



# Winning the Peace in the 21st Century

A Task Force Report  
of the Strategies for US National Security Program

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# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments . . . . .	4
Foreword . . . . .	5
Executive Summary . . . . .	7
Report Goals and Structure . . . . .	7
Findings and Recommendations. . . . .	8
Task Force Report . . . . .	16
Introduction: The “Bush Doctrine” in Context . . . . .	16
Alternative Grand Strategies for Ensuring US National Security . . . . .	23
Preventive War . . . . .	23
Active Deterrence and Containment . . . . .	25
Cooperative Multilateralism . . . . .	26
Discussion and Critique of Alternative Strategic Viewpoints . . . . .	29
Preventive War . . . . .	29
Active Deterrence and Containment . . . . .	34
Cooperative Multilateralism . . . . .	38
Where Do We Go From Here?—Six Critical Issues Requiring Further Debate. . . . .	41
Preemption and Preventive War . . . . .	42
The Costs of Global Primacy and a US Hegemonic Order . . . . .	44
Nontraditional and Transnational Threats . . . . .	50
The Necessity and Feasibility of Spreading Liberal Democracy . . . . .	53
The Future of Arms Control and Disarmament . . . . .	56
Conventional Weapons Proliferation . . . . .	58
Appendix . . . . .	60
Dissenting Viewpoints . . . . .	60
Additional Viewpoints . . . . .	62
Task Force List . . . . .	67
The Stanley Foundatiion . . . . .	69

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4

Michael Kraig  
Program Officer, The Stanley Foundation

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## Foreword

The end of the Cold War and the events of September 11 make it imperative that the United States develops a new grand strategy. Yet even after the completion of major combat operations in Iraq, the United States does not have a consistent national security strategy or grand strategy that enjoys the support of the American people and our allies and which is clear to our adversaries and potential adversaries. This situation is markedly different from the Cold War period, when the United States had a clear, coherent, and widely supported strategy that focused on containing and deterring Soviet communist expansion.

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*Even after the completion of major combat operations in Iraq, the United States does not have a consistent national security strategy or grand strategy that enjoys the support of the American people and our allies....*

The tragic events of 9/11, the increase in transnational terror threats, and possible threats from regimes that have or are capable of developing weapons of mass destruction now make it imperative to develop a new national security strategy that enjoys the support of the American people. Americans of all political persuasions should recognize the need for a vigorous debate about what that new strategy should be.

To assist in this process, the Stanley Foundation created an independent task force to analyze the strategy or strategies the United States might use to ensure its own national security, while creating a stable, just, and sustainable global system in the 21st century. The task force was made up of 25 foreign policy analysts and practitioners representing all points of view on the political and foreign policy spectrum. Indeed, the chair and the foundation made a conscious effort to ensure that all points of view were represented in the group. (See Appendix for dissenting viewpoints and elaborations from individual members. See Task Force List for members and their institutional affiliations.)

The task force, which began its deliberations in August 2002, held seven half-day sessions from September 20, 2002, through May 22, 2003. The discussions, each of which included presentations by the task force members and selected readings, analyzed the following topics. (See <http://sns.stanleyfoundation.org/taskforce/index.html> for the detailed agendas, reading lists, and primary source documents used in discussions.)

- Session 1, September 20, 2002  
Toward a consensus view of the security environment
- Session 2, November 20, 2002  
An overview of the National Security Strategy of the Bush administration

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- Session 3, January 17, 2003  
The strengths and weaknesses of the National Security Strategy of the Bush administration
  - Session 4, March 20, 2003  
The impact of economic issues on national security
  - Session 5, May 21, 2003  
Counterproliferation and cooperative security: the role of arms control, disarmament, and counterproliferation in the 21st century

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6

- Session 6, May 21, 2003  
Regional security strategies for Asia
- Session 7, May 22, 2003  
Alternative frameworks for US National Security Strategy

The Stanley Foundation organized this task force hoping for an organized and spirited debate about one of the central issues of our time. Over the course of our meetings we had that. While debates were sometimes quite pointed and animated, the chair and task force members took seriously the challenge of listening and learning from one another. The foundation is pleased that because of the good spirit of the participants, the discussions avoided the toxic partisanship that too often infects contemporary debates. With the help of that constructive approach, the discussions—as reflected in this report—were able to identify important insights and make significant recommendations.

The Stanley Foundation expresses its appreciation to all who helped make this endeavor a success.

Jeffrey G. Martin  
Vice President and Director of Programs

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# Executive Summary

## Report Goals and Structure

The Stanley Foundation Independent Task Force on “Strategies for US National Security: Winning the Peace in the 21st Century” assembled a group of 26 foreign policy thinkers and practitioners from all points of view to address three basic questions:

- What should the United States do with its historically unprecedented global power?
- What is the likely future position of the United States in the world 10 to 15 years from now, and how should the United States go about influencing that position?
- How can the United States ensure its own national security while at the same time create a stable, just, and sustainable global system in the 21st century?

To answer these fundamental questions—which encompass everything from finances to the future of defense transformation to the applicability of US values to other parts of the globe—the task force met in a series of seven sessions over nine months. (See <http://sns.stanleyfoundation.org/taskforce/index.html> for the detailed agendas, reading lists, and primary source documents used in discussions.)

During the discussions, most task force members agreed on the broad goals espoused by the Bush National Security Strategy of the United States of America (NSS) and other strategy statements. However, many also expressed sharply conflicting opinions over the means of implementing the goals and innovations in the NSS. In fact, the implication of task force disagreements was that the real question is not *whether* the United States should use its preeminent global position to shape a new global order, but rather *how* it should go about using its power in a way that does not create further instability and future catastrophic attacks against US territory.

Despite these various policy disagreements, several key points of reflection did emerge. These common threads, generally shared by a majority of participants, are summarized directly below as the primary findings and recommendations of the group. However, perhaps more important than the commonalities are the repeated, sharp differences in opinion that

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*The real question is not whether the United States should use its preeminent global position to shape a new global order, but rather how it should go about using its power...*

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divided the group into smaller islands of political thought throughout the discussions. For the purpose of summarizing, ordering, and clarifying these differences, Chairman Larry Korb proposed three broad “grand strategies” or “strategic viewpoints” that brought the contending arguments together under three conceptual areas and focused the group’s final deliberations: the grand strategy of **preventive war**, the grand strategy of **active deterrence and containment**, and the grand strategy of **cooperative multilateralism**. These strategic views of the world—and the various statements of task force members that support or critique these viewpoints—are outlined in detail in later sections of this report.

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8

Finally, the report’s conclusion describes in detail **six critical issues** around which there was a consistent lack of majority opinion and consensus, and which require further intensive debate and reflection:

- The timing and standards for military preemption and preventive war.
- The costs of global primacy and a US hegemonic order.
- The importance of incorporating (and seriously funding) national security initiatives that combat nontraditional and transnational threats through conflict prevention measures such as development aid to struggling societies and states.
- The necessity and feasibility of spreading liberal democracy as a conflict prevention measure that bolsters US security.
- The future of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) arms control and disarmament.
- The importance of conventional weapons proliferation.

The ultimate answer to these questions will have a defining impact on US security in coming years and ideally should be fully confronted in the political debates surrounding the upcoming presidential election in 2004. All of these critical areas of dispute will need to be resolved if the United States is to pursue a truly integrated, coherent, and effective set of international policies over the long term.

## **Findings and Recommendations**

Because of the end of the Cold War and the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States needs to develop a new national security strategy



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*National security depends less and less on territory and natural resources and more and more on the ability to adapt and integrate into the global economy.*

or grand strategy that has the support of the American people and its allies and is clearly understood by its current and potential adversaries. Without such a strategy the United States will find it difficult to prosecute the war on terrorism efficiently and effectively.

The Bush administration, therefore, deserves credit for producing a national security strategy document that is the first clear, coherent, and comprehensive statement of national security strategy since the end of the Cold War. For the most part, the strategy documents produced by the administrations of the elder Bush and Clinton failed to come to grips with the new challenges of the post-Cold War era. In particular, the Bush administration is the first one to recognize that the United States is currently in a position to fundamentally shape the international order. Whether it decides to shape international institutions in such a way that the United States will not be called on to use its powers of military coercion for every new crisis or whether it decides that international institutions are little more than ineffective chains on its ability to exercise its fundamentally benign hegemony, will determine the character of the international system for the foreseeable future.

The one commonality between the current and past US presidents is their focus on the opportunities offered by the spread of free market economies and free political systems. National security depends less and less on territory and natural resources and more and more on the ability to adapt and integrate into the global economy. Economic issues are increasingly linked to security, and US strategy must take into account this mutually reinforcing dynamic in its dealings with other nations and the World Trade Organization. Both Clinton and Bush have made the appropriate decision to spread free market democracy to promote stability and discourage threats. The basic assumption is that repressive regimes and nonperforming economies can indirectly feed into transnational terrorism, while an open economy that is supported by institutions and backed by enforceable rules tends to increase the welfare of most citizens.

Despite these commonalities, however, the new Bush strategy statements (as well as concrete policies) differ markedly from those of past presidents in the *threat and use of military force and economic power*, and also in their focus on the *universal application of US values and norms as the long-term answer to global instabilities*. In these areas, the Bush strategy of preventive war is a revolutionary document that contains at least five major innovations. Unlike past presidential security doctrines, the Bush NSS:

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- Identifies terrorists with a global reach—and regimes which purportedly support them—as existential threats to US security.
  - Embraces military dominance and explicitly outlines as a goal the *dissuasion* of military buildups by would-be regional powers, rather than relying solely on the *deterrence* of regional or global military threats that already exist.
  - Attempts to deter *acquisition* of WMD by threatening preemptive military action against rogue states if a WMD production program goes forward (what one task force participant called “regime-icide” or “regime decapitation and elimination.”)
  - Prescribes indefinite American hegemony and seeks a future “balance of power for peace,” that is, a concert of Great Powers that falls squarely under the moral and military framework provided by US hegemony.
  - Seeks the extension of free market democracy throughout the globe to eradicate the root causes of terrorism by ensuring the realization and indefinite extension of a US-defined global order. Or in other words, the goal is not just to “make the world safe for democracy” but rather to make the world democratic.

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10

This said, there are some major ambiguities inherent in the Bush NSS or “Bush Doctrine” as carried out in practice. While a certain amount of ambiguity is not only inevitable but desirable in a strategy document, words have real consequences in international affairs; the president ought to ensure that the valid criticisms of the contradictions in the strategy he proclaimed in September 2002 are taken into account in the drafting of the next edition of his national security strategy. The president needs to clarify at least three major ambiguities in the strategy of preventive war in order to avoid sending conflicting signals about US intentions: the circumstances in which preventive war and preemptive attacks will be used, the tension between promoting democracy and prosecuting the war on terrorism, and the role of existing alliances versus coalitions of the willing or ad hoc coalitions.

