and instead of balances forming, we would see a world hegemony being forged.<sup>3</sup> This has not been the case. The first concern of states is not to maximize power, but to maintain their positions in the system.<sup>4</sup> The expectation is not that a balance, once achieved, will be maintained, but that a balance, once disrupted, will be restored in one way or the other.<sup>5</sup> Conceivably, the lesser powers might become wary of US influence and flock to the weaker side, because it is the stronger side that threatens them.<sup>6</sup>

The key to preventing the tendency for weaker states to ally against the strong is the behavior of the US. Even with benign intent, the US will continue to behave in ways that annoy and frighten others.<sup>7</sup> We must attempt to allay the rational fear states have of too much power residing in the hands of too few.

Balance of power is not as clear in today's dynamic world as it was before either of the world wars. Today, no country or set of countries can restore the balance.<sup>8</sup> Contrary to balance of power theory, US influence increased in the early 1990s,<sup>9</sup> an imbalance the US likely prefers. Thus, predictions are more volatile, and the role of the US in the international arena cannot be established purely on balance of power theory.

### **Anarchy**

Political realists maintain international politics is a struggle dominated by organized violence, that a state of world anarchy exists.<sup>10</sup> This is not to say there is no order in the world, only that each nation acts on its self-interests as opposed to the common good. The ultimate test of the success of policy is preserving and strengthening the state.<sup>11</sup>

In anarchy, security is the highest end.<sup>12</sup> States are uncertain about each other's future intentions and actions; consequently, they spend a portion of their effort protecting themselves against others.<sup>13</sup> In interdependency theory, states are more secure in controlling what they depend on to lessen the extent of their dependency.<sup>14</sup> It is therefore difficult to rely on other states without some reservations.

A hierarchical world governing agency could be a hedge against anarchy. However, states would have to sacrifice a degree of sovereignty and allot some portion of their military instrument to the world governing agency. This reduces the military power

retained by the state. Thus, the state could only consider such an allocation if the agency were capable of protecting its client states.<sup>15</sup> The UN is incapable of offering such protection. It has no standing military force, and states are not likely to allocate any of their military capabilities to such an international agency because no one has “excess” military capability.

Consequently, we can expect anarchy to continue. International agencies without assigned forces cannot guarantee protection. The US has the forces and capacity for global response, but there are risks in such hegemonic influence.

### **Hegemony**

Hegemony exists when a single power, having superior economic and military resources, implements a plan for international order based on its interests and vision for the world.<sup>16</sup> There are two elements of the theory of hegemonic power: that order in world politics is typically created by a single dominant power, and that the maintenance of order requires continued hegemony.<sup>17</sup>

The theory of hegemonic stability predicts the more one such power dominates the world political economy, the more cooperative interstate relations will be.<sup>18</sup> Successful hegemony requires military power to protect this economy.<sup>19</sup> Economic or military might cannot serve as the sole basis of political power of states.<sup>20</sup> Power should not be confused with strength and force; for hegemony to be equated with leadership, the moral and intellectual dimension must be emphasized.<sup>21</sup> If wealth fosters pride, lesser-developed nations might react angrily and opt for war.<sup>22</sup>

History has been an unending series of cycles; the conclusion of one period of hegemony is the beginning of another cycle of growth, expansion, and eventual decline.<sup>23</sup> Lacking a precedent for today's current international situation, though, is it possible for the US to act as a force for good while not serving as a catalyst for adverse reaction? Hegemonial powers do not always exploit secondary powers economically,<sup>24</sup> but if the US refuses to adapt to change, we may be destined to repeat the cycle.<sup>25</sup> Our national power is not actually eroding, but because we are losing the ability to control outcomes in a more complex international system, the erosion of the international hierarchy may signal a decline in relative US power.<sup>26</sup>

### **Closing Thoughts**

If hegemony needed as a substitute for world government, the only nation capable of extending such influence is the US. Is there a responsibility for America, the world's dominant power, to preserve the peace? We must decide the lesser of two evils. Too much engagement risks negative reaction to US hegemony, while too little may result in an unchecked proliferation of religious extremists, Chinese communism, rogue states, and radical national causes.

