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Executive Summary

The end of the Cold War presents a unique opportunity for a radical overhaul of America's foreign policy commitments and consequent annual savings of as much as $150 billion on the defense budget. This study examines the prospects for reform of American foreign policy under the Clinton administration.

Despite their rhetoric, Clinton and his key national security advisers seem to accept the tenets of George Bush's "neo-Cold War orthodoxy," which assumes that the end of the Cold War has made the world a more dangerous and unstable place, putting more, not fewer, demands on American leadership.

This study shows that, on the contrary, the level of global threat today is far less than it was during the Cold War. Although there may be numerous local conflicts, they will rarely affect America's security. The end of the super-power rivalry has made the world a safer place where disputes can be treated on their merits, often without any U.S. involvement. The moral, economic, and strategic arguments that the U.S. military budget must remain at its present level are examined and refuted.

"Aggressive unilateralism" (whether American or foreign) on trade issues is identified as the principal threat to global stability, and strong support of multilateralism and open markets is shown to be a key U.S. interest.

Introduction

American foreign policy stands at a crossroads. The two main players, President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher, will have to decide whether to set out in a new direction determined by a "fresh assessment" and "bold new thinking"[1] or to continue along the path of the status quo advocated by former president George Bush. Even though he had previously heralded the arrival of a "new era for the world,"[2] in commencement addresses at Texas A&M University on December 15, 1992, and at the United States Military Academy on January 5, 1993,[3] Bush lay the ground- work for maintaining the status quo. His approach, best described as neo-Cold War orthodoxy, is a strategy the Clinton administration should emphatically reject.

The Neo-Cold War Orthodoxy

The neo-Cold War orthodoxy is based on "business as usual," the contention that the end of the Cold War has not reduced the need for an interventionist U.S. foreign policy. Proponents of that approach assert that the collapse of

communism has created global "instability" and that more, not less, American political and military leadership is, therefore, required.[4] They have discovered justifications and rationales for maintaining the existing national security establishment and a virtually undiminished military budget in humanitarian and peace-keeping missions that are unrelated to the national interest, such as the one in Somalia, and in such new rationales as "limited sovereignty" or the "law of democratic intervention."[5] Anything else is stigmatized as "isolationism," "1930s' appeasement," a "failure of will," or a "poverty of concept" that risks the rise of a new Hitler.[6]

Sources of Support for Orthodoxy

The neo-Cold War orthodoxy is finding crucial support, both at home and abroad. In a speech at Oxford University on December 4, 1992, former president Ronald Reagan set the tone by declaring that "our success in conquering communism should now be followed by success in conquering the host of smaller but no less deadly challenges." He called for strengthening NATO and formation of a UN "army of conscience."[7] Similarly, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Colin L. Powell, has supported the case for a 1.6-million-strong military "base force" by pointing to areas of unrest throughout the world.[8]

America's allies tend to subscribe to the neo-Cold War orthodoxy. For example, European diplomats at the Brussels NATO conference and the meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Geneva in December 1992 pressed outgoing Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger for more, not less, American engagement in world affairs.[9] Their motives for such enthusiasm are quite self-serving. Washington's NATO allies are all taking advantage of the end of the Cold War to decrease defense spending. The Dutch and the Germans have recently announced cuts of up to 45 percent. In light of public opinion polls showing broad demand for even less defense spending, there is no guarantee that the European states will not cut defense spending even more.[10] Combined defense expenditures of the European members of NATO are shrinking by 23 percent. The last thing Washington's allies want is for the United States, which consistently spends more than 150 percent of the combined expenditures of the other members of NATO, to insist on enjoying its own peace dividend.

If the United States did claim its share of the peace dividend, its allies might have to take more responsibility for crises in their backyard, such as the Bosnian conflict. The Europeans, principally the British and the French, all too conscious of being pilloried in the United States for what is perceived as their lack of leadership in the Yugoslav crisis, have increased their contributions to the UN forces in Yugoslavia to nearly 10,000 troops. Nonetheless, they show no signs of wanting to accept the whole responsibility; instead, they are seeking a U.S. force of from 10 thousand to 15 thousand to assist with the enforcement of the Vance-Owen peace plan.

In addition, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's ideas about diminished national sovereignty have introduced a new rationale for American interventionism. His proposal for a permanent UN force that would include U.S. units, acting under a UN mandate, would create new arenas for U.S. military involvement. Boutros-Ghali's ideas have been used to buttress arguments for the continuation of today's defense expenditures. Powell has written, "I believe peacekeeping and humanitarian operations are a given."[11] Former secretary of state George P. Shultz has also drawn on that rationale in connection with Yugoslavia.[12]

More important, however, early statements by members of the new administration have indicated that they share the inherited Cold War mindset. In his inaugural address, President Clinton stressed that the world is "less stable." Rather than greet a new era, Clinton spoke of the "old animosities and new dangers" resulting from communism's collapse and indicated America's readiness to intervene with force, not only when U.S. vital interests are challenged, but also when the "will and the conscience of the international community are defied."[13]

At his first press conference, Secretary of State Christopher, while calling for a new approach, showed that he, too, embraced many of the tenets of the old thinking.[14] He, too, spoke of a "new and vastly more complicated era." Although he pointed to the increase in religious and ethnic conflicts in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, he made no attempt to relate those conflicts to U.S. interests. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, while chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, piloted through a defense budget that prompted commentators to write that there was little day-light between the Clinton and Bush defense plans.[15] Incoming CIA director R. James Woolsey has commented, "This world that we are beginning to see looks more and more like a more lethal version of the old world that existed

before 1914 when a range of nationalist sentiments produced the holocaust of World War I."[16]