Furthermore, the strategy of preventive war (as stated by the administration) has several advantages and disadvantages in achieving the goal of providing for our national security while creating a stable, just, and sustainable global system in the 21st century. The advantages of a preventive war strategy are:

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- It provides a coherent and vigorous response to an existential threat.
  - It leverages US military and economic power.
  - It ensures that US interests are not subordinated to nations or organizations whose goals may be different from ours.
  - It enables the United States to act unilaterally for global ends.

The disadvantages of adopting a preventive war strategy are:

- It can lead to imperial overstretch or the de facto creation of an American empire that would create an eventual backlash against the United States and its allies by rising strategic competitors.
- It may fail to take into account regional differences.
- It relies almost exclusively on military instruments and ad hoc “coalitions of the willing” to solve international challenges.
- It may not fully address the growing threat of failing states and transnational terror groups.
- It risks creating a new international norm for the use of military force (for instance, preventive war and preemptive attacks may be used by nations such as India in regard to the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan, or by China in regard to the dispute over Taiwan).
- It implies a selective standard for nonproliferation efforts that many other nations are uncomfortable with—namely, by focusing almost solely on “rogue states” in its definition of the WMD threat, rather than viewing the weapons themselves as inherently destabilizing, and by stressing the need for prevention or preemption of rogue state WMD holdings while at the same time sharply de-emphasizing the need for universal arms control and disarmament efforts that would include the nuclear arsenals of the United States and its friends and allies.

If these disadvantages are not taken into account in implementing the national security strategy of preventive war, the United States could lose more in the long run than it gains in the short run as a result of specific military actions.

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*Adopting a preventive war strategy...may not fully address the growing threat of failing states and transnational terror groups.*

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First, while task force members all agreed that traditional strategic problems continue to be relevant in the post-9/11 era, there was still a strong plurality who thought the Bush NSS was profoundly lacking in new ideas or workable answers for the increasingly transnational global environment (and global threats) facing the United States in the 21st century. As forcefully presented by one participant, “[T]he NSS is a piece of total nostalgia.... Indeed it is reminiscent of NSC-68 [the Cold War strategy]. This is not looking at the 21st century at all, where there is much more economic and environmental interdependence than ever before.” In the view of this group of participants, the Bush administration’s NSS should go beyond traditional threats and opportunities by taking into account a broader definition of security that incorporates transnational and intranational (societal) threats as problems in their own right, a phenomenon separate from the direct threats posed by traditional state actors. Transnational and intranational concerns include environmental decline, chronic resource scarcity, health threats and pandemics, and the growing class of dispossessed in the form of “youth bulges” in struggling nations, failed states, and underdeveloped economies. These factors have already combined to create young and ready recruits to terrorist organizations in areas of the globe where the benefits of globalization have been lacking or have been unequally shared among societal groups.

The circle of experts on the task force also questioned the almost exclusive focus of Bush administration policy on “rogue state threats” and the purported connection between states and nonstate actors. In their view, there are some significant dangers inherent in the current dominant policy discourse, which regularly utilizes emotive terms such as *rogue states* or *evil regimes* in a way that undermines clarity of thinking. In one participant’s analysis, “There is a very important distinction between state and nonstate actors. States have nukes in order *not* to use them (this is even true in the case of India and Pakistan), while nonstate actors pursue nuclear weapons in order to *use* them [emphasis added].” In turn, “This focus on extreme language is related to a dangerous obsession on threats from states as opposed to threats from societies. For instance, the recent emphasis on getting rid of Saddam and his regime while not securing the nuclear sites in Iraq from looting after the war was over. This reflects a wrongheaded paradigm in thought.”

Second, the use of ad hoc “coalitions of the willing” was identified as a trend that is likely to continue and will likely be successful in the short term. However, many task force members believed that this practice has definite limits. For the moment, the United States has the wealth and power to persuade others to join it, but cooperation can fade over time.

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*No “one-size-fits-all” strategy can effectively protect the national security interests of the United States in an age of terrorists, tyrants, and WMD.*

This ad hoc approach is most successful in building a quick patchwork of friends and allies on a specific issue during an impending crisis, when the United States is concentrated primarily on military-oriented questions: finding ports, loading points, permission for fly-over rights for surveillance planes and attack aircraft, and short-term financial support for crisis objectives. These sorts of quick agreements may be highly effective for prosecuting a specific military campaign or reacting to a drastic threat (such as North Korean threats to convert fissile material into nuclear bombs), but it does not provide the ingredients for a long-term bilateral or multilateral relationship. Finally, the approach pursued with Pakistan or Qatar in the recent military campaigns works only in the case of weak or highly dependent states that need a great power guarantor for financial, military, or political reasons. It is unlikely to work well when the likely coalition partners are strong, established, and relatively independent—as was seen in the case of Turkey in the run-up to the second war in Iraq. Therefore, the reliance on coalitions of the willing may not be a sustainable central ordering dynamic in the international arena, particularly in regions where states have more of a solid history and identity such as East and Southeast Asia.

Third, making the choice to retain the United States’ military dominance will require major fiscal choices and economic tradeoffs, particularly in a period of escalating budget deficits. This will require much more political and social debate about the very real “guns versus butter” policy tradeoffs that have thus far been decided outside the public limelight or have been skirted altogether in budgetary debates. For instance, many of the costs that used to be paid by other countries hosting US forward-deployed forces are now being paid by the United States. As some task force members noted, the “coalition of the willing” for the second war in Iraq often looked more like a “coalition of the bribed and coerced,” and if this trend continues, the United States may have to pay for coalition support on a mercenary basis in future regional crises.

Fourth, there are real tradeoffs between promulgating broad principles that are clear and concise—but are hard to apply to specific cases in individual regions of the globe—versus relying on more micro-level strategies tailored to specific regional circumstances and “hard cases” such as North Korea and Iran. No “one-size-fits-all” strategy can effectively protect the national security interests of the United States in an age of terrorists, tyrants, and WMD. What works in the Middle East may not be applicable in Asia. Or what works against Iraq may not be appropriate for Iran.

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Fifth, due to the effects of the information revolution and the spread of global media in all regions, the value of carefully crafted international public diplomacy has markedly increased—as has the cost of basing the wording of major strategy documents on the need to win approval primarily from a domestic audience. Grand and sweeping normative statements about military preemption and the universal application of US values, while effective with the US domestic audience, are even more widely read (and taken at face value) outside US borders by foreign leaders and transnational groups. This same language may alienate, anger, unnerve, or even threaten prominent members of foreign audiences whose cooperation may be required to bolster US security, and it may also galvanize enemies into taking defensive actions the United States wants to avoid, such as obtaining WMD.

Sixth, as per the Bush NSS, the task force agreed that preventing the proliferation of WMD and the material to create them should be among the United States' highest priorities. However, such efforts are stymied by continued disagreement over the standard for nonproliferation—namely, are WMD arsenals in the hands of US friends and allies a destabilizing factor that ultimately threatens US security, or do they provide a positive net benefit because WMD is only a problem if proliferation occurs outside the friendly circle of US supporters? Is it possible to easily draw a moral distinction between those states who *should* be allowed to have nuclear weapons and other WMD, and those who *should not*? This question makes international efforts in the arms control arena even more challenging than might otherwise be the case.

Because of these various difficulties—all of which surfaced repeatedly in task force deliberations—the president and Congress should recognize that preventive war is not the only or even the preferred solution to our national security challenges. Deterrence and containment are still viable strategies in many cases and, even with our great power, the United States still needs the help of other nations to win the peace in the international arena in the 21st century. More specifically, the weaknesses or disadvantages of the preventive war strategy can be offset by adopting parts of two alternative approaches, which we label “a realist strategy of active deterrence and containment” and “a liberal internationalist strategy of cooperative multilateralism.” These alternative strategic viewpoints are described and analyzed in greater detail below; but briefly, the realists contend that even the most ruthless tyrants can be contained and deterred; that preemption should be employed only as a last resort not as a strategy or be elevated to a cardinal norm; and that the goal of US national security



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*...efforts should include more committed US policies to secure, control, account for, and destroy the massive stocks of nuclear fissile material in the former Soviet states.*

policy should be to create stability as opposed to spreading democracy. The liberal internationalists add to these points by arguing that even with its immense power the United States needs the help of other nations and the international community to win the war against terrorism and that the United States should, therefore, take the lead in building a global consensus in favor of those norms and institutions that support American values and interests. Moreover, the liberal internationalists define *stability* in much more dynamic and ambitious terms than many analysts calling themselves either realists or neoconservatives. For true stability to take root in large areas of the developing world, liberal internationalists believe that the United States should increase substantially its support for bilateral and multilateral aid programs that seek to alleviate poverty, disease, and lawlessness, because these conditions create an environment in which terrorists can flourish.

In both contending approaches, the ideas of prevention and preemption are not completely eschewed. However, even if one accepts the need for early preemption of threats to US security, *preemption by military means alone* cannot and should not be the only component of a preemptive defense policy. The most effective way to preempt attacks by terrorists is to work with other nations to share intelligence about these groups, dry up their financial assets, and arrest them before they are in a position to cause harm.

Finally, whatever the standard used for identifying WMD proliferation threats, those task force members critical of the Bush Doctrine tended to agree that nonproliferation policies should not be limited to traditional state threats and the purported connections between transnational terror groups and states with WMD aspirations. Rather, US preventive nonproliferation and counterproliferation efforts should include more committed US policies to secure, control, account for, and destroy the massive stocks of nuclear fissile material in the former Soviet states. Programs such as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction effort should be supported and reemphasized.

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# Task Force Report

## Introduction: The “Bush Doctrine” In Context<sup>1</sup>

The task force took as its starting point the congressionally mandated National Security Strategy (NSS), which was released by the Bush administration on September 17, 2002, three days before the first meeting of the task force. A copy of the NSS can be found at the US State Department Web site: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/wh/c7889.htm>.

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16

The National Security Strategy was mandated by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act. Since the mid-1980s, the US Congress has argued quite correctly that it cannot make major resource decisions effectively in the area of national security without a strategic framework. According to that law, the National Security Strategy document is supposed to be issued annually. Because of the change of administrations and the events of September 11, 2001, however, the strategy had not been updated since December 1999.

Some of the ideas in the NSS were initially reflected in the Defense Department’s Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which was released three weeks after 9/11. However, the key concepts of the NSS were not articulated until the State of the Union “axis of evil” speech in January 2002 and in presidential speeches at West Point and Fort Drum in June 2002. In turn, these latter speeches were based on secret directives approved by the president in June 2002: National Security Presidential Directive 17 and Homeland Security Policy Directive 4 (NSPD-17/HSPD-4).