If the US is to establish a benevolent world hegemony, we can learn from Athens' lessons of more than two millennia ago by establishing a realistic vision and emphasizing the moral and leadership dimensions of hegemony.<sup>27</sup> Whether the US succumbs to another power in the twilight of another hegemonic cycle will depend on our leadership and ability to adapt in a dynamic international structure, on America's vision for itself and the rest of the world, and its strategy for achieving its objectives.

US national security strategy is derived by evaluating alternatives and consequences considering balance of power relationships, anarchy, and hegemony. There are many paths we may follow.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, Second Edition (Scott, Foresman: Glenview, IL, 1989), 36.

<sup>2</sup>Zalmay Khalilzad, *Strategic Appraisal 1996* (Santa Monica CA: RAND, 1996), 28.

<sup>3</sup>Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

, 128.

<sup>6</sup>Kenneth Waltz, *Military Issues in the Post-Cold War Era*, in *The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics*, Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz, ed. Fourth Edition (University Press of America: Lanham MD, 1993), 461.

<sup>7</sup>Waltz, *Military Issues in the Post-Cold War Era*, 462.

<sup>8</sup>Waltz, *Military Issues in the Post-Cold War Era*, 461.

<sup>9</sup>Keohane and Nye, *The United States and International Institutions in Europe After the Cold War*; in *After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989-1991*, by Keohane, Nye, and Stanley S. Hoffman (Harvard University Press: Massachusetts, 1993), 105.

<sup>10</sup>Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 23.

<sup>11</sup>Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 117.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>16</sup>Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1984), 31.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>20</sup>Daniel Garst, In *Thucydides and Neorealism* (Published in *International Studies Quarterly* (1989), 33), 20.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 22-23.

<sup>22</sup>Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*, Third Edition (The Free Press: New York, 1988), 87.

<sup>23</sup>Robert Gilpin, quoted in *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory*, by Robert O. Keohane (Westview Press: Boulder, 1989), 49.

<sup>24</sup>Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 45.

<sup>25</sup>Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power*, 252.

## Notes

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 228.

<sup>27</sup>Garst, 22-23, claims the lack of this dimension precipitated the downfall of Athens.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Alternative National Strategies**

Keeping in mind the issues of balance of power, anarchy, and hegemony, we can better address the question of where the US should be heading in the wake of the Cold War. Our involvement in world affairs as we prepare to enter a new century will be dictated by our willingness to lead and embodied in our national security strategy.

The US might pursue any of a number of grand strategies ranging from neoisolationism to global leadership. Strategy could be based on American military might, regionalized economic blocs, or other measures of national and international capabilities. Our degree of engagement in the international community has direct implications on the potential for world peace.

#### **Neoisolationism**

The US may choose to abdicate its leadership role and react to developments in the world situation on a case by case basis.<sup>1</sup> This would result in the US losing the opportunity to shape the future and make military training more difficult in trying to prepare for the entire range of plausible conflicts.

On the surface, there may be some appeal for a US withdrawal from international affairs to a focus on domestic problems. A tendency to turn inward was evidenced during

the 1996 presidential election debates which notably lacked interest in foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> A 1994 survey showed 84 percent of Americans believed we should pay more attention to domestic problems and less to international problems.<sup>3</sup> Depending on the extent of defensive commitments to the US or North America, there may be a significant reduction of defense expenditures in the short run.<sup>4</sup> Abandoning global leadership would also reduce the risk to American soldiers serving around the world in combat and OOTW situations.<sup>5</sup>

Technology could encourage a “Fortress America.” The US could gain situational awareness around the world through an extensive network of information facilitated by space communications capabilities.<sup>6</sup> High priority would be given to reduce US vulnerability to missile attacks and information warfare.<sup>7</sup> Fewer US forces would operate overseas in forward presence, peacekeeping, or peace enforcement roles. The “peace dividend” could be diverted to domestic programs and economic competitiveness, while our competitors divert a greater share of their expenditures into defense.<sup>8</sup>

However, realistically and over the longer term, a neoisolationist approach will *increase* the danger of major conflicts, require greater US defense effort down the line, threaten world peace, and eventually undermine US prosperity.<sup>9</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, American isolationism had disastrous consequences for world peace.<sup>10</sup> US withdrawal from the world scene may spark an arms race and nuclear proliferation as international states scramble to form a new balance of power matrix.<sup>11</sup> Other states who currently exercise restraint because of security ties with the US or fear of possible negative US actions may see an invitation to energize their nuclear programs.<sup>12</sup> The resulting turmoil

throughout the world, especially in Asia and Europe, would force major economic adjustment in the US.<sup>13</sup>

Interdependence and national security interests, then, discourage US disengagement from the international community.