Prospects for meaningful reform appear bleak--indeed, spending on some aspects of national security may even increase. Woolsey's predecessor, Robert Gates, spotted the opportunity to protect the CIA budget, claiming that "demands for prompt, detailed and actionable information from policy makers, the military and Congress have actually increased in the last two years."[17] Echoing that statement, Woolsey has said that the CIA now has "a more complex and difficult agenda."[18] A similar bureaucratic conservatism is flourishing on the military side. Powell has all but repudiated the plans of Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) to reduce redundancies and duplications in the armed forces, arguing strongly, for example, that each of the services needs to retain its own independent air wing.[19] So far, the military seems to be winning the budgetary battle.

The reductions announced by Secretary Aspin on February 3, 1993, will decrease spending by only 4 percent from levels planned by the Bush administration,[20] and the cuts mentioned by Clinton in his State of the Union address on February 17, 1993, will still leave military expenditures in 1998, eight years after the end of the Cold War, at some 90 percent of 1992 levels. The modest reductions, which are to be scattered piecemeal among the services, are additional evidence that the Clinton administration is following the bureaucratic principle of "equal pain" rather than a new security strategy that recognizes that the world has changed.[21]

In a bureaucratically inventive twist, the national security community is asserting that the collapse of the superpower bipolarity has made the world a more complex place and that global threats will now emerge unpredictably. That development, they insist, precludes any significant cuts in the national security budget.

Consequences of Status Quo Thinking

Despite President Bush's remark at Texas A&M that "there can be no single set of guidelines for foreign policy"[22]--a sentiment that any serving diplomat who has sought to bring consistency to the vicissitudes of his country's foreign policy would wholeheartedly endorse--it is manifest that, in the absence of an underlying rationale, the dangers of ill-considered, seat-of-the-pants decisions in response to television pictures of man's inhumanity to man will dramatically increase. The United States will be the functional equivalent of a global policeman, whether or not U.S. leaders choose to use the term.

That raises important questions of resource allocation. A billion dollars for foreign policy means a billion less for domestic investment or a billion more added to the deficit. For sensible financial planning to take place, it is necessary to devise at least a broad framework for determining how, when, why, and in what form U.S. defense forces will be called upon to intervene overseas. To say with a shrug that "it depends on what turns up" is intellectually lazy.[23] Given that the resources concerned total more than $250 billion a year, it also represents an abandonment of public trusteeship.

Neo-Cold War orthodoxy would establish a U.S. police precinct in every country of the world. It would entail a defense tab of nearly $1.3 trillion over the next five years and an additional $150 billion for intelligence collection. It would seem that the impetus to change and, with it, the potential to articulate more rational national security commitments and spending plans have melted like snow under the klieg lights of network television illuminating the Marine landing on the beaches of Somalia.

President Clinton was absolutely right to decry attempts to overhaul foreign policy simply to raid the defense budget to finance "domestic wish lists."[24] Doing so would be to play fast and loose with national security and should have no part in any responsible planning. Foreign policy, especially the maintenance of the conditions requisite for democracy, free trade, and open markets, will continue to involve vital American interests and demand resources.

But none of that means that reform is either dangerous or irresponsible. Boarding parties of national security traditionalists--who are aptly described as a "foreign policy Mafia"[25]--are intent on sinking any idea that might reduce their share of the budget booty. Their tactic of choice is to "capture" national security as a ring-fenced area of public expenditure beyond the understanding of normal mortals[26] and to damn any proposal for reform as having within it the seeds of 1914 or 1939. If President Clinton listens to those people, he will be forced to abandon his goal of making "savings and security compatible."[27]

Cherished Myths of Orthodoxy

Three main themes sounded by the foreign policy establishment to buttress their arguments in favor of the status quo are worth examining:

nothing fundamental has changed; old problems beget new ones;

the world is a more unstable place; and

only America can solve the world's problems.

Nothing Fundamental Has Changed

Many members of the foreign policy community argue that, despite the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States faces a similar array of threats from new sources.

New Enemies Replace Old. Chester A. Crocker, a former assistant secretary of state, for example, writes that "historic changes since 1989 have profoundly destabilized the previously existing order without replacing it with any recognizable or legitimate system. New vacuums are setting off new conflicts. Old problems are being solved, begetting new ones. The result of this process is a global law-and- order deficit that is straining the capacity of existing and emerging security institutions."[28] On the same theme, Woolsey has remarked, "We have slain a large dragon, but we now live in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes and in many ways the dragon was easier to keep track of."[29] Syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer has even discovered a new Comintern, with headquarters in Iran, that will support Islamic fundamentalism and orchestrate a new monolithic threat to U.S. security.[30]

Such arguments are based on a curiously revisionist image of the Cold War. Does anyone who lived through the Cuban missile crisis, witnessed the Soviet tanks roll into Prague and Kabul, saw wounded refugees bleed to death under the Berlin Wall, was briefed on the cat-and-mouse games of American and Soviet nuclear submarines under the polar ice, or, as did Crocker, battled Soviet-backed subversion in Africa remember that era as a time of "existing order"? Furthermore, the notion of equivalence between the threat to the United States presented by the ballistic missiles and massed armor of the Warsaw Pact and the series of problems that has dominated the headlines since the Soviet collapse needs critical examination.