These documents, the NSS and NSPD-17/HSPD-4, which will be referred to throughout this report as “the strategy,” are the most detailed and comprehensive statements of how the administration intends to protect the national security interests of the United States while creating a stable, just, and sustainable global system in the post-9/11 world. In effect, they create a new foreign policy strategy of preventive war that some have referred to as the “Bush Doctrine.” Most analysts at home and abroad construe this doctrine of preventive war to mean that the United States will not hesitate to take anticipatory, or preemptive, action to defend itself, whenever it decides it must; that it will maintain military

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<sup>1</sup> Much of this analysis is drawn from Lawrence J. Korb, *A New National Security Strategy in an Age of Terrorists, Tyrants, and Weapons of Mass Destruction* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2003).



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dominance indefinitely regardless of cost; and that it will actively seek to spread democracy and human rights around the globe. They view this strategy as a radical departure from the strategies of deterrence and containment carried over from the Cold War era by successive administrations. And they view the war against the regime of Saddam Hussein as the first manifestation of this new policy.

Some analysts, such as diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis, as well as several members of this task force, have argued that the Bush Doctrine represents the most profound shift in US grand strategy in the past 50 years and the first coherent statement of national security policy since the end of the Cold War. Others, including the secretary of state and some task force members, have claimed that the items contained in the NSS and in NSPD-17/HSPD-4 are not radically different from existing policy.

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*Some analysts... have argued that the Bush Doctrine represents the most profound shift in US grand strategy in the past 50 years....*

Few members of the task force disagreed with the goals and strategic principles outlined in the strategy. There has, however, been a great deal of debate (in the task force as well as more broadly in the nation and around the world) about how these goals and principles would be implemented in specific cases, particularly when they seem to conflict with one another—for example, promoting democracy while conducting the war against terrorism, which has required cooperating with several dictators. In addition, some people, even within the administration and certainly within the task force, support some aspects of the strategy while disagreeing with others. For example, some support the concept of preemptive military action but are wary of making the extension of democracy an explicit goal of US national security policy. Still others support the promotion of democracy and individual rights but chafe at the perceived overreliance on US military power to achieve these goals. Finally, some members of the task force felt that the NSS failed to place enough emphasis on the dangers arising from such nontraditional and unconventional threats as environmental degradation, uncontrolled human epidemics, lawlessness, and the demographic bulge in underdeveloped countries.

To put the discussions of this task force in proper context, it is important to provide some background on and an analysis of the Bush NSS.

At the dawn of the Cold War, the executive branch initiated the practice of publicly articulating its national security strategy. The most well known of these early articulations was George Kennan's 1947 "X" article in *Foreign Affairs*, which provided the rationale for the containment strategy that became the cornerstone of US foreign policy throughout the Cold

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War. This strategy was codified the following year by the Truman administration's National Security Council Document 68 (NSC-68).

The executive branch's issuance of an annual national security strategy document did not become accepted practice, however, until the Nixon administration released an annual State of the World Report. (During the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the best rationale for US national security policy was actually contained in the secretary of defense's "Annual Report to Congress"). As noted above, Congress made the submission of a national security strategy mandatory as a matter of law when, as part of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act, it required the president to report regularly on this subject to Congress and the American people. This law stipulates that the report be made annually and that a new administration must release its strategy publicly within its first five months in office (a deadline that was not met by either of the two administrations faced with this requirement).

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18

Moreover, the outgoing Clinton administration did not issue a strategy document in its last year in office, and the Bush NSS was not released until September 17, 2002, some 20 months after he came into office. Thus, this NSS was the first public release of a strategy document in nearly three years. Its importance was magnified by the fact that it was the Bush administration's first official strategic policy pronouncement in the aftermath of 9/11 and came five days after the president's speech to the United Nations calling on the world body to enforce its resolutions in Iraq or face the consequences of another catastrophic terrorist attack, possibly with weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

The key concepts of the NSS were articulated in the State of the Union "axis of evil" speech in January 2002 and in presidential speeches at West Point and Fort Drum in June 2002. Some of the ideas in the NSS are also reflected in the Defense Department's QDR, which was released three weeks after 9/11.

The task force decided that a useful way to begin the analysis of the strategy documents was to compare the ideas contained in them to the last NSS, to Bush's own campaign statements, and to the policies that he pursued in office prior to 9/11. In President Clinton's final NSS, released in December 1999, his administration outlined three goals for the country. He said the purpose of the US national security strategy was to promote security, bolster America's economic prosperity, and promote democracy and human rights around the world.

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*Once in office,  
Bush angered  
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out of several  
multilateral  
arrangements....*

President Clinton recognized that military force might be necessary in situations that pose a threat to our national interests, but his NSS laid down a number of conditions that circumscribed its use. The former president argued that military forces should be brought in only if their use advances US interests, if they are likely to accomplish the stated objective, if the costs and risks of their deployment are commensurate with the interests at stake, and if other nonmilitary means are incapable of achieving our goals. And the Clinton NSS emphasized that the United States would act in concert with the international community whenever possible. In other words, multilateral when we can, unilateral only if we must.

The Clinton administration was not opposed to military interventions primarily on humanitarian grounds, as witnessed by the US use of force in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Perhaps haunted by the low-tech slaughter that unfolded in Rwanda, President Clinton's views gradually evolved to the point where he believed that the world community ought to stop genocide and ethnic cleansing—and the United States should assume the leadership role in doing so, if necessary. This perceived newfound willingness to intervene on moral and humanitarian grounds led some commentators to discern a “Clinton Doctrine,” which some task force members argued was in reality not much different than the Bush Doctrine. In their view, the rhetoric between Bush and Clinton may have been different, but the reality was the same when it came to using military force to protect the nation's interests.

In Bush's successful 2000 presidential campaign, he opposed such ad hoc interventions and “nation-building,” instead calling for a more humble US approach to world affairs. Bush branded China and Russia as “strategic competitors” rather than “strategic partners,” and said he intended to focus his foreign policy efforts on preventing the emergence of a rival great power. Once in office, Bush angered many US allies when he opted out of several multilateral arrangements (including the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, the Biological Weapons Convention [BWC], and the International Criminal Court), talked about withdrawing US military forces from the Balkans and the Sinai Peninsula, and refused to follow through on the diplomatic initiatives in North Korea and in the Middle East that he had inherited from the Clinton administration. As his national security advisor noted, the Bush administration was intent on “proceed[ing] from the firm ground of the national interest and not from the interest of an illusory international community.” Bush also adopted a much more confrontational approach toward China, particularly after that nation forced an American EP-3

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reconnaissance plane to land on Hainan Island, held the crew captive for several days, and refused to allow the crew to fly the plane home.

Not surprisingly, given the events of 9/11, the NSS and NSPD-17/HSPD-4 strike quite a different tone from the statements of the previous administration and from Bush's own campaign pronouncements and the policies his administration pursued prior to 9/11. The new documents stated that the objectives of US strategy are to defend, preserve, and extend the peace and that the United States will accomplish these three goals by fighting "terrorists and tyrants," maintaining military dominance, building good relations among the Great Powers, and encouraging free and open societies on every continent.

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From the end of the Cold War until September 11, 2001, most US foreign policymakers assumed that there would be no major disruptions in the international system, that there was no need for the United States to go out of its way to achieve great power cooperation, that there was effectively a strategic pause in great power competition, and that while the country should promote democracy and free markets, doing so was neither a strategic nor a moral imperative, nor did it need to do so on every continent. As one member of the task force noted, the United States did not want to create the perception that it was intent on global messianism or turn the traditional business of foreign policy into a more ambitious humanitarian agenda that some decry as "social work."

Although members of the group expressed some concern about the means of implementing the goals of the NSS, they acknowledged that they continue to resonate with most of the American people, especially in light of the events of 9/11. For the most part, the American people appear to appreciate the president's willingness to state bluntly and openly what has long been the philosophical underpinning of US foreign policy: the United States will use its military dominance proactively to safeguard its interests. Most Americans also seem to agree that people everywhere desire the blessings of political and economic freedom and, while the United States should take care to account for some diversity of approaches, democracy and free markets are generally laudable goals worth promoting.

In contrast, there was quite a bit of controversy within the task force about the specific steps the United States should take to achieve these goals and whether the different components of the strategy come into conflict with one another. In addition, because Bush insisted that the document be short (it ran only 31 pages), most members of the task force

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argued that it does not deal in depth with some issues that are of legitimate national security concern to Congress, the American people, our allies, and our potential competitors.

The task force and most of our outside readings noted that the strategy does contain at least four major innovations that make it markedly different from previous strategic documents. First, the NSS raises global terrorist networks and outlaw regimes to first-order or existential threats to the security of the United States and to the stability of the international political system. Prior to 9/11, there seemed to be a general consensus within the Bush administration that its key priority was to manage relations with the other Great Powers in order to prevent the emergence of new rivalries, particularly with China. Despite warnings from the national security team of the Clinton administration, antagonistic regimes and terrorists were not perceived as threats of the same magnitude. They were viewed more as pawns in a geostrategic game of chess run by the Great Powers.

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*The president and his national security team argue that... military forces must assume a greater role in this dangerous and uncertain era.*

The Bush NSS, on the other hand, argues that the reactive strategies of deterrence and containment, which enabled this country to safeguard its security from the end of World War II through September 10, 2001, are no longer sufficient. The president and his national security team argue that those strategies alone will not succeed against either the shadowy terrorist networks that operate without any readily identifiable addresses or the radical regimes that secretly sponsor them. Accordingly, preemption by military forces must assume a greater role in this dangerous and uncertain era.

Second, the new strategy makes it clear that our military forces must remain dominant for the foreseeable future. In the 1990s the United States structured its armed forces in accordance with a military strategy that required an ability to confront two major regional contingencies simultaneously. The QDR of September 30, 2001, modified this defense strategy marginally by emphasizing that the core of our armed forces was to achieve deterrence in four major theaters, backed by the ability to swiftly defeat two aggressors in the same time frame while preserving the option of marching on the capital of one of the major aggressors and replacing its regime if absolutely necessary. Neither the Department of Defense nor Congress had ever embraced the idea that our armed forces had to be strong enough to dissuade our political adversaries from pursuing a military buildup aimed at surpassing or rivaling the power of the United States.