### **Unipolar World**

The unipolar world emerged from the sudden evaporation of the bipolar world that marked the Cold War. Some observers argued the US was now the only country that could project great military power anywhere in the world, that the US had far and away the world's largest national economy, and the US was now the focus of global affairs.<sup>14</sup>

This viewpoint was evidenced by the US-led build-up of military forces in and around the Arabian peninsula in response to the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.<sup>15</sup> Not only were the vast military forces predominantly American—nearly 500,000 troops deployed to the region—but the US was the only country with the diplomatic power capable of forming the allied coalition.<sup>16</sup> This diplomatic power was applied to soften the economic impact on the US treasury, as other countries helped fund the war effort to ensure their access to oil.

This poses the question of whether the US could maintain its military might and position as the world's superpower given its own economic problems.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, if economic power were a necessity of supporting military strength—the dominant instrument of power in international relations—did this mark a shift away from traditional thinking about power distribution?<sup>18</sup> These questions about cracks in the armor of US

dominance caused many people to reject the unipolar model of the new international order.<sup>19</sup>

### **Regionalized World**

A regionalized power distribution model suggests military power has been superseded by economic strength as the most important instrument of power (IOP).<sup>20</sup> This model is based on regional economic blocs—in the Americas centered on the US, in Europe centered on the European Community, and in East Asia centered on Japan.<sup>21</sup>

Evidence to support the future predominance of this model is the emergence of the European Community (EC), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) bloc, the economic codevelopment sphere in East Asia, creation of a South American free trade area, and the formation of common markets in Central America and West Africa.<sup>22</sup>

However, critics maintain this outlook overlooks the continuing importance of military capabilities as a tool of state power.<sup>23</sup> They point out the EC's difficulties with the Maastricht Treaty as evidence that moving toward economic cooperation will not enable people to overcome national pride and national identity.<sup>24</sup> In addition, economic warfare and trade restrictions, such as those that contributed to the onset of World War II, could result, causing national power to default to military capabilities.<sup>25</sup>

It would appear, then, that economics alone will not shape the new world order.

### **Multipolar World**

A multipolar world may emerge dominated by the US, the EC, Japan, and China, but with other states occasionally rising to play prominent roles.<sup>26</sup> In this scenario, economic strength will grow in importance, but military strength will continue to play an important

role.<sup>27</sup> Proponents stress the importance of “soft” measures of national power, such as beliefs, ideas, and culture, in addition to economic and military power.<sup>28</sup>

A regional balance-of-power system would have advantages for the US. Expecting regional powers to assume responsibility for the world’s “hot spots” would reduce defense expenditures and deployments of American troops overseas.<sup>29</sup> Given its relative distance and insulation from points of potential major crises, the US could stand back as an “offshore balancer,” focusing on deterring the emergence of a predominant power and confrontation between great powers while pursuing economic interests.<sup>30</sup>

However, there are serious drawbacks to the regional approach. Regional powers may not respond to threats in an “appropriate” manner as defined by US national security strategy.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the US would be dependent on other international states or blocs to act on its behalf. Also, political and military struggles among the major democracies could heighten, and each might pursue economic self-interest with more determination.<sup>32</sup> The US would also be at a competitive disadvantage to extend its sphere of influence as other nations and regions would be more inclined to reach anti-US alliances.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, the differing cultures and political expertise of global participants could lead to wars the US would be unable to maintain distance from.<sup>34</sup> In the nuclear age, the lack of dominant restraint, such as the US might provide, could have serious consequences.

### **Global Leadership**

Finally, the US may elect to play a global leadership role and deter the rise to power of another hostile global rival or a return to multipolarity.<sup>35</sup> The post-Cold War global environment is likely to be more receptive to American values—democracy, free markets,

and the rule of law—and this scenario has a better chance of dealing cooperatively with the world's major problems, such as nuclear proliferation, regional hegemony by renegade states, and low-level conflicts,<sup>36</sup> if the US can successfully exercise hegemonic influence.