The Emergence of Discretionary Threats. Clearly, the ultimate threat to the United States during the Cold War was total destruction in a global holocaust brought about by the doctrine of "mutually assured destruction." Despite START II, that threat remains alive, albeit in a less virulent form; Russia retains the technical capability to destroy this country. It is ironic that the traditionalists seem to be able to live with that residual threat with relative complacency at the same time they find pre-1914 parallels with conflicts that, for all their local savagery, do not directly threaten American lives or livelihoods. Compared with the nuclear threat--and it is important that its present diminished state not cause amnesia about its original potency--the other threats about which the foreign policy establishment has been warning so breathlessly are relatively minor.

Nuclear proliferation, anti-democratic movements, Islamic fundamentalism, narcotics trafficking, ethnic tumult, economic imbalances, and population and environmental pressures are, indeed, real problems. But they share an interesting common element: not one carries the immediate physical threat of annihilating the United States that was present every day of the Cold War. There is a discretionary quality about the new threats. Unlike a direct Soviet attack on Germany or South Korea, to which the United States would have been obligated to respond immediately, today's problems can be debated at length. We have time to consider the merits and the disadvantages of intervention.

The uncontested and leisurely six-month military build-up between Operations Desert Shield (August 1990) and Desert Storm (January 1991) proves the point. The new threats may be real, but they are of a different quality. That fact should be telling us something important: unlike the threat from the Soviet Union, today's threats do not present a systemic challenge to American interests. Even those, such as former president Richard M. Nixon, who warn of the

dangers of a collapse of democracy in Russia speak in terms of increased ethnic tensions. They do not anticipate any recrudescence of the threat of nuclear Armageddon.[31] The new threats may affect American interests tangentially or by extension and thus may validly command American attention or intervention, but that is very different from the situation that existed during the Cold War. At that time, policymakers and defense planners did not have the luxury of choice. Now they do. It is quite wrong to argue that nothing fundamental has changed.

The World Is More Unstable

The second argument holds that the removal of fear of the nuclear holocaust "has made the world safe for conventional war."[32] Foreign policy experts from the Cold War era have, like Chester Crocker quoted above, forgotten their history if they have come to believe that the Cold War was a period of stability during which both sides played a bloodless and painless version of the "great game" by a mutually agreed-on set of Marquis of Queensbury rules.

Misplaced Nostalgia for the Cold War. In fact, the Cold War was not a bit like that. The Soviet Union really did try to starve West Berlin; subvert Greece and Afghanistan; put missiles into Cuba, Iraq, and Syria. It really did snuff out freedom in Hungary and Czechoslovakia; prop up dictatorships in Cuba, Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique; bankroll the Communist parties of Western Europe and Latin America; and supply military hardware to all and sundry, including state sponsors of anti-American terrorism. And Iraq's surface-to-air missiles that threaten allied aircraft today really are Soviet made. None of that was or is a dream. To contain Soviet power, the West really did live on the nuclear high wire.

As for the supposed absence of conventional war, has the neo-Cold War orthodoxy forgotten Vietnam, Biafra, Chad, the Iran-Iraq war, successive Arab-Israeli wars, the Indo-Pakistani war, Nicaragua, Chile, El Salvador, the abortive communist coup in Indonesia, China's annexation of Tibet, the ethnic massacres in Sri Lanka, and the Turkish invasion of Cyprus?

Let no one rewrite the history of the Cold War as some kind of blissful Soviet-American condominium. That is revisionist history at its most dreamy. The Cold War was a period of sustained global instability. Dr. Strangelove may have been a screen writer's invention, but what he repre sented in terms of Strategic Air Command hair-trigger readiness was real enough.

Different Degrees of Instability. At the global level, things have changed dramatically. The threat of nuclear annihilation has diminished, and in that crucial sense, stability has replaced instability. However, at the sub-global or local level, the world may indeed seem a more unstable place, at least to those who, with their vision colored by what they now remember as the coziness of the U.S.-Soviet relationship, fail to recall the bloody confrontations of the Cold War era. To those who do remember those events, today's disputes in Yugoslavia, Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, South Ossetia, the Trans-Dniester Republic, and other trouble spots of the former communist empire seem strikingly familiar. Only the names are new. Today's disputes are not, as Bush attempted to imply in his West Point speech, novel outgrowths of a new post-Cold War chaos.

None of those conflicts, not even the one in Yugoslavia or the Hindu-Moslem confrontation in India, both of which have the potential to spill across borders, threatens a global crisis, any more than did regional wars, such as the 1974 Greece-Turkey war and the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, during the allegedly stable Cold War period. Strategic rocket forces are not going to move to a higher state of readiness as a result of any current disputes. None of them is a forerunner of the emergence of an expansionist hegemonic power, Jefferson's "force wielded by a single hand," the threat that traditionally has motivated massive American intervention.

Unlike such Continental powers as Napoleonic France or Nazi Germany, Serbia has no territorial ambitions beyond the borders of the former Yugoslavia. It is bad analysis to equate minor, regionally containable problems with threats to world peace. That sort of bloated language may be tolerable in UN resolutions; it should find no place in American thinking. Belgrade is not Munich.[33] The disputes filling today's headlines are local. Eventually, they will find local solutions, albeit after what may be prolonged and painful struggles.