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Moreover, as several members noted, a policy of military dominance was explicitly disavowed by the previous Bush administration in 1992 when it became publicly known that some members of the Pentagon's civilian leadership were about to recommend such a policy. A draft defense guidance document called for a proactive foreign policy that would shape rather than react to challenges to US hegemony and urged military intervention in Iraq to assure access to Persian Gulf oil. At that time many observers, including the first President Bush and his national security advisor, viewed the strategy as somewhat arrogant and too hawkish, so it was quickly jettisoned. But a number of individuals who now hold high positions on the national security team of the current President Bush (including the vice president and secretary of defense) produced in the fall of 2000 a 90-page blueprint for transforming the US military and the nation's global role. This report, released by the nongovernmental organization Project for the New American Century, argued that the United States should not only attain and maintain military dominance but should also project it with a worldwide network of forward operating bases over and above our already extensive overseas deployments. These individuals believe that maintaining the dominance of our armed forces is necessary to preventing the emergence of any rival power and have concluded that others will not dare embark on futile arms races once they realize the predominance of our military power.

Third, the new strategy emphasizes cooperation among the Great Powers in order to preserve a unified front in the war on terrorism. It advocates that this cooperation be carried out under the aegis of US leadership. Unlike previous national security documents, particularly those promulgated during the Cold War, the new strategy assumes that other Great Powers—China, Russia, India, Japan, and the European Union—prefer, or at least will acquiesce to, management of the international system by a single hegemon like the United States because its impulses are relatively benign and because it stands for certain values that are shared by most states, an assumption that most task force members found dubious.

The new strategy conveys an understanding that there are items—such as armed forces to maintain the peace and funds to provide financial bailouts—that only the United States can provide, due to its unrivaled military and economic capabilities. And it reflects a conviction that the United States does not seek to acquire foreign territories, subjugate other peoples, or alter the international status quo in any way that is hostile to the legitimate aspirations of freedom-loving citizens of the world—and that our most important allies and strategic partners will recognize this to



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be the case. In short, the strategy postulates that the United States does not wish to create an empire and maintains that others will take our words at face value. More important, it makes the critical assumption that the Great Powers are united in their perception of a common threat—the terrorists and the tyrants who support them—for the first time since the end of the Cold War. It maintains that we can set aside our lingering differences with other Great Powers to forge a common front as part of the war on terrorism. This assumption was also strongly disputed by several members of the task force.

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*The security strategy enunciates, for the very first time, a policy that specifically calls for removing the root causes of terrorism and tyranny.*

Fourth, the security strategy enunciates, for the very first time, a policy that specifically calls for removing the root causes of terrorism and tyranny. This strategy document commits the United States to extend free market democracy everywhere, even to pockets of the world such as the Middle East, where many nations—sometimes with our own grudging support or acquiescence—have resisted its spread. In recent months, this strategy has taken concrete shape in the form of calling for regime change in the Palestinian Authority and pursuing it in Iraq, as well as pressing traditional allies such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia to enact democratic reforms. Some members of the group pointed out that the military operation for disarming and rebuilding Iraq will come into conflict, at least in the short term, with some of the other goals the Bush administration has for the region. Others noted that in the long term, disarming and democratizing Iraq could actually further the democratization of the rest of the Middle East, if the administration can successfully establish that country as a model for other states in the region to follow. They support National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice’s argument that the development of freedom in the Middle East is the security challenge and moral mission of our time.

### **Alternative Grand Strategies for Ensuring US Security**

To help clarify the discussions of the task force on how the National Security Strategy will be implemented and how its parts relate to certain unifying themes and ideas, the chair outlined the following three specific grand strategies—based upon his own work at the Council on Foreign Relations.

#### **The Strategy of Preventive War**

Supporters of this view argue that traditional concepts of deterrence and containment will not work against terrorists or tyrants who rule the world’s rogue states. As one advocate of the position noted, in the post-9/11 world, deterrence and containment are dead. Nor will the root causes of

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terrorism be eliminated as long as a free market democracy is not extended throughout the globe. The terrorists swear allegiance to their convictions and seek martyrdom, while some tyrants grow increasingly reckless and misunderstand the depth of America's resolve. Furthermore, international agreements cannot constrain the behavior of these actors. Global terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda have openly disavowed international law and, as we have seen time and time again, outlaw regimes such as Iraq, Iran, and North Korea cannot be counted on to abide by their international commitments. International organizations are often ineffective in resolving today's security threats, and they sometimes frustrate US foreign policy objectives by constraining US power and influence for no good reason. Therefore, the United States must adopt a bold new strategy of preventive war that elevates preemption to a cardinal norm, maintains military dominance, and actively seeks to extend free market democracy throughout the globe.

Members of the task force noted that larger trends have conspired to make the threat posed by radicalism much greater in recent times. Given the rapid dissemination of destructive technologies, sensitive information, and capital flows in today's globalized world, threats from terrorist networks and rogue states can and will materialize more rapidly than in the past. Moreover, any future attacks promise to be much more devastating if and when these actors get their hands on biological, chemical, or nuclear WMD. As the world's leading military and economic power, the United States is the most likely target of these terrorists and tyrants. In the face of and in response to these imminent dangers, the United States has not only the duty but also the legal and moral right to launch preemptive attacks—unilaterally if necessary. To prevent those terrorist threats from emerging, common sense dictates that the government not stand idly by and wait to act until catastrophic attacks are visited upon the American people.

The United States has the unrivaled military and economic capability to repel these challenges to our security but must display the will to do so. To be able to carry out a strategy of preventive war—taking unilateral preemptive military action when necessary—this country must be a hegemonic power. The United States can protect its security and that of the world in the long run only by maintaining military dominance. Only America can effectively respond to the perils posed by terrorists, regional thugs, weapons proliferators, and drug traffickers. It can do the most to resolve problems created by "failed" states before they fester into major crises. And it alone can ensure that the world's sea lanes and skies are



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kept safe and open for free trade. But the array of challenges in its path requires military dominance and cannot be met on the cheap.

The ultimate goal of US foreign policy will be to use this power, alone if necessary, to extend free market democracy around the globe. This is the only way in which the United States can deal with the long-term causes of terrorism. These terrorists come from countries that suffer from political repression, economic corruption and underdevelopment, and a broad lack of respect for the rule of law. And, contrary to what some believe, democracy and capitalism do not spread inexorably on their own. The United States therefore needs to assume a leadership role in spreading and accelerating the growth of free market democracies that have been taking hold in the aftermath of the Cold War.

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*History shows that when one ...state attempts to impose its values, institutions, and military power on other nations...the dominant power may then bankrupt itself in the ensuing competition.*

### **The Strategy of Active Deterrence and Containment**

Supporters of this view argue that when it comes to the role of state actors, the events of 9/11 did not fundamentally alter the nature of the international system. They argue that as a Great Power with global interests, the United States must have sufficient power to protect its vital interests without depending on other nations or international institutions whose goals are often different from ours. However, the United States should not expand those interests beyond what is absolutely necessary to safeguard its security, because doing so could undermine or severely weaken the long-established norms regarding national sovereignty and the rights of all nation-states to defend themselves via establishing a rough balance of power and balance of interests. Moreover, while preemption has and always will be a tactic that can be employed in exceptional circumstances, especially in dealing with terrorists with a global reach, it need not be elevated to a status of a cardinal norm or a doctrine, particularly against established states. Therefore, the United States should continue to embrace the proven strategy of active deterrence, which maintains sufficient military power to dissuade others from using force and responds quickly and decisively, either unilaterally or multilaterally, to threats to vital US interests. At the same time, however, the United States should purposely restrain its foreign policy and security goals and constrain the quantity and technological quality of its military buildup and use of military options to ensure that a “counterbalance” or new group of disaffected states and actors does not emerge to challenge and ultimately weaken the US position in the world. History shows that when one empire or state attempts to impose its values, institutions, and military power on other nations without restraint or regard for their interests, a new challenger to the hegemonic order inevitably emerges and the dominant power may then bankrupt itself in the ensuing competition.

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Moreover, history has demonstrated that even the most ruthless tyrants understand and respect the logic of robust containment and active deterrence. Indeed, Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security advisor, has argued that even if a rogue country ruled by a terrorist and tyrant like Saddam Hussein acquired WMD, its weapons would be unlikely to seriously threaten the United States because any attempt to use them would bring national obliteration. When dictators have undertaken acts of aggression, as Saddam Hussein did in invading Kuwait in 1999, it has been as a direct result of the United States' failure to communicate credibly its intent to retaliate. On those occasions deterrence did not fail us; it was just poorly implemented.

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A host of other problems would plague a strategy of US preventive war. By making preemption a doctrine rather than a tactic, the United States will encourage other states to legitimize their own aggression under the guise of defensive measures. Other states may already have begun to do just this, lowering the threshold for armed conflict and making the world less stable. Finally, by attempting to maintain military superiority and actively working to spread democracy and free markets throughout the world, this country will most likely overextend itself and take on the trappings of empire. Should the United States pursue an ambitious path of benign hegemony, it could lose track of its most important security priorities, suffer battle fatigue at home, and encourage a global backlash. We would then be likely to find ourselves in a situation very similar to the one that occurred in Vietnam some 40 years ago, when successive US presidents committed national blood and treasure to a peripheral cause that was not essential to the overarching strategic goal of containing Soviet communist expansionism.

In the final analysis, the primary purpose of national security policy must be the narrower one of promoting stability, not the broader goal of extending free market democracy. US soldiers are not "social workers" equipped to conduct risky regime changes or undertake idealistic humanitarian interventions such as Haiti, Somalia, or Liberia that are peripheral to our vital national interests. Rather than expend its energies on such futile engagements, this country should focus on the task of eradicating networks of terrorists with global reach, while more vigilantly pursuing policies of robust containment and active deterrence that render outlaw regimes impotent.

### **The Strategy of Cooperative Multilateralism**

Supporters of this view argue that the United States is a nation of laws

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*[A strategy of  
multilateralism]  
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of its security....*

and throughout its history has taken the lead in creating global norms and institutions that reduce threats to international peace and security. Even with its unrivaled power, the United States cannot win the war against terrorists and tyrants unilaterally. As the Defense Science Board noted in a 1999 report, the United States is an 800-pound gorilla with a glass jaw—danger comes not only from WMD but also dual-use conventional high technologies that could be utilized to defeat US high-tech weapons dependent on information technology. Nor will this nation be more secure if it undermines existing international norms by launching preemptive attacks against established states. Therefore, the best way for the United States to protect its security and that of its partners and allies, in the long run, even after 9/11, is to adopt a strategy of multilateralism that seeks to build a global consensus in favor of those norms and institutions that support American values and interests.

This strategy recognizes the contribution that military power makes to US security while acknowledging its limitations and maintains that this country's interests and values can best be pursued and sustained in the long term by working multilaterally with our allies and partners through international institutions. It does *not* mean to suggest that others have a veto over America's pursuit of its security, nor does it hold naively that the national interests of others can always be set aside to achieve consensus in favor of US interests and values. But when it is possible, we should listen to our allies and partners so that when the time comes for collective action we will not have alienated our friends or even inadvertently created new enemies. Our motto should be multilateral where we can and unilateral where we must, not vice versa.