In order to preclude the rise of another global rival or multipolarity, the US would have to act according to a set of guidelines.<sup>37</sup> First, the US would have to strengthen and extend its alliances with the economically rich democratic states of North America, Western Europe, and East Asia—the “zone of peace.”<sup>38</sup> The US must preserve its military preeminence, which would serve as a hedge against Russian reimperialization and Chinese expansionism while promoting cooperation with both.

The US must also prevent hostile hegemony over critical regions, such as the oil-producing Arabian Gulf states. Although the US is the dominant military power, the use of force must be judicious, and the burden must be shared among our allies. The US must maintain its economic strength and an open international economic system while maintaining domestic support for a greater defense commitment in the near term.<sup>39</sup>

US global leadership has many implications for the US military.<sup>40</sup> As the “insurance policy” for the other IOPs, US military forces must maintain nuclear deterrence, fight and win regional conflicts when deterrence fails, deter and defend against the use of weapons of mass destruction in regional conflicts, improve their capability to fight low-intensity conflicts and OOTW, increase power projection capabilities as force levels and overseas basings reduce, and dominate space and information technologies.<sup>41</sup>

The United States' ability to retain a global leadership position will depend upon a strong economic base to preserve military and technological dominance. The US must also be careful not to overextend itself, relying on regional allies whenever the situation is

appropriate.<sup>42</sup> The alternative to global leadership is reacting to world developments, losing the opportunity to shape the future, and increasing the risk to US military forces employed in a hostile environment after preemptive engagement has been forfeited.<sup>43</sup>

### Closing Thoughts

If the US wishes to ensure its national security, it must control the international environment. It is unlikely America will return to isolationism, although pressures for diverting more resources into domestic programs could affect US ability to retain its superpower status. Given our history and present capability to exert considerable political, economic, and military influence globally, the question for US national strategy, then, is not whether to engage the international community, but to what degree.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>2</sup>During the second debate between President Clinton and Senator Dole, not a single foreign policy question was posed from the audience, even after prompting from the moderator, Jim Lehrer.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 32. Quoting from *Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, 1994*.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>9</sup>Khalilzad, *Strategic Appraisal 1996*, 17.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>14</sup>Daniel S. Papp, *Contemporary International Relations: Frameworks for Understanding*, Fourth Edition (MacMillan: New York, 1994), 207.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 207.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 207-208.

## Notes

- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., 208.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., 209.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., 210.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup>Khalilzad, *Strategic Appraisal 1996*, 21.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid., 22.
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibid., 22-23.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid., 23.
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., 23.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup>Ibid., 23-24.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid., 32.
- <sup>40</sup>Ibid., 29.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., 29-31.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., 32-33.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid., 34.

## Chapter 4

### National Strategy for the Twenty-First Century

The US is presently the world's predominant power. Neoisolationism is not in our best interests if we wish to retain this status and control our national destiny. In deriving a national strategy, the US will act according to its requirements for national security and its capability to act based on a prediction of how the world will look as the twenty-first century unfolds.

The US military is the most capable such force on the planet. American political and economic influence are still potent. The propensity for major conflict appears to be significantly reduced as democracy springs forth in more and more areas of the world. Future wars will probably be lesser regional conflicts with a significant requirement for humanitarian assistance, although China's and North Korea's intentions are not yet clear.

Unfortunately, US military, political, and economic strength proved less than fully effective in situations such as Bosnia and Somalia. America was unskilled at conducting operations other than war (OOTW). Television images of an American soldier's body being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu exposed how shallow our national resolve could be as many called for an immediate end to our involvement in Somalia. As our soldiers were being killed for questionable causes, Americans again debated the definition of our national interests and our responsibility to the international community.

Clearly, the US is a nation of great capability. However, at issue is how we wish to employ our instruments of power in the interests of our national security. Is America, the victor of World War II and the Cold War, the sole superpower remaining in the world today, needed and responsible for keeping the peace in a world of anarchy?

The first step in determining an appropriate level of international engagement is to determine where we want to go. We will not know which road to take if we don't have a destination.

### **Opportunity Knocks**

In this singular point in history, the US is uniquely capable of establishing a benevolent world hegemony. Our diplomatic, economic, and military strength allow us to set or affect the course for the rest of the world. Here is an opportunity to stamp out a lot of what's wrong with the world as we see it—if we engage proactively. Before setting goals for the US, Americans should first understand their nature.