In contrast, at the global level the world is much more stable. What is confusing analysts is that the relaxation of the iron hand of communism has allowed many ancient local animosities to boil over. Parts of the world, whose alleged

stability during the Cold War in fact resembled a pressure cooker on the point of explosion, have blown off their lids.

The world as a whole, however, has not become more dangerous; indeed, it is a much safer place than it used to be. Secretary Aspin is joined by foreign policy traditionalists such as Sens. Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) who, as they rightly draw attention to the continuing existence of a Russian nuclear capability, concede that the danger of a nuclear holocaust is at an "all time low" or "has receded to the vanishing point."[34] The START II agreement confirms that assessment.

Nuclear Proliferation. The number of nuclear powers will inevitably increase. The end of the Cold War may prompt some of Washington's allies, freed of the need to seek American protection from the Soviet Union, to "go it alone"; the collapse of the Soviet Union and the increasing accessibility of weapons technology may facilitate the export or the indigenous manufacture of nuclear devices, thus bringing closer the day when a nuclear weapon may pass into the hands of an unstable dictator. That danger is exacerbated by Moscow's uncertain ability to effectively control the vast arsenal of the former Soviet Union.

The trend is clearly troublesome, and there are no easy solutions. Superficially attractive proposals for coercive policies backed by the threat of U.S. air strikes[35] against emerging nuclear-weapons states fail to address more than a small portion of the problem. They may work in the case of relatively small rogue regimes, such as those of Iraq or Libya, but what if the new proliferators are larger countries, such as Brazil, Nigeria or Indonesia? The present U.S. stance, which in theory condemns and seeks to prevent all proliferation but in practice turns a blind eye to Israel's nuclear activities, needs reevaluation. Perhaps the most urgent need is for the widest possible dissemination of knowledge about the safekeeping and control of nuclear materials and technology.[36]

Despite legitimate concerns about proliferation of nuclear weapons, it is an overreaction to assume that the United States must worry about international instability per se. Most conflicts in the post-Cold War period will be parochial. They may pose problems for neighboring powers, but they will only rarely threaten the security of the United States.

Only America Can Solve the World's Problems

The third error of the neo-Cold War orthodoxy is to assume that mere identification of problems is enough to justify extensive U.S. intervention. Proponents of orthodoxy take as a given that the United States must become involved in universal problem solving because, as they frequently assert, only the United States has the military might to take the necessary actions. As Bush said in his West Point speech, "There is no one else."[37] National Security Adviser W. Anthony Lake came close to taking the same position when he said that the United States should use "its monopoly on power" to intervene in other countries to promote democracy.[38]

The Problem of Free Riding. Defense spending in the United States, as in any other country, is a public policy choice that affects domestic welfare very directly. Defense spending is normally predicated on real or anticipated threats to the salus populi, not on open-ended commitments to step into the breach when others refuse to accept responsibility.

It is blindingly obvious that, if one nation (the United States) is willing to tax its citizens to pay for unpleasant and dangerous actions that benefit other nations (e.g., Japan and the members of the European Community), irrespective of whether they help pay the costs, it is in the economic interest of those other nations to prolong that, for them, happy situation as long as possible. In economic parlance, they are "free riders." As pointed out above, foreign nations are only too happy to see the United States as the "protector of last resort"--and too often that of "first resort." It saves them money, which they can then spend on domestic priorities. President Clinton's statement that "it is time for our friends to bear more of the burden" [39] will cut no ice until America's allies see U.S. soldiers embarking on planes to leave Europe, Japan, Korea, and other parts of the world.

In addition, those who speak of a U.S. monopoly on power betray the mindset of 1950 when the United States produced over 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product. With the U.S. share now under 20 percent, those people fail to understand that, as Clinton has said, "The currency of national strength in this new era will be denominated not only in ships and tanks and planes, but in diplomas and patents and paychecks."[40] In signing the START II treaty, Russian president Boris N. Yeltsin made the same very sensible point: "Russia's might as a great power is determined not by the quantity of its missiles but by the living standards of its citizens and by the

development of culture, education and national traditions."[41]

The Limits of U.S. Power. The assumption that some form of U.S. government (most often military) intervention is the best policy stands in stark contrast to the increasingly popular view that government intervention is not always the solution to domestic problems; sometimes it is the cause. For example, it is extremely doubtful that intervention to expand the already bristling arsenals of the Middle East is the best answer to the advance of Islamic fundamentalism--yet that is precisely the position of some neo-Cold War analysts.[42] Given the fact that Western support for the repressive policies of the former shah of Iran was in part responsible for the anti-Western virulence of today's regime in Tehran, a policy that offers more of the same is courting disaster, all the more so if it risks delivering enormous stocks of state-of-the-art military equipment into the hands of fanatics.

A better alternative might be to put more resources into encouraging interchange between the United States and the Islamic world. The Ford Foundation's support of Chinese studies in the 1960s and 1970s could serve as a model. Ford's efforts produced a generation of students who better understood China--to the great benefit of relations between the United States and China.