Under a strategy of liberal internationalism, the central idea is that all nation-states seeking to lend certainty, predictability, and stability to their security situations will find greater relative security through mutual obligations to limit their military capabilities rather than through unilateral or allied attempts to gain dominance. *Security* is increasingly defined as a "collective good that cannot be divided," due largely to the globalization of social and economic trends, the diffusion of new technologies with dual-use applications, and the specter of mass destruction raised by mutual use of WMD in conflicts. This outlook assumes that enemies or potential enemies will accept the same legal and technical constraints on behavior as friends, despite the existence of substantial mutual suspicions and mistrust. It also assumes that these legal and technical constraints will be mutually advantageous and mutually verifiable.

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In sum: security is guaranteed not through dominance but through the outlawing of policy options that have the goal of achieving dominance over the opponent. Liberal internationalists believe that security is best pursued *with* other states rather than against them, even in those cases where the states in question may have starkly different value systems and ideological goals.

Such a strategy emphasizes new synergies in global law enforcement, intelligence-sharing, and efforts to thwart money laundering to fight terrorists more effectively. It advocates the use of US power to strengthen those norms and institutions designed to prevent the proliferation of WMD, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the biological and chemical weapons conventions, and the Missile Technology Control Regime. It also recommends large increases in funding for programs, such as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, that aim to reduce the spread of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons materials and human expertise in the former Soviet Union. At the same time, this strategy strives to adapt existing cooperative security arrangements, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to deal with the new threat environment, while exploring new security-enhancing mechanisms with our friends in Asia. It attempts to integrate former adversaries such as Russia and China and emerging powers like India into an international system that supports US values, and it emphasizes preventive diplomacy to quell conflicts before they erupt into major crises. Finally, this approach commits the United States to a leadership role in organizations that deal with economic, environmental, social, and health problems—problems that create a climate in which radicalism can flourish.

Although the use of force is certainly justified in self-defense, as is explicitly recognized in the UN Charter, it should be employed only when the threat is imminent and leaves no viable alternatives. In other words, striking first should be a tool of last resort, not a first option. Making unilateral preemption and military superiority the linchpins of US national security policy will undermine international norms that favor nonaggression and weaken our own security in the long run by encouraging copycat behavior. Finally, many threats to the United States just cannot be resolved by unilateral force. It therefore makes little sense to try to maintain military superiority indefinitely if doing so requires neglecting the nonmilitary components of our foreign policy and diverting funds from social and economic programs that keep this nation strong.

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## Discussion and Critique of Alternative Strategic Viewpoints

As might be expected, there was spirited discussion about which of the three proposed strategies seems most appropriate to achieve the goal of providing for our national security while creating a stable, just, and sustainable global system in the 21st century.

### Preventive War

The following points were made in support of the strategy of preventive war.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the World Trade Center may be viewed as the bookends of a transition period that spanned from the end of the Cold War through the beginning of our general struggle against new forms of radicalism. During that transition period, there were serious disagreements about the nature of the international system in the post-Cold War world.

During that time, some had actually argued that there was a strategic pause and that the end of the Cold War meant the “end of history”—that is, the triumph of liberal, democratic values that would be embraced globally even without major US promotion. Others trumpeted the “obsolescence of war” and the dawning of a “new world order” when the Soviet empire peacefully expired; still others were less optimistic, forecasting a “clash of civilizations” as different cultures and societies butted heads. Then a series of ethnic conflicts in “failed” states in the early and mid-1990s convinced some that this lethal combination of ethnic hatred and poor or nominal governance presaged a “coming anarchy.” Toward the end of the 1990s, the forces of globalization convinced some analysts that the endless cycles of security competition among nation-states had been permanently replaced. They argued that at a time when barriers to trade and capital flows were falling, global markets knitted together by information technology were now more relevant than nation-states and traditional military power. The government’s main challenge was to promote tariff cuts and regulations that supported free trade at home and abroad. As was famously repeated, nations with McDonald’s do not go to war with each other.

September 11 changed all that. Americans now should realize that this great nation is vulnerable. For the first time in our history, an enemy has overcome our formidable geographic advantage to wreak large-scale destruction on the US mainland. The threats we face today come less from powerful states than from weak or small ones; less from large, sophisticated militaries than from shadowy bands of terrorists

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capable of wreaking havoc on this nation, our allies, and the world financial system.

The attacks of 9/11 may end up costing the United States about \$1 trillion. There is no longer any doubt that at the current time and for the foreseeable future, we face an existential threat to our security. This threat is as great as any we have ever encountered throughout our history, even during World War II and the Cold War. Indeed, 9/11 marked the beginning of a fourth world war, declared on the United States and one we cannot afford to lose.

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30 This new, threatening environment requires an equally novel, bold, and strategic vision that captures today's realities and capitalizes on our unique capabilities to protect this great nation. We must proactively use our current position of unparalleled strength and influence—what some have labeled the “unipolar moment”—to create an international system that protects our interests and values. American primacy may not last forever, so the time is now to use our power to create a safer, better world. We can do this most effectively if we adopt a strategy of preventive war that makes the unilateral use of force, including preemption, the bedrock of the US national security strategy.

No other nation or international body combines hard military and economic power with the will to deal with the grave threats posed by terrorists and tyrants. Their next attack on our nation, our interests, or our allies is very likely to involve nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. If the 9/11 attacks can be compared to Pearl Harbor, the appropriate analogy for the destruction visited by the next attack may be Hiroshima. If we wait for these threats to materialize fully, we will have waited too long. We owe it to the American people not to resort to the wishful thinking that these terrorists and tyrants will be deterred by traditional means. They were not deterred on September 11 and are not likely to be deterred in the future.

Nor can we expect international organizations or our allies to adequately protect our interests and values. Historically, when this country has hesitated in rising up to meet incipient security challenges, it has found that the dangers do not go away but grow. Throughout the last century, this proved to be the case, beginning with World Wars I and II and stretching through the ethnic conflicts of the 1990s. And when others have failed to suppress violence and instability, it has been the United States that has had to enter the fray to restore peace and stability. Now, when radicalism



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begins to intersect with destructive technologies, we can no longer afford to let the dangers gather on our doorstep.

Finally, given the nature of the threat we face, this strategy is legal under any common-sense definition of international law, and it is moral as well—even according to the standards of “just war” theory. Nor is it entirely a new strategy; over the course of our history, many presidents, including Reagan and Clinton, have resorted to or threatened preemption to safeguard our national security.

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*To sustain a strategy of preventive war...our national security [would have to] be rooted in the preeminence of our military power and in our willingness to use that power....*

To sustain a strategy of preventive war, we must remain the world’s only superpower. We must therefore maintain our military dominance, regardless of the cost. At present, we have developed conventional and nuclear military strengths that are beyond challenge. And at a cost of only 3 percent of our gross domestic product (GDP), we will be able to keep them that way for the foreseeable future.

To put it bluntly, our national security must be rooted in the preeminence of our military power and in our willingness to use that power to protect US security. This country should not allow itself to be tied down by international agreements or institutions. At a time when the danger is great, we cannot accept the fate of Gulliver in the land of the Lilliputians. Despite what they may say publicly, our hegemony is acceptable to most of the international community, even the Great Powers, because it is linked to universal values. As President Bush pointed out in the State of the Union address in January 2003, these values are a gift from God to humanity, not from the American people to the rest of the world.

Once we succeed in restoring the peace, we must go further to secure and extend it for future generations of Americans. If we content ourselves merely with defeating the terrorists and tyrants but do little to replace their radical visions of society with something better, we will have squandered our unipolar moment. In short, we will never remove the root causes of terrorism and tyranny unless we make a generational commitment to work actively to spread free market democracy throughout the globe. To paraphrase President Woodrow Wilson, the United States must not only make the world safe for democracy if we intend to prevent another September 11, it must make it democratic.

Peace-loving peoples everywhere cherish the benefits of political and economic freedom. Through the battles against Hitlerism, fascism, militarism, and communism of the last century, our way of life proved to be the most

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successful. Even if this great country occasionally fails to live up to its ideals, our system of democracy and economic choice is the best one to serve the demands of human dignity. America's freedoms are universal ones, shared and revered by peoples worldwide. And only this system of governance can extend the peace that Americans of all generations have worked so hard to create.

All three of these components—the use of military force, alone and preemptively if need be; military dominance; and democracy promotion—work seamlessly together. As in the case of building a three-legged stool, one cannot construct a sustainable policy based on only one or two of these components and expect the preventive action strategy to hold together. Maintaining this country's military dominance is a necessary condition for a strategy that emphasizes the use of force in defense of our national security. And the first two legs of this option will collapse under their own weight without a complementary strategy that seeks to enlarge the circle of free market democracies.

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**Supporters of the Preventive War Approach.** Some argued that this grand strategy has at least four distinct advantages over the other approaches. First, it offers this country a proactive, coherent, and interconnected strategy that most vigorously responds to the existential threats to the United States posed by terrorist networks with a global reach and the “axis of evil” states. Second, this strategy takes advantage of the United States' unrivaled military and economic power to act decisively at a time when this country is most vulnerable. Third, it enables the United States to play a dominant role in the international system and ensures that our interests and values are not subordinated to those of other organizations or alliances that might have a different agenda than ours (because they seek to constrain our power and influence or because they are not as likely to be the targets of terrorists and tyrants). Fourth, it enables the United States to act unilaterally but for global ends. If, acting alone, this country cripples global terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda and removes a tyrant who threatens an entire region (such as Saddam Hussein), it is, in essence, promoting global interests. And while some nations might publicly complain about unilateral preemption, in reality they will be glad that these threats have been effectively dealt with by someone else without their having to sacrifice too much of their own blood and treasure.

**Critics of the Preventive War Approach.** Critics made the following seven points. First, it runs a real risk of “imperial overstretch”—that is, exhausting our scarce economic resources by taking on too many simultaneous



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international commitments, which may create battle fatigue among the American people who are not equipped to bear the financial and psychological costs of what some have called “empire lite.” Second, it is essentially a one-size-fits-all policy that fails to take regional differences into account. While the Bush Doctrine of preventive war may be relevant for the Middle East, for instance, it is not applicable to Asia where the predominant reality is viable, independent states with relatively strong economies and domestic institutions—that will be less willing to follow the US lead during heated crises, especially if their domestic populations are unsupportive.