Americans are tired of being unappreciated. We consider ourselves as executors of noble causes and take offense to anti-American demonstrations. We don't have the patience for long-term foreign entanglements. The American public is unwilling to support a large military when the threat of global war is perceived to be negligible. They see the military as a fighting force and are relatively uneducated about the need for armed forces in operations other than war (OOTW).

However, America the bountiful also has a national conscience that stirs a willingness to defend the helpless, to assist the needy. We do so not because of national security reasons, but because we are a strong, caring nation with resources to offer. Americans are

tired of two-bit dictators perpetrating genocide in Third World countries, tired of no one caring for helpless refugees, tired of gangs of armed bandits hoarding food while the emaciated masses invade our homes via television. We will help if we can.

Humanitarian operations often require military forces to provide a secure environment so relief agencies can operate safely. The UN, with no standing and responsive military force, is not capable of effectively engaging in humanitarian operations that require military support. The 1994 humanitarian aid mission to Rwanda suggests we will intervene when there is a natural disaster but not to halt violence (if the cost of stopping it is too great).<sup>1</sup> Here our concerns were moral and symbolic, and public opinion determined policy.<sup>2</sup> We should define criteria for intervention in terms of *national* interests instead of merely *vital* interests.

If the US is incapable of responding to disasters in Africa, isolationism will be strengthened.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the frequent crises in Africa and the likelihood this continent will remain unstable for years to come, the US military has not adapted a structure to better deal with these crises. EUCOM is responsible not only for Europe, but for most of Africa as well. Although its former *raison d'être*, the Warsaw Pact, has been dismantled, EUCOM has picked up responsibility for the former Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe and is dealing with a still-explosive situation in the Balkans, all while US forces have been severely cut. EUCOM is stretched thin.

Perhaps it's time to stand up an African Command that would relieve EUCOM of its extracontinental responsibilities. A permanent AFRICOM command structure in Egypt, for example, could bring full-time expertise to bear where it is most needed, strengthen US-Egyptian ties, and perhaps bring Egypt on line as a co-leader of African development.

The US is needed to maintain order in the world and is capable of assisting in ways no other country or agency can. America can further entrench itself in the position of global power and facilitate achieving its national security interests by capitalizing on this opportunity for world leadership. Americans need to decide whether to answer the call.

### **Manifest Destiny?**

The US has long maintained its right to intervene. Senior officials in the Reagan administration asserted "...some rights are more fundamental than the right of nations to nonintervention, like the rights of individual people...[We] don't have the right to subvert a democratic government, but we do have the right against an undemocratic one."<sup>4</sup> The *National Security Strategy for Engagement and Enlargement* (NSSEE)<sup>5</sup> does not explicitly state this strong position, but it is perhaps a *de facto* summary of the US position on its right to intervene in another sovereign state's affairs.

The US thinks of itself as acting for the sake of peace, justice, and well-being in the world,<sup>6</sup> but our "right to intervention" should not be employed against "undemocratic" states. Some countries, such as Saudi Arabia, are not democracies, yet they are responsible members of the world community, and we should not impose American values upon them. We should not mandate democratic forms of government, but rather be concerned for the human rights policies of the sovereign states. Conceivably, benevolent autocracies could provide for their people better than the US takes care of its own.

Should America serve as a model for the world? Waltz asserts neither America nor any other country should do so.<sup>7</sup> In the span of a decade, the US initiated wars against Iraq, Grenada, and Panama, violating international law in the latter invasion.<sup>8</sup> This is

evidence that, in international politics, unbalanced power constitutes a danger even when it is “benevolent” American power that is out of balance.<sup>9</sup>

Waltz’s implication is international states are forced to follow the US model. On the contrary, the US can be a passive model other states may freely emulate. If intervention occurs, it is because the standards established by the international community or, in the case of US unilateral intervention, American criteria, are not adhered to. If we act unilaterally, it will be because we lack the support of the world community. In such cases, the US model will be challenged.

Serving as a model is good for the US in two ways. First, it is a tool other states may use in their own self-development. Peace has prevailed much more reliably among democratic countries than elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> For the first time, every country in South America is a democracy. Second, the US model would be a baseline from which Americans can aspire to greater good, regardless of how other governments function.

The US has the power to be a significant factor in keeping the world safe for democracy and smothering the possibilities of nuclear Armageddon. Our engagement in the international community must continue with vigor. A national vision will lead us to this greater good.