An undifferentiated list of the world's problems is not a valid argument for the maintenance of status quo thinking in the foreign policy and national security arenas. A rigorous effort is needed to relate the problems to U.S. interests and resources. Too many analysts are resorting to the discredited domino theory for analysis of current problems. For example, advocates of American involvement in the former Yugoslavia paint a picture of seamless escalation of fighting from Bosnia via Kosovo, Macedonia, and Albania to a general Balkan war involving Greece, Turkey, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania--with the Iranian mujahideen thrown in for good measure.

One scenario even foresees a general Balkan war with the United States and Germany supporting one side and France, Britain, and Russia supporting the other.[43] All too soon, with such nightmarish scenarios, we are back in Sarajevo in 1914.[44] Little effort is made to show that that progression is probable; even less is made to show that American involvement would achieve, rather than thwart, a solution.[45]

Just as there are domestic problems that fall outside the purview of the federal government, so there are overseas problems that are better addressed by local or regional entities than by outsiders, who, however pure their motives, may have neither the long-term knowledge nor sufficient interest to bring an appropriate solution to the problem. Indeed, outsiders may complicate matters. That was the message that the UN and EC mediators in Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance and David Owen, originally sought to project.[46]

Africa provides a good example of the failure of outside intervention. Foreign aid to African nations has lurched from support for large capital projects through commodity stabilization and favorable loans to drastic International Monetary Fund-led deflation. Despite all the billions of dollars that have been poured into that continent, the experiences of Somalia, Sudan, and Liberia demonstrate that outside intervention, however well intentioned, cannot achieve its goals unless those most affected adopt constructive policies.[47]

Problem identification is therefore not enough. A vital next stage--a rigorous demonstration that the problem could be addressed by U.S. intervention and that solving the problem is important to American interests--is also required.

The Intellectual Foundations of the Neo-Cold War Orthodoxy

In his Texas speech President Bush set out to lock his successors into his vision of American foreign policy continuity in the post-Cold War era. "History's lesson is clear," Bush said. "When a war-weary America withdrew from the international stage following World War I, the world spawned militarism, fascism and aggression." He established three criteria--moral, economic, and strategic--to underpin continued American political and military involvement in world affairs:

morally, the failure to respond to massive human catastrophe like that in Somalia would scar the soul of our nation;

economically, a world of escalating instability and hostile nationalism will disrupt global markets, set off trade wars, set us on a path of economic decline;

strategically, abandonment of the worldwide democratic revolution could be disastrous for American security.[48]

In stressing those three principles, Bush was arguing for the foreign policy status quo. Given the fact that President Clinton has spoken in almost identical terms--the imperative of presidential leadership is to reinforce the powerful global movement toward democracy and market economies[49]--it is difficult to see how new thinking on foreign policy will emerge from the Clinton administration.

Morality

The proposition that the United States has a special moral duty to right the wrongs of the world has been a resonant theme throughout the 20th century. In The Cycles of American History, Arthur Schlesinger draws attention to the bipartisan pageant of American statesmen from Woodrow Wilson ("America had the infinite privilege of fulfilling her destiny and saving the world"), through John Foster Dulles ("the broad principles that should govern our international conduct are not obscure. They grow out of the practice by the nations of the simple things Christ taught"), Lyndon Johnson ("history and our achievements have thrust upon us the principal responsibility for protection of freedom on earth"), and Jimmy Carter ("there is only one nation in the world which is capable of true leadership among the community of nations and that is the United States"), to Ronald Reagan ("we are enjoined by scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it [evil] with all our might").[50] In saying that "the second imperative of Presidential leadership is to reinforce the powerful global movement towards democracy and free markets. Our strategic interest and our moral values are both rooted in this goal,"[51] President Clinton is identifying himself as the successor to a long line of presidents who have placed moral values high among their priorities.

At issue here is not the presence of morality in the foreign policy mix but the practical choices to which it leads. Schlesinger provides the vital text from the famous July 4, 1821, address of John Quincy Adams: "Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her [America's] heart, her benedictions and her prayers be." However, true to the traditions of the Republic's Founders who had warned of the dangers of "entangling alliances," Adams added, "But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy."[52] It is precisely that balanced legacy that Bush attacked at West Point, when he said that, although George Washington had been right to warn of dangerous entanglements, "what was entangling in Washington's day is now essential."[53]

It is ironic to witness the emergence of a new alliance between hard-bitten analysts who, mocking the Wilson-Carter tradition, grazed for long years in the lotus fields of Cold War realpolitik and raison d'Çtat and former opponents of the Vietnam War who once scoffed at America's arrogation to itself of a special moral mission. That new alliance has adopted morality (a concept that appears in several guises such as "humanitarianism" and "civilization") as their leitmotif to replace the Cold War certitudes.

Morality per se and unconnected to national interest will provide no more accurate a compass for the new administration than it did for the Republican right wing in the 1992 election campaign. The familiar dilemmas will soon intrude: When are we justified in setting aside our predisposition toward democracy as has been done recently regarding Algeria, Peru, and China? How do we encourage national independence movements in one country but not another-- contrast the different fates of the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey? How do we ration humanitarian intervention among deserving causes--Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, East Timor, Bosnia, Ngorno Karabakh? How do we pressure Hong Kong to accept Vietnamese boat people while turning away Haitians? In-and-out "feel-good" interventions in easy situations such as Somalia, and even Iraq, may present manageable problems, but how is it possible to avoid morally inspired policies that lead to damaging crusades such as those waged in Vietnam and Central America?