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*A strategy of prevention allows other nations to justify aggressive wars under the pretext of preventive war.*

Third, it relies too much on the military component of foreign policy, which could necessitate large increases in defense spending at a time when the federal budget deficit for the next decade is projected to be \$7.1 trillion and there are large competing claims, both at home and abroad, on discretionary funds in the federal budget. As one task force member pointed out, the America of today is not that of the 19th or early 20th centuries; now, middle-class citizens (not just poorer segments of society) expect a high level of quality education, roads, healthcare, and other social and infrastructure goods, and it is not clear that the Bush administration has enunciated clearly the very real tradeoffs involved in pursuing a security strategy of indefinite military primacy. One task force member asked whether the external strategy of primacy and hegemony mandated an internal, domestic ideology of republicanism, while another charged the administration with pursuing a switch of funds from domestic priorities to national security that amounted to “economics by stealth” in which domestic, social budget cuts are made to fund new global security priorities without adequate debate or understanding among the larger American populace.

Fourth, the preventive war strategy ignores the economic and social components of power that traditionally have helped the United States achieve its national security objectives. Fifth, pursuing regime change as part of a policy of extending democracy could undermine the US ability to wage a successful war against terrorism because it requires the assistance of many authoritarian regimes (at least in the short run). Sixth, a strategy of prevention allows other nations to justify aggressive wars under the pretext of preventive war. Finally, it risks creating a backlash among US strategic competitors, like China, Russia, and India—and even European allies—who view the US pursuit of military dominance as the beginning of an American empire and who could seek to balance American power either separately or together as the Germans, French, and Russians

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did in stopping a UN resolution approving the US invasion of Iraq. Other major powers may also refuse to cooperate fully with the United States in dealing with such nontraditional threats as environmental decline, spreading epidemics, and transnational crime.

### **Active Deterrence and Containment**

A “realist” or “realpolitik” policy of deterrence and containment found support for the following points in our sessions. While the United States certainly has the legal and moral right to wage a preventive war against terrorists who are planning to attack the nation, its allies, or its interests, anticipatory self-defense should not be elevated to the status of a doctrine. To be successful and legitimate, a preemptive military attack must be based on near-perfect intelligence. The post-war analysis of the intelligence that the British and the Americans relied upon to justify the invasion of Iraq demonstrates how difficult it is to get good intelligence. Moreover, military action against terrorists is only one component of a preemption strategy. The best way to preempt attacks by terrorists is to work with other nations to share intelligence about these groups, dry up their financial assets, and arrest them before they are in a position to cause harm. In fact, in working with law enforcement and intelligence officials around the globe since 9/11, the United States and its partners in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Spain, and Jordan already preempted dozens of attacks by arresting more than 3,000 suspected terrorists and freezing more than \$100 million of terrorist groups’ financial assets. In August 2003 cooperation among Russian, British, and US intelligence and law enforcement agencies resulted in the arrest of a British arms trafficker who sought to procure 50 surface-to-air missiles for terrorists to use to shoot down US commercial planes.

The supporters of the preventive war option are right to a limited extent—that preemption is not a new tactic for this country. The Clinton administration established an Office of Counterproliferation in the Pentagon and actually contemplated a preemptive attack against North Korea’s nuclear reactors in 1994 if a credible compromise could not be reached. President Reagan’s invasion of Grenada in 1983 was intended in part to prevent the Soviets from gaining a foothold on the island. Similarly, President Johnson invaded the Dominican Republic in 1966 to keep that country from becoming another Soviet outpost in this hemisphere. Finally, and most memorably, President Kennedy contemplated a preemptive attack in the 1960s against China to prevent that nation from deploying nuclear weapons. In each of these cases, however, preemption was seen as a specific tactic to implement the policies of containment and

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deterrence, not as a new doctrine. Nor was it applied universally. For example, Reagan preempted in Grenada but not in Cuba, even though Cuba was a greater threat to US interests in this hemisphere.

While it is one thing to favor preemption of international terrorist networks, it is quite another to suggest preemptive action against established nation-states, even so-called rogue states. September 11 did not change the nature of international politics and state sovereignty. The notion of sovereignty established in 1648 at Westphalia is still relevant. While terrorists in search of the perceived glories of martyrdom are not susceptible to the logic of deterrence, the dictators in charge of rogue regimes are a completely different story. History clearly supports the view that even the most tyrannical rulers are rational actors who wish to remain in power. These leaders know that, were they to use WMD for themselves or provide such weapons to terrorists, the response by this nation would be overwhelming.

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*While it is one thing to favor preemption of international terrorist networks, it is quite another to suggest preemptive action against established nation-states....*

These dictators can effectively be contained by military and economic pressure applied by the United States. And even if containment were to break down, they would not be able to blackmail or intimidate their neighbors or our allies. They would undoubtedly understand that should they ever use WMD, the United States would certainly respond swiftly with overwhelming retaliatory force to ensure their destruction. In fact, the most likely scenario in which a dictator would use WMD against the US homeland, troops, allies, or interests is if that dictator perceived an imminent preemptive military action by the United States.

In the view of the realists, the other two components of the NSS are equally problematic. While maintaining military dominance and extending free market democracy are laudable goals, they should not take precedence over or come at the expense of other, more important national priorities, which at the present time must be dealing with terrorists with a global reach.

The proposed defense strategy outlined in the QDR of September 20, 2001, requires adequate military power for its successful implementation. If that makes the United States militarily dominant, then it is a useful and necessary means to the required end. But military dominance should not be a goal in and of itself. Public statements to this effect unnecessarily make potential enemies like China afraid that the United States has become a revisionist power and send mixed messages to our allies that we might prefer to go it alone. Such a policy may also force this country to spend more than is necessary on defense and siphon money away from

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other important foreign policy activities that help to make the world safer from the forces of radicalism. In addition, there is the residual danger that if escalating defense budgets prevent the government from dealing with problems at home, the American public could grow restless and wary of the level of defense spending required for military readiness. Better to keep our international footprints to a minimum so as not to breed unnecessary ill will and resentment at home and abroad. The United States should reserve the right to act with due force and vigor, but only when absolutely necessary.

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36

Finally, the United States should be cautious about entering the business of democracy promotion, as it will sometimes come at the expense of our most important national security interests. Throughout the Cold War, we spoke out eloquently about the importance of freedom and human rights, but we never endangered our nation's security by seeking to extend democracy to a country through power or force. In the 1950s and 1960s, when the Eastern European countries revolted against Soviet imperialism, we did not send in US troops to aid their cause because this would have produced a war with the Soviet Union in Europe that may have escalated to the use of nuclear weapons. When the Soviet Union put down the rebellions in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia with military force, we did condemn it loudly—but stopped short of risky military involvements. Had Mullah Omar handed over Osama bin Laden and had Saddam not violated the UN resolutions, we would have allowed these despicable despots to remain in power.

In the short term, the war on terrorism comes into direct conflict with the Bush administration's pursuit of a human rights agenda. After 9/11, we had to turn a blind eye to the lack of democracy in Pakistan and the former Soviet republics in Central Asia, not to mention the tactics of the Russian and Chinese governments in dealing with minorities in their countries. We were right to do this because we needed the help of these states in destroying Al Qaeda and the Taliban. In the Middle East, the war on terrorism—not to mention our strategic interest in ensuring the free flow of oil—requires us to back a number of authoritarian regimes. While this is unfortunate, successful and realistic statecraft often requires us to evaluate the costs and benefits of policy trade-offs and prioritize our objectives accordingly. The United States must first respond to the existential threat posed by the terrorists with a global reach and worry about all else after this challenge has been met and surmounted. We cannot dissipate our energies by trying to eliminate all terrorism and all evil and making the world safe for democracy.

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*The path to peace and stability... lies in keeping our national priorities straight by pursuing the war on terrorism with the same... clarity of purpose that proved so successful during the Cold War.*

These sorts of compromises with our democratic principles are not new. During World War II, we formed an alliance with Josef Stalin's Soviet Union to fight the Axis powers. Similarly, during the Cold War, we had to cooperate with Communist China and rogue military governments in Taiwan, South Korea, Greece, Turkey, Chile, and Argentina in order to contain Soviet expansionism. In hindsight, we were probably too willing to be uncomfortable bedfellows with repressive regimes during the Cold War, but ultimately, our single-minded approach to fighting the Soviets helped ensure that this struggle ended in a complete victory for the United States without a single shot being fired. Today, the path to peace and stability similarly lies in keeping our national priorities straight by pursuing the war on terrorism with the same single-minded focus and clarity of purpose that proved so successful during the Cold War.

37

**Supporters of Active Deterrence and Containment.** Those who favor this realpolitik approach claim it has at least five advantages. First, realism keeps the focus where it should be: fighting the global terrorist networks that pose a threat to our way of life and very existence. Second, it maintains the traditional, tried-and-true approach of dealing with aggressive nation-states in the international system through containment and deterrence. Third, it avoids the dangers and downsides of "imperial overstretch" and American empire-building. Fourth, it deals with the world as it is rather than as we would like it to be. Fifth, it will likely be supported by our allies and even our strategic competitors, a number of whom think in like terms and so will understand and respect this approach rather than be motivated to try to balance US power.

**Critics of Active Deterrence and Containment.** Those critical of the realist perspective made the following five points. First, it risks another 9/11 with even more dire consequences if this strategy's proponents underestimate the nature of the threat and wait until it is too late to respond. Second, it increases the probability that tyrants who rule rogue states will acquire nuclear weapons, which they may use, provide to terrorists, or employ as tools of blackmail and coercion. Third, it may project an image of weakness or lack of resolve to foes that misapprehend the nature of this strategy. Fourth, it fails to deal with the root causes of terrorism by allowing authoritarian regimes with inept economic and backward social policies to remain in power. Fifth, it sacrifices promotion of freedom and individual rights abroad to fighting the war on terrorism.

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## The Strategy of Cooperative Multilateralism

In our discussions the following arguments were made in support of the liberal internationalist strategy of multilateralism. Like the proponents of the other two approaches, advocates of the multilateral approach agreed that the task at hand is to defeat the terrorists and tyrants who threaten this nation's security. They also generally concurred with advocates of preventive war that this requires translating the United States' dominance into a peace that is lasting and durable—one that is roughly fashioned around our blueprint for national success: individual liberty, democracy, and free enterprise. The disagreement lies in the means to arrive at this shared goal.

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38

To be sure, liberal internationalists agree that the recent intersection of radicalism with destructive technologies will sometimes require the United States to use its military might decisively to protect the American people and to make the world safer. Yet there are limitations on what force can accomplish—particularly when it is used unilaterally, without the support of our allies and partners. This country is best able to promote its interests and values when it consults with friends and with the institutions it itself took the lead role in creating. Although divergent national interests may make compromise difficult, the United States should use its immense power and influence to persuade—rather than coerce—other countries to sign on to its agenda. Only by respecting the values, judgments, and interests of our friends and partners can the United States alleviate the concerns of those countries and organizations that fear and resent our unparalleled power.