### **Vision for America**

Why should the US intervene in foreign affairs? Because we must continue to look out for Number One, as will any sovereign nation concerned with its continued survival. Stability in the world is not just a US goal, but a *condition for our national security*. We are the only nation with sufficient power to ensure global stability. No other state or

organization has such capability for immediate and decisive response. Our priorities must be to preempt the conditions which require large defense expenditures and maintain a secure environment so everyone is guaranteed basic human rights.

The NSSEE states our national strategic objectives.<sup>11</sup> There are three central goals of our national strategy: to enhance our security with military forces that are ready to fight and with effective representation abroad, to bolster America's economic revitalization, and to promote democracy abroad. US engagement in today's world prefers acting in concert with other states, but if necessary, calls for acting unilaterally in support of our vital interests.<sup>12</sup> If our vital interests aren't at stake, there will be less public support to finance OOTW and risk US casualties.

Humanitarian missions in far-off reaches of the globe are hard to link to US national security strategy. However, in the long run, US engagement will pay off by helping other states, nations, and individuals reach a higher level of development. The seeds for war should be dealt with before they germinate into regional or international threats. If we are unwilling to intervene and defer leadership to other nations, we will have to accept the possibility the results may not be in tune with our national security needs.

A national vision for America is needed as the foundation of a national security strategy. This vision will describe the end-state Americans desire for the US. As the oracle of democracy, we will employ our national instruments of power (IOPs) towards specific objectives in line with America's "Prime Directive." The moral dimension of leadership must be the cornerstone of our vision. This vision should consist of two main tenets: encourage and welcome diversity, but firmly deal with those who fail to respect the

basic rights of humanity or abide by internationally accepted norms. War cannot be allowed if civilization is to survive.

### **Closing Thoughts**

If war is contrary to our national interests, and we wish to play the biggest part in preventing war, there are two ways to do so: by rendering the use of arms unattractive to the degree no nation would be willing to engage in war, or by eliminating the sources of conflict.<sup>13</sup> The US can be effective in deterring major wars by maintaining a dominant military force and the will to use it. There is at present and for the foreseeable future no serious challenge to US military dominance. However, the future is unpredictable and deterrence will not necessarily be effective in the case of lunatics or dictators.<sup>14</sup> Some countries are so different ideologically and religiously we aren't sure how to deal with them. How do we deter fundamentalist Islamic violence perpetrated in God's name?

If the US is to play the dominant role in assuring world peace, we must recognize the causes of war and proactively work to resolve conflicts and perhaps eliminate the causes, thus the results. We might ask whether peace requires a benevolent superpower to make sure no nation can get away with engaging in a war. Unfortunately, human history is rife with chronic bloodshed. Many countries are not evolved enough to follow the rules without threat of punishment, and someone has to enforce the law. The international community, as a whole, should police lawbreakers, but if they don't, then the US must, ideally because it's the right thing to do, at the least for own national security. We must apply our resources toward integrating all nations into a world community so war will no longer be an acceptable method of resolving disputes.

Great ideas can keep the peace.<sup>15</sup> A national vision is essential to effecting a strategy of engagement and enlargement that will promote democratic ideals and ensure a safe environment for humanity to flourish. We as a nation, not just our national leadership, must support these great ideas that will lead the world to peace.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Steven Metz and James Kievit, *Learning From Rwanda*, in *Joint Operations and Campaign Concepts Coursebook* (Air Command and Staff College: Maxwell AFB AL, January 1997), 281-282.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 280-281. The authors contend the public can tolerate violence in peripheral areas, but will not abide human suffering from natural or preventable causes.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 461-464.

<sup>5</sup>*National Security Strategy for Engagement and Enlargement*, February 1996.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>Kenneth Waltz, *Military Issues in the Post-Cold War Era*, 461-464.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 461-464.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 464.

<sup>10</sup>Waltz, *Military Issues in the Post-Cold War Era*, 463.

<sup>11</sup>*National Security Strategy for Engagement and Enlargement*, Feb 96, p.i.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>13</sup>Fred Iklé, *Every War Must End* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1991), 108.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, quoting Winston Churchill, 118.