The task for the Clinton administration will be to unite morality and practicality. Morality, as a long-standing motivator of American foreign policy, will necessarily point the way to areas in which American values and public opinion will demand activity. That is as it should be. But it will be important not to allow moral principle to be hijacked and abused for unrelated, budget-grabbing purposes by those who during the Cold War prided themselves on their tough-minded realpolitik and let moral considerations take second place. Those now putting on the humanitarian badge must be asked to explain why they have abandoned the position that U.S. combat forces should be committed overseas only if America's "vital interests are at stake."[54] Conversely, those who opposed the U.S. interventions in Vietnam and Nicaragua--whose Contras Reagan once described as "the moral equivalents of the Founding Fathers"--

must explain why intervention for moral reasons is obligatory today. Moral values can be expressed and fortified in many ways, but most post-Cold War interventionists share an unhealthy fondness for military responses. Domestically, we do not teach moral values at the point of a bayonet. There is no reason to believe that we can do so overseas.

Economic Interdependence

There is wide agreement that economics will be at the top of the foreign policy agenda. President Clinton is on record as saying, "My first foreign policy priority will be to restore America's economic vitality."[55] What is less clear is how that priority relates to preserving a national security budget of over $250 billion.

Allegations that global instability is threatening open markets are misplaced. If anything, the opposite is true. As the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union look into the abyss of years of economic mismanagement, they see that foreign investment is vital for their recovery. The consequence is that McDonalds is operating in Moscow and Chevron will one day be pumping oil in Tajikistan. For the most part, markets are opening, not closing.

Even if we accept the dubious proposition that Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are a zone of instability, the direct threat to American economic interests is hard to discern. The countries of that region took a derisory 1.5 percent of U.S. total exports in 1991 and provided an insignificant 0.5 percent of total imports.[56]

In fact, the "threat" (to use an inappropriate clichÇ) to U.S. economic interests comes from two entirely different sources. The first is increased competition from foreign companies, notably those of America's major allies and partners--Western Europe, Japan and her Asian neighbors, Canada, and Mexico. The second is such domestically generated deficiencies as falling educational standards, low savings, and budgetary irresponsibility.

It is not clear how an overinflated national security budget can help ameliorate those problems and improve the competitiveness of American industries. Indeed, overspending on defense is a significant part of the problem. It seems highly anomalous that the European nations, which are so much closer to the alleged zone of instability, are able to spend, per capita, only 62 percent (in the case of France and United Kingdom) or 40 percent (in the case of Germany, Italy, and Spain) of what the United States does. According to present planning, those disparities will increase; as a whole, NATO is planning to reduce its military manpower by 23 percent by 1995. The U.S. reduction, by contrast, will be a below-average 19.6 percent.[57] No wonder European diplomats are pressing the United States to stay engaged militarily in Europe. A decision to leave would wreak havoc with European budgets.

President Clinton has called for America's partners to "bear more of the burden."[58] Europe in particular presents an excellent opportunity for radical burden shifting through a gradual assumption of NATO's responsibilities by its European members.[59] That would allow the United States to place economics at the center of U.S.-European relations. But to do so the president will have to turn his back on the neo-Cold War orthodoxy.

Strategic Support for Democracy

When the history of the 20th century is written, there is little doubt that America will be praised for the role it played. The defeat of two totalitarian systems, fascism and communism, will be recorded as an immense contribution to human freedom. And America will be remembered even more for having helped to put something better in the place of the two defeated systems. The establishment of the institutions of the post-World War II order, particularly the liberal trading system agreed on at Bretton Woods in 1944, and the fostering of democracy in Western Europe and Japan were profoundly creative acts for which later generations are deeply in America's debt. In comparison with those achievements, less honorable episodes such as the Vietnam War and the persistent coddling of authoritarian, albeit friendly, dictators, will recede into the background.

With democracy triumphant as both an idea and a system, today's challenges are very different. Even if the commitment to democracy in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is only skin-deep, even if China continues to cling to an authoritarian political system while liberalizing its economic system, even if religious Islam continues to offer an alternative view of man's relationship to society, none of those systems inherently threatens democracy. Unlike communism or fascism, they do not postulate the overthrow of or opposition to democracy for their continued existence. We come back to the point made above that there is no systemic challenge to American or Western ideas.

In this new context, strategic support for democracy takes on a new meaning. Although it is clearly still in America's interest to encourage the spread of democracy-- democracies tend not to make war on each other and, over the long term, tend to be more stable than alternative forms of political organization--appropriate ways of doing so have changed. No longer are the world's established or aspiring democracies threatened by physical challenges that they would be unable to meet without American assistance. The challenges that they face today come from internal tensions such as distorted distribution of wealth or limited economic opportunities. For example, in Egypt Islamic fundamentalism is gaining ground among the mass of the poor and dispossessed; in Peru an indigenous terrorist movement is taking advantage of a population alienated from the political process; and in India chronic economic underperformance is prompting Hindus to seek scapegoats in the Moslem population.