In most cases, this means that the so-called preventive war approach is neither the ideal nor the preferred way to transform our immense power into a global consensus in favor of our values and interests. Loose talk of “anticipatory self-defense” breeds fear and resentment among allies, partners, and institutions that we need behind us to wage the war on terrorism successfully. A March 2003 survey by the Pew Foundation of 38,000 people in 44 countries showed that there is widespread resentment of America's global influence as well as growing resistance to the perceived excesses of US policies. And if applied too broadly, this strategy is incompatible with how we order our domestic life, not to mention the binding norms of international law. If we win the military battle but lose the war over ideas, then the larger goal of producing a durable peace may be lost.

Article 51 of the UN Charter—a treaty that a US president and the Senate pledged to uphold—explicitly supports the inherent right to use



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*A multilateral policy would seek to use US power and influence to integrate other countries and institutions into arrangements consistent with US interests and values.*

force in self-defense. This provision is generally interpreted as activating the right to self-defense when the threat of “armed aggression” is imminent. But the references to preemption in this administration’s new strategy appear to carve out a much broader exception to the general prohibition on the use of force. For advocates of the multilateralist approach, it suggests a newfound willingness to put American blood, treasure, and prestige on the line without first exhausting all available diplomatic alternatives. Advocates of this liberal internationalist approach prefer that the United States coordinate military enforcement actions through the United Nations, much as we did in 1990-1991 during the run-up to the Persian Gulf War and more recently tried to do in achieving the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1441. This resolution allowed the most comprehensive arms inspections regime to date back into Iraq and furnished whatever legitimacy the United States may have had for the coalition it led into Iraq after that nation failed to cooperate fully with the inspectors, as Resolution 1441 demanded.

As exemplified by these episodes, a multilateral policy would seek to use US power and influence to integrate other countries and institutions into arrangements consistent with US interests and values. This strategy insists that the United States is committed to working with its allies and partners in international institutions such as the United Nations, NATO, the Organization of American States, and other alliances as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency.

This strategy also reaffirms a US leadership role in organizations that encourage economic openness and rule-based dispute settlement, notably the World Trade Organization, and that help developing countries respond to economic emergencies and pursue sustainable development, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It appreciates the positive role that arms control agreements—such as the NPT and the BWC that limit nuclear, chemical, biological, and conventional weapons—can play in promoting our vital national interests. And it recognizes that the best way to ensure the smooth political and economic transformation of former adversaries like China and Russia, and emerging great powers like India, is to enmesh them in organizations that support democratic principles. Rather than having the United States go off in search of empire, this approach emphasizes a combination of preventive diplomacy with collaborative efforts to promote universal norms that reflect the values and ideals that Americans hold dear.

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If the United States strengthens its alliances and adapts international rules to new realities, it will not need to maintain a costly military dominance. It can reduce its defense budget, which is already bigger in 2003 than the military budgets of the next 20 largest spenders combined, and consider reducing its global military presence. The funds that are freed up can be applied toward the nonmilitary component of the annual foreign affairs budget, including bilateral and multilateral foreign lending and assistance, as well as increased funding for the Nunn-Lugar program, which helps to control the spread of fissile materials. These previously unavailable monies can help alleviate those conditions in countries that spawn radicalism, such as disease, poverty, and lawlessness, thereby making a significant long-term contribution to our national security.

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In the final analysis, the neoconservatives are right that extolling the virtues of democracy and free markets worldwide should be the main long-term focus of our national security policy. Free market democracies are less likely to war against one another or spawn terrorism. But the appeal of American institutions loses some of its luster if this country is perceived as imposing its will on others rather than operating by building consensus. In the long run, a multilateral strategy promoting a cooperative world order will be most effective in transforming American primacy, or a unipolar moment into a lasting peace.

**Supporters of Cooperative Multilateralism.** Those who favor the multilateral approach pointed out that it has the following advantages. First, it makes cooperation more likely in the war on terrorism and other international challenges that cannot be met alone, such as the proliferation of WMD, transnational crime, narcotics trafficking, global financial instability, infectious diseases, poverty, lawlessness, water shortages, environmental degradation, and rebuilding shattered societies like Afghanistan and Iraq. Second, it increases the likelihood that the United States will not have to act alone in enforcement actions that are also in defense of its own national interests. Third, it reduces the risk that America's unsurpassed military and economic power and cultural sway will produce resentment that results in countervailing coalitions among nation-states and new recruits for terrorists. Fourth, it ensures that the United States stays true to the same values in the international arena that generations have worked to preserve and protect at home. Fifth, it provides a more persuasive model for strategic competitors and rogue regimes to follow in respecting international norms; it effectively converts US power into authority. Sixth, it allows the Department of Defense to reduce its budget and perhaps its global presence, making available resources for other foreign affairs priorities as well as domestic needs.



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*How can the United States ensure its own national security while at the same time create a stable, just, and sustainable global system in the 21st century?*

**Critics of Cooperative Multilateralism.** Those skeptical of the cooperative approach noted that it has at least four weaknesses. First, it may subordinate US national interests to the collective will of other nations, international institutions, or international agreements whose interests are often different from ours. Second, it constrains the ability of the United States to take forceful, direct action in defense of its interests at a time when its hard power is at its apex and remains vulnerable to external threats. We know from historical experience that international agreements, particularly in the arms control area, often empower rogue states and other international outlaws. Third, it conveys a potential image of complacency and weakness to foes that equate multilateral diplomacy with doubt and indecision. Fourth, it invites criticism from some Americans who are suspicious of remote, global institutions that for them portend a loss of national sovereignty.

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41

### **Where Do We Go From Here? Six Critical Issues Requiring Further Political Debate**

To recap the goals and methods of the Independent Task Force on “Strategies for US National Security,” the Stanley Foundation brought together roughly 25 participants from various professional, analytical, and ideological backgrounds to consider three macro-level questions about the future of US national security. The participants in question reflected both military and civilian backgrounds, and many of the independent experts in the group had direct or indirect connections to official circles in the military or the Washington, DC, policy community. The questions animating the group’s discussions were:

- What should the United States do with its historically unprecedented global power?
- What is the likely future position of the United States in the world 10 to 15 years from now, and how should the United States go about influencing that position?
- How can the United States ensure its own national security while at the same time create a stable, just, and sustainable global system in the 21st century?

This concluding section describes in detail **six critical issues** around which there was a consistent lack of majority opinion and consensus, and that require further intensive debate and reflection:

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- The timing and standards for military preemption and preventive war.
  - The costs of global primacy and a US hegemonic order.
  - The importance of incorporating (and seriously funding) national security initiatives that combat nontraditional and transnational threats through conflict prevention measures such as development aid to struggling societies and states.
  - The necessity and feasibility of spreading liberal democracy as a conflict prevention measure that bolsters US security.
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- The future of WMD arms control and disarmament.
  - The importance of conventional weapons proliferation.

The ultimate answer to these questions will have a defining impact on US security in coming years and ideally should be fully confronted in the political debates surrounding the upcoming presidential election in 2004. Each of these critical areas of dispute will need to be resolved if the United States is to pursue a truly integrated, coherent, and effective set of international policies over the long term.

### **Preemption and Preventive War**

The first area, which is the one that has received the most attention, is the emphasis on preemption (as opposed to deterrence and containment) as the key component of the NSS. In the strategy document and in his West Point speech, the president emphasized that we cannot let our enemies strike first. But some members of the task force accused the administration of failing to clarify in the strategy document exactly which enemies it has in mind. In their view, it is unclear whether a policy of preemption applies only to terrorists or also to the rogue states that harbor them. If it also applies to rogue regimes, they asked if the policy includes all outlaw states, only the “axis of evil” states, or just a particular member of the axis. Some are also confused about the criteria that will be used to decide whom and when to preempt. Finally, a few members expressed concern about recent press reports that speculated that preemption might even include a first strike with nuclear weapons against “hard targets.”

The national security advisor sought to clear up some of this confusion in a speech to the Manhattan Institute in New York City on October 1, 2002. Among other things, she tried to make clear that the United

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States is not proposing to abandon the traditional concept of deterrence. The strategy, in fact, explicitly endorses deterrence, stating flatly that the military must be able to deter threats against US interests, allies, and friends. She also sought to assure the administration's critics that the preemptive use of force would be applied in a careful and considered manner. Preemption, she said, would come only after all other means, including diplomacy, had been exhausted, and in response to a grave threat for which the dangers of waiting outweighed the risks of taking action.

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*Critics see the Bush strategy as ushering in a new age of American imperialism, for which the United States is ill-prepared either psychologically or financially.*

Some members asked, however, if all this talk of preemption might undermine strategic stability in a crisis by providing potential foes like North Korea or Iran with incentives to lash out at the United States first rather than wait for a debilitating first strike. They speculated that preemption might undermine deterrence by encouraging countries to adopt precarious "launch-on-warning" force postures and undertake a "race to the button" in a crisis, thereby potentially unleashing their weapons systems in advance of what they believe might be a destructive preemptive US strike against them.

Moreover, if the United States reserves the right to preempt when it believes that its enemies are poised to strike against it, one of our group asked what is to prevent India from employing the same doctrine to justify a preemptive strike against Pakistan, or China against Taiwan, or Russia against Georgia. Some members pointed out that high-level Indian and Russian leaders have already made statements approving of the value of "anticipatory self-defense" after the release of the NSS. Their concern, which is noted but dismissed in the NSS, is that other countries could adopt similar defensive strategies as pretexts for aggression.

More broadly, the preemption doctrine elicits concern in foreign capitals and in the halls of international organizations that the foreign policy of this nation has undergone a radical revision in the aftermath of 9/11. US allies and partners fear that this doctrinal innovation signals the birth of a new era in which an enraged America is intent on revising the international status quo to its own liking. They have expressed the fear that the United States has given itself a green light to use its overwhelmingly vast conventional military hastily against recalcitrant nations so as to remake them in America's own image. In short, critics see this strategy as ushering in a new age of American imperialism, for which the United States is ill-prepared either psychologically or financially.

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## The Costs of Global Primacy and a US Hegemonic Order

Can the United States afford a strategy of military primacy? Can it afford to have such a massive force that regional powers such as Russia or China are dissuaded from pursuing significant military power for projecting their interests on a regional basis? Will a national security strategy based upon US unilateral dominance undermine US authority on key issues with other states, thereby subverting law enforcement and intelligence cooperation in the war against terrorism? Or will it alienate nations whose assistance will be needed to address global environmental decline, spreading pandemics, transnational crime, and other nontraditional but critical threats to US security?

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44

There was no widespread consensus that a US policy focused on indefinite hegemony would eventually subvert the US leadership role. One task force member even pointed out that global primacy was a simple *fact*, not a strategy to be created, since the United States has reached its current dominant position spending only 3-4 percent of its GDP and proceeding with its normal Cold War deployment patterns.