<sup>15</sup>Blainey, *The Causes of War*, 13.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusions**

After reviewing the conceptual issues of power relationships, the challenges of anarchy, and the risks of hegemony, we can determine whether the NSSEE embodies a national strategy commensurate with our vision for America. As we do so, we must answer three questions: Can the United States fulfill the role of world leadership in the post-Cold War era? Should the US take on this responsibility? And, if it should, what will it take to do so successfully?

#### **Can the US Fulfill the Role of World Leadership**

This first question centers around capabilities. A dominant nation can preserve the peace.<sup>1</sup> America is capable of employing great power globally, more than any other nation. The US military is undoubtedly the world's most powerful armed force. America still has considerable political clout, as evidenced by President Bush's ability to form the coalition against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War and brokering the Dayton Peace Accord for the Balkans. The US remains the world's single largest economic power.

However, US resources are limited. We cannot be everywhere at once, nor can we afford unlimited foreign engagement. Public support for US intervention has been less than enthusiastic considering the cost in resources and the risk to American lives during

OOTW, especially when resolution does not come quickly. All of America's power will be of little use if it cannot be focused to exert influence internationally.

Fiscal realities force the US to adopt a flexible strategy. We can allow regional blocs to function as long as and to the extent the US allows them to function. Some may call this a regional world scenario, but in effect the US is keeping its superpower status in reserve as the dominant nation. When necessary, we can act unilaterally, as called for in the NSSEE. The US is capable of exerting significant influence, but resource limitations require us to strengthen relationships with other nations so they can contribute to keeping the peace. We must be wise in our leadership; a national vision will keep us focused on our purpose.

### **Should the US Be the World Leader**

Whether the US should play the role of world leader is a function of our national security policy and our vision for America. Peace is a prerequisite for long-term domestic prosperity, but peace is not a normal state of affairs.<sup>2</sup>

The good news is, there is a trend away from major global conflict. The destructive power of nuclear weapons deters rational states from engaging in unlimited war. This is not to say a major war can't occur. We cannot rule out the possibility of a major conflict in the Middle East, Korea, or China.

War in some form will undoubtedly continue to be a fact of life in this dynamic world for many years. Nuclear weapons empirically have had little value in deterring regional conflict. Virtually all wars since the Korean Conflict were fought in Africa.<sup>3</sup> Lesser regional conflicts will likely continue to ignite in the consolidative and expansive states.<sup>4</sup>

A significant cause of war is competition for resources,<sup>5</sup> such as food, water, and nonrenewable resources. When vital interests and existence are threatened, conflict may escalate into war. Preventive diplomacy can defuse conflicts before they become crises.<sup>6</sup>

War in the twenty-first century might take on an entirely new dimension, as military forces or governments may not be the only serious threat to our national security.<sup>7</sup> The next war may be initiated by an “information Pearl Harbor” as the possibilities of war in cyberspace increase, with electrons the ultimate precision guided weapon.<sup>8</sup> War might also be waged by multinational corporations across national boundaries using no fielded military forces. The stakes could be just as high regardless of the type of war and whether or not military forces are fielded.

The US is faced with a dichotomy. First and foremost, we are committed to protecting our vital interests, as stated in the NSSEE. Engagement in the international community and fostering of democratic ideals are tenets of our national strategy to resolve conflicts before they become crises. However, resource constraints put pressure against our strategy of engagement and enlargement. The American public is eager to beat the swords of overseas defense commitments into plowshares of domestic priorities. They do not easily make the connection that successful national security strategy provides a safe environment for implementing domestic programs.

We surely must not cower into neoisolationism, or someone else will fill the leadership void, relegating the US to a follower role with unused resources and capability. Consequently, the US must engage the world community to preempt the sources of conflict while retaining the world’s dominant military force and the will to employ it. If

our reasons for engagement and the use of force when necessary are not altruistic, at the least we must do so in the interests of our national security.

### **Will the American Public Support World Leadership**

The NSSEE states a need for significant US involvement in international affairs. However, execution of the NSSEE involves more than simply stating the goals of our national security program and trying to implement reactive foreign policy measures in line with our objectives. Public support is imperative, as the last paragraph of the NSSEE states.

Our engagement abroad requires the active, sustained bipartisan support of the American people and the US Congress. Of all the elements contained in this strategy, none is more important than this: our administration is committed to explaining our security interests and objectives to the nation; to seeking the broadest possible public and congressional support for our security programs and investments; and to exerting our leadership in the world in a manner that reflects our best national values and protects the security of this great and good nation.