It is not easy to see what contribution American armed forces might make to the resolution of those tensions. To the contrary, overt U.S. interference in such internal conflicts would most probably make difficult situations much worse by allowing the disadvantaged side to appeal to anti- foreign nationalism. In such situations the use of armed force, threatened or actual, is not a viable option. It is abundantly clear, for example, that, despite the Bush administration's fire-eating attitude toward Iran, a military response would have produced exactly the opposite result of that desired.[60]

The most useful support for democracy that the United States can provide will almost certainly be on the trade front. So far, the Clinton administration seems to be ambivalent about that point. In his speech at American University on February 26, 1993, to an audience that included the Washington diplomatic corps, he endorsed the concept by saying, "The habits of commerce run counter to the habits of war."[61] However, as we have seen, when speaking to domestic audiences such as Boeing Corporation workers just four days earlier, Clinton has been able to sound quite the jingoistic protectionist.[62]

To achieve the goal enunciated in his American University speech, creating a "more open trading system," President Clinton will need to resist siren voices from U.S. industry and from within his administration that, with various catchwords, advocate a retreat from open trade. In particular, he will need to counter the "aggressive unilateralism" [63] of those who, under the guise of "managed trade" or "outcome-denominated trade," threaten to launch a beggarthy-neighbor rewriting of the rules of international commerce.

That strategy would impoverish Third World populations that are already receptive to anti-Western philosophies, thereby undermining the goal of supporting democracy. Unfortunately, the aggressive unilateralist school of thought has its adherents within the heart of President Clinton's economic team. For example, the new head of the Council of Economic Advisers, Laura D'Andrea Tyson, calls herself a "cautious activist" in commercial policy. At the very least, that denotes a shift away from a policy of "free trade to one of sophisticated intervention."[64] A downturn in world prosperity, which would be the probable result of abandoning rules-oriented free trade, is sure to widen the circles of instability as the world's poor and deprived are driven to ever more extreme philosophies to relieve their desperation.

Therefore, the United States can make its greatest contribution to global stability through an intelligent trade policy. As do morality and economics, trade policy has little to do with military strength. Support for democracy cannot be used to justify the continuation of the national security status quo.

Conclusion

Bill Clinton stands at the culmination of three great 20th-century wars. The first two bequeathed unfinished business to the victors who were forced to make further military sacrifices. World War I doomed the European imperial system but, due to errors in peace making, spawned expansionist fascism; World War II disposed of fascism but, through the accident of wartime alliance, allowed the consolidation of the intellectually barren but predatory evil of totalitarian communism. That tragedy led to the prolonged, though ultimately successful, struggle of the Cold War.

The situation today is different, in fact so different from that inherited by Wilson and Truman that it takes quite a leap of imagination to comprehend the enormity of the transformation. For the reasons set out above, unlike his predecessors, Clinton does not face the prospect of a prolonged struggle against a global enemy. If he can appreciate the importance of that change, Clinton should be able to conduct his presidency on the basis of peaceful collaboration

to achieve shared human goals.

Unfortunately, the improved situation overseas is offset by the sharp deterioration in domestic finances. Congressional Budget Office statistics from August 1992 project the cumulative 1991-95 federal deficit at $1.428 trillion.[65] Even if Clinton's plans for both spending decreases and revenue increases are fully implemented, by 1998 the deficit will be on the rise again.[66]

Together, those factors make the need to restore balance in American foreign policy unambiguously clear. The structures erected for the Cold War can and should come down. In their place, new arrangements that allow the United States to protect its interests in a multipolar political and economic environment should be erected.

The end of the Cold War has great secular significance. For the first time in many decades the United States is not confronted by a hostile, hegemonic power intent on its destruction. A new agenda made possible by the changed international situation should be relatively easy to establish.[67] The stage is set for a substantive, not merely a rhetorical, review of America's place in the world. Such a review should take advantage of the transformation in the world security environment to restore equilibrium to American foreign policy.

By judiciously realigning American commitments overseas and sensibly transferring American responsibilities to regional structures, it should be possible to guarantee U.S. core security, maintain an active American engagement in world affairs, and retain the capability for U.S. global power projection, if that were to become necessary.[68] Those objectives can be achieved with a defense budget about half the size of the one currently projected.

Clinton won the presidency at both the best and the worst of times. In the domestic sphere, his freedom of manoeuvre is extraordinarily limited by the combined constraints of the budget deficit, Social Security and other entitlement expenditures, and interest payments. In foreign and defense policy, by contrast, he has been dealt a uniquely strong hand--if only he can recognize it. For the first time in a generation, foreign and defense affairs make it possible, not to extract resources from the economy, but to return them for more productive use. All the president needs is the courage to chart a new course.

Notes

[1] Gwen Ifill, "Clinton Says Bush Failed Leadership Tests Abroad," New York Times, August 14, 1992, p. A15; and Don Oberdorfer, "Christopher Brings Skills as Tactician, Coordinator and Negotiator," Washington Post, December 23, 1992, p. A10.

[2] Serge Schmemann, "Bush and Yeltsin Sign Pact Making Deep Missile Cuts," New York Times, January 4, 1993, p. A1.

[3] Excerpts from the respective speeches appeared in the New York Times, December 16, 1992, p. A25, and January 6, 1993, p. A6.

[4] Speaking on December 15, 1992, former CIA director Robert M. Gates said, "The world now includes many more complicated and often dangerous problems than the world we just left." George Lardner, "Gates Warns of Iraqi Nuclear Aspirations," Washington Post, December 16, 1992, p. A6.

[5] UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has written: "It is undeniable that the centuries old doctrine of absolute and exclusive sovereignty no longer applies. A major intellectual requirement of our time is to rethink the question of sovereignty." Boutros-Ghali, "Empowering the United Nations," Foreign Affairs 71 (Winter 1992-93): 98. The "law of democratic intervention" originated with France's minister for humanitarian action, Bernard Kouchner. "The United Nations: Mr. Human Rights," The Economist, December 26, 1992, pp. 57-60. See also "World Cop?" The Economist, December 19, 1992, pp. 13-14.