Public and congressional support for the NSSEE, however, have been lacking. There has been substantial public pressure to reduce our engagement in the world and focus more on domestic programs. If the NSSEE truly reflected public opinion; the public would be more supportive of US foreign policy. It's a safe bet relatively few Americans know of the NSSEE.

For the disconnect between the NSSEE and public support to be repaired, either of two things must happen: the NSSEE must accurately reflect the public's desires for international engagement or disengagement, or the public must be educated on the NSSEE and why this policy is good for our national security interests. The second alternative is preferable. Conflict will undoubtedly continue in the next century; US engagement can

significantly reduce the scale of conflict and the propensity for war. It is clearly in our national interests to do so.

Our leadership must formulate a national vision and educate the public on the reasons for our national strategy, the long-term reasons in favor of engagement and enlargement, the dangers of isolationism, and the need for patience in executing our strategy. America's vision, filling the moral and leadership requirements of successful hegemony, could be subject to voter approval to keep national security issues at the forefront of our national conscience and ensure public involvement and support. We must declare war on war, engage decisively, then follow through.

If the US is to serve as a model of democracy, our own people must understand considerably more about international relations and the important issues that drive formulation of a national security strategy. Our government cannot successfully continue implementing policies for the good of the masses. We need to more effectively use the information IOP to focus more on educating the public so they can be full participants in developing a national strategy they understand and are willing to support.

### **Final Thoughts**

The US won the Cold War, not by accident, but because some Americans had the vision and courage to make it happen. We slapped each other on the backs for a job well done. Instead of retreating into the sanctuary of our borders, the US must continue to maintain a position of world leadership. History warns us we haven't seen the last self-serving tyrant who will not respond to diplomatic or economic pressure from the US or

the world community. In such cases, we must be prepared to teach harsh and permanent lessons to those who understand nothing but superior force.

Shifts and anomalies in the world's balance of power suggest employing a different mix of IOPs. Without world government, anarchy will continue as each state does what it must in the interests of its own security. The US can preclude the potential of anarchy to degenerate into war. We can exploit our dominant position to keep the peace and preempt war rather than react to crises. To do so effectively requires early, continual, committed engagement. A stronger capability in the information IOP can generate public support for a US leadership role and extol the virtues of democracy to the world.

The information IOP can be exploited to deter war. Global, real-time news brings horror into every home. These images help spur the world into action against aggression and tyranny, and quick response can act as a deterrent to escalation of the conflict. The memory of wars affects leaders and followers.<sup>9</sup> As nuclear weapons proliferate, there is an increased likelihood for their use.<sup>10</sup> Film from the immediate aftermath of nuclear detonations over Hiroshima and Nagasaki communicates the inhumanity of such weapons. Nonetheless, dominant capabilities must be maintained in our political, economic, and military IOPs to better ensure a world formed according to our national security goals.

America must be bold enough to lead the world through the unknown. Our only other options are to follow or get out of the way, options which cannot guarantee survival of the United States. We would be fools not to study and learn from history, but chaos theory tells us the lessons of the past cannot necessarily predict future events. Circumstances in today's world present unique challenges to traditional thinking about

power and influence, and historical lessons may or may not apply in twenty-first century international affairs.

History doesn't necessarily lead to the future. Rather, the future leads to history, and it starts today.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Blainey, *The Causes of War*, 109.

<sup>2</sup>Blainey, 3.

<sup>3</sup>Magyar, *Conflict in the Postcontainment Era*, in *War and Conflict Coursebook* (Air Command and Staff College: Maxwell AFB AL, August 1996), 5, 11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, *Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence From Cases*, Drawn from *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994), 5-40.

<sup>6</sup>*National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 11.

<sup>7</sup>George J. Stein, *Information Warfare*, Article in *Airpower and Campaign Planning Coursebook* (Air Command and Staff College: Maxwell AFB AL, March 1997), 215.

<sup>8</sup>*Air Force Magazine*, December 1996, 3. Editorial by John T. Correll refers to speculation by Senator Sam Nunn during a June 1996 hearing with CIA Director John Deutch.

<sup>9</sup>Blainey, 9.

<sup>10</sup>Blainey, 280.

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