[6] See the whimsical and, presumably, tongue-in-cheek article "Looking Back from 2992" in The Economist, December 26, 1992, p 17-19; and "The C Team on Foreign Policy," Washing ton Times, January 12, 1993, p. F3.

[7] Richard Evans, "Reagan: A Smile and a Call to Arms," Financial Times, December 5, 1992, p. 3.

[8] Colin L. Powell, "U.S. Forces: The Challenges Ahead," Foreign Affairs 71 (Winter 1992-93): 37; and Michael R. Gordon "Joint Chiefs Head Challenges Calls to Revise Military," New York Times, December 31, 1992.

[9] Elaine Sciolino, "A Lame Duck Diplomat Wrestles with a World in Flux," New York Times, December 20, 1992, p. E3.

[10] Ronald van der Krol, "Dutch Plan Big Defense Spending Cut," Financial Times, January 13, 1993, p. 2; and Marc Fisher, "Kohl Plans Cut in German Forces," Washington Post, February 7, 1993, p. A26.

[11] Powell.

[12] "Bosnia: A Sense of Fury," Interview with George P. Shultz on "MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour"; quoted in Washington Post, December 13, 1992, p. C7.

[13] "An American Renewal: Transcript of the Address by President Clinton," New York Times, January 21, 1993, p. A15.

[14] "Excerpts from Clinton's Press Conference Introducing his Latest Nominees," New York Times, December 23, 1992, p. A14.

[15] John Lancaster, "Bush, Clinton Differ Little on Mili tary," Washington Post, September 18, 1992, p. A1. It must be noted that the Democratic approach in general and Aspin's in particular was conditioned by the political need to demonstrate that the Democrats were not "soft on defense." Clinton's actions in office may be different.

[16] R. Jeffrey Smith, "Woolsey: A Washington Insider in Every Way," Washington Post, December 23, 1992, p. A10.

[17] Lardner.

[18] Smith.

[19] Michael R. Gordon, "Joint Chiefs Curtail Plans for Reducing Duplication," New York Times, January 29, 1993, p. A1.

[20] Eric Smitt, "Clinton Seeking $14 Billion Cuts by Military," New York Times, February 2, 1993.

[21] Powell.

[22] John M. Goshko, "Bush Warns against Retreat to Isola tionism," Washington Post, December 16, 1992, p. A22.

[23] Richard Cohen, "Summing Up the Bush Doctrine," Washing ton Post, January 7, 1993, p. A31.

[24] Ifill.

[25] William G. Hyland, "Foreign Policy: The Agenda Is Easy," Washington Post, January 24, 1993, p. C9.

[26] Leslie H. Gelb, "The Diversity Trap," New York Times, January 7, 1993, p. A23. Gelb argues against diversity, not on principle for he calls diversity a "good idea" for domestic government. Foreign affairs, however, should remain immune because of the lack of blacks and women who are qualified for that mystic guild.

[27] Ifill.

[28] Chester A. Crocker, "The Global Law and Order Deficit," Washington Post, December 20, 1992, p. C1.

[29] Sciolino.

[30] Charles Krauthammer, "Iran: Orchestrator of Disorder," Washington Post, January 1, 1993, p. A19.

[31] Richard M. Nixon, "Clinton's Greatest Challenge," New York Times, March 5, 1993, p. A29.

[32] Schmemann.

[33] Anthony Lewis, "Beware of Munich," New York Times, January 8, 1993.

[34] Sens. Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar, "Still a Soviet Threat," Washington Post, December 22, 1992, p. A21. Aspin is quoted in John Barry, "Arms Control: The End of the Beginning?" Newsweek, January 11, 1993, p. 19.

[35] Robert S. McNamara, "Nobody Needs Nukes," New York Times, February 23, 1993, p. A21.

[36] Ted Galen Carpenter, "Learning to Live with Nuclear Proliferation," in Market Liberalism: A Paradigm for the 21st Century, ed. David Boaz and Edward H. Crane (Washington: Cato Institute, 1993), pp. 259-75.

[37] Ann Devroy, "4,000 Cadets Say Farewell to the Chief," Washington Post, January 6, 1993, p. A21. In the same speech, Bush also said that "the fact that America can act does not mean that it must." Welcome though those sentiments are, they are difficult to assess as they conflict with other remarks in the same speech (quoted elsewhere) and, most important, with Bush's record of frequent recourse to military intervention.

[38] Steven A. Holmes, "Choice for National Security Adviser Has a Long-Awaited Chance to Lead," New York Times, January 3, 1993, p. 16.

[39] Ifill.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Steven Erlanger, "Concessions on Arms Pact Made by U.S.," New York Times, January 3, 1993, p. 8.

[42] Krauthammer makes this argument. Of course, he flies from the logic of his argument that U.S. policy might be rethought with regard to Iraq, the one regional power that represents a real counterbalance to Iranian ambitions.

[43] Walter Russell Mead, "Put American Troops in Macedonia," New York Times, February 22, 1993, p. A17.

[44] See, for example, Robert E. Hunter, "European Security," in Agenda 1993: Policy Action Papers (Washington: Center for Strategic and Internation