However, this fact still begged an important question: What should US primacy look like on the world stage so that it might be generally seen as *legitimate* by other nations and cultures? Should it be centered on rule-based institutions or on discrete US reactions in the form of ad hoc coalitions created for each crisis? Which approach is truly sustainable and most likely to enhance US security in the long run?

Those concerned with the costs of global primacy stressed the dangers of losing financial, political, logistical, and military support in key regions during future crises, including multilateral support for nation-building in failed or failing states such as Iraq, Afghanistan, or Liberia. In particular, some task force members also expressed concern that the pursuit of primacy by the United States would alienate those foreign countries whose assistance will be needed to address global environmental decline, spreading epidemics, transnational crime, and other nontraditional security threats. Several task force members stressed the need to create a new “rule-based order” or “institutional order” in key regions such as East and Southeast Asia or the need to re-create a Great Power consensus on a revamped United Nations in order to lower the costs of the US leadership role and gain critical support from major regional powers such as China, Russia, or the European Union.

**International Coalitions: Institutional or Ad Hoc?** One major issue requiring more clarity is the role of existing alliances vis-à-vis what the

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administration calls “coalitions of the willing,” or ad hoc coalitions. The NSS notes that the United States is committed to supporting longstanding institutions such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Organization of American States, and NATO. But the NSS also calls for creating coalitions of the willing, as we did in the war against Iraq, to deal with specific threats. The first statement suggests a willingness to consult with our traditional allies and partners, while the latter implies that this country alone determines the mission in any given circumstance and others can hop aboard if they wish—but whether they do so or not is largely irrelevant to us.

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*A critique of the version of global primacy espoused by the Bush NSS was the heavy focus on reacting to threats, as opposed to creating new structures and acting on opportunities for positive change.*

If the United States systematically chooses to bypass established organizations such as the United Nations in favor of ad hoc coalitions, then it risks their increasing obsolescence in the face of today’s new challenges. By the same token, these traditional institutions may constrain US power and frustrate the pursuit of our national interests amid interminable consultations with those whose express purpose it is to render less significant the US advantages in military and economic power—as we recently witnessed in the debate within the UN Security Council over a second resolution authorizing the use of force to enforce UN resolutions and disarm the Iraqi regime.

The strategy offers little guidance as to which is the preferred arrangement and when each approach should be used. It also begs the question of what damage will be done to existing multilateral organizations such as NATO if they are routinely bypassed, as NATO was in the war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and the United Nations was in the war against Iraq. Members of the group pointed out that our European allies played a minimal part in the military campaign in Afghanistan, despite their first-ever invocation of Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty, which stipulates that an attack on one member is an attack on all.

A related critique of the version of global primacy espoused by the Bush NSS was the heavy focus on *reacting to threats*, as opposed to *creating new structures and acting on opportunities for positive change*. According to one participant, “the US must take a binocular view of the future”—reacting to existing threats but also preventing and containing future threats through the construction of a new international order. “It’s not just about avoiding bad outcomes, it’s also about building better outcomes.” The threat environment should be considered in the context of where the nation is trying to go: the United States would ideally like a high degree of economic autonomy and would prefer to remain the military and technology leader. This participant, though critical of the Bush approach,

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agreed with these broad goals of the Bush NSS in which the United States would maintain its dominance in various areas indefinitely. However, it must be done in a way that is truly “sustainable” in the long term. To make a new order sustainable, the United States must ask the basic question, “What’s wrong with the United Nations?” The answer: the core consensus among Great Powers that established the organization has broken down, “it has been watered and beaten down.” According to this participant, “All states are not created equal, so how do you differentiate them in a way that is sustainable?” The question of end states is very important, and in reaching these goals the United States cannot have it all. Thus far, the United States has been unwilling to make sustainable political tradeoffs at the international level.

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46

At its most basic level, the question can be reformulated: Is the administration right in adopting a vision of maximum flexibility? Will an ad hoc approach based on “coalitions of the willing” be superior to the institutionalization of new norms? Or would institutionalization (the construction of revamped international organizations based on a new Great Power consensus) instead be superior, since it would allow the United States to face crises such as failed states as recurrent problems rather than treating them as completely new, “first-time, each instance” cases on an ad hoc basis?

**Economic Costs.** In the view of many task force members, the United States has always relied on economic might as well as its military power, latent or real, to ensure its security. Both the US international position and the welfare of its own citizens are founded on its position within the global economy. The US economic posture is and will remain central to US power and global security, and therefore the US government’s economic strategy should be integrated at the level of the National Security Council. US leaders can no longer afford to relegate US economic strategy to “low politics.”

Unfortunately, very few people in government understand how domestic resource strategy plays into economic statecraft. The true integration of economic and military statecraft, of shaping economic strategy to buttress US national security, is not happening at the moment. Several task force members believed that despite the language in the Bush NSS about the importance of liberal economics as the basis of a stable, self-sustaining global and domestic order, the real focus of the administration has been on maintaining and using military might. The contradiction between strategic statements and policy realities illuminates several large costs and contradictions:



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*...the concrete connections of the economic strategy to the military side of the equation have not been coordinated within the US government.*

- Economic statecraft: If the United States is willing to take unilateral approaches, the economics of this approach matter because our current situation is one of “coalitions of the bribed and coerced.” If this is the way of the future, it is a “mercenary situation” and will be a major drain on the treasury (the Iraq war alone may cost the United States more than \$100 billion). This reliance on ad hoc coalitions could in turn undermine US strategic primacy.
- While the economic policy is one of “openness,” the concrete connections of the economic strategy to the military side of the equation have *not* been coordinated within the US government. The case of China illustrates this point. Is China a future Great Power competitor or a strategic partner in the new global order?
- The “positive-sum” aspects of globalization are in fact susceptible to the “zero-sum” mentality of hard geopolitics, an issue that the foreign policy debate in Washington has skirted. Military or traditional strategic concerns do have economic consequences.
- Nation-building: This administration has disdained it from the beginning, but the realities of the war on terror have changed the US operating environment. The United States cannot afford to let its promises go unfulfilled in Afghanistan or Iraq.
- Sanctions: US leaders are talking about using them on North Korea and there will be more of this type of coercive instrument in the future. This, in turn, affects the functioning of both the US economy and the trading practices of other major states.
- There are two “economic wildcards”: the possibility of future wars of preemption (North Korea, Syria, Iran) and the possible use of the economic instrument against the United States by states that become disenfranchised politically from the prevailing global order. For instance, the hostile use of economic power in an areas such as trade by the European Union could “make life very unpleasant” for the United States.

#### **Moral Costs: Military Programs, “Bad Regimes,” and Regime Change**

Some analysts were pessimistic about the current trends in the “revolution in military affairs,” arguing that the high-tech path the United States is following, when mixed with military doctrine, will have extremely negative consequences on the US image. According to one participant, “transforming the military makes many things come down the pipe that when



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they are used are going to have a huge impact on how the world sees the United States,” including directed energy weapons, space weapons, and so on. There are real dollars behind these emerging systems. “We discount the effects of these weapons [on US diplomacy and international image] at our peril.... Shock and awe will be transformed into disgust and horror.” Chairman Korb agreed that there may not be a purposeful connection between what the US military does and the overall US grand strategy, because the military’s actions will simply create a future reality that may not be in accordance with the overall strategy and policy goals.

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48

Another task force member noted that, “We tend to operate from an assumption of our great ‘benign-ness.’ But much of the world doesn’t regard us as benign, and many of our doctrines are aimed at other countries and are meant to be threatening.” Our strategies indirectly menace more than half of the countries in the system. Kosovo in this sense was a quite shocking spectacle for the rest of the world— “we can do what we say we will do.” (When this participant was in India immediately following the war in Kosovo, many Indian analysts and political commentators told him that Kosovo was a primary rationale for creating a credible Indian nuclear option). So the sense of threat that the United States purposely intends to convey in its military capabilities and doctrine may create a tremendous amount of ill will toward the United States.

The questions are: Is this an issue that matters? Can we do anything about it? There are no options for nations to balance against the United States except the nuclear option—it is the only neutralizer other countries have. However, according to one participant, it is not traditional balancing but rather *strategies of resistance to affect the United States on specific issues* that matter. One pertinent example: the United States wanted Rolf Ekeus, and instead had to accept Hans Blix, as the head of the most recent United Nations’ WMD inspection team in Iraq. There are also small but meaningful efforts to delegitimize US power and policy by occasional antihegemonic alliances. Example: Russian Foreign Policy Official Primakov’s antihegemonic tours to Dehli and Beijing. However, the Bush administration believes that this “friction on the margin” does not matter as much as first-order issues such as getting rid of Saddam.

In response, a pro-Bush task force member noted that India is in fact “swinging in our favor.” The lesson for India of Gulf War I (in 1991) was “get nukes”; the lesson of Kosovo 1999 was “thank god we have nukes”; now the feeling in India is that American hegemony might not be so bad. So there is no need to be overly pessimistic about the consequences of US power.

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*By targeting states such as Iran or North Korea with regime change, is the United States in danger of making these populations hostile for the next 100 years?*

Others believed that the Bush NSS “is really bad history,” and its reliance on “bad history” would in fact undermine the strategy’s effectiveness in the long term. In particular, the historical arguments of the Bush NSS rely on the assumption that “rogue states” can only be dealt with through preemption and preventive war, a practice that could undermine the moral and political authority of the United States on the world scene.

The underlying premise of the new directions being taken (preventive and preemptive military force) is that the rogue state threat is qualitatively different from the Cold War era, thereby mandating a radically new response that discards traditional deterrence and containment as policy solutions. The threat is thought to be “urgent” because of this level of desperation of the “bad guys,” i.e., the leaders and regimes of these rogue actors are thought to be so desperate and insecure that they are not deterrable. But is this era so different from the previous? Rogue states have not “emerged” recently; rather these proliferation problems have been developing for decades, even as far back as the 1970s. This calls into question the notion that traditional deterrence, particularly against established states, is dead.

This charge of “bad history” and potential negative moral consequences of a preemptive strategy was in turn linked to the past realities of US responses to Stalinist Russia and Mao’s China, especially during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, US decision makers in fact considered preventive war or preemptive strikes as serious policy options toward the growing Soviet nuclear threat, and even more serious arguments were made within the Lyndon Johnson administration in the 1960s in regard to the rise of China as a new nuclear power. However, these extreme policy options were discarded in favor of both deterrence and containment, which worked (though more slowly). The Soviet Union eventually collapsed; China is now a leading trading partner, is liberalizing economically, and is cooperating with us in limited ways on security issues as well.

As voiced by one participant, “Mao’s China—*there* was a rogue state. And we made peace with it, which suggests anything is possible. Also, surely if we look back now, war with the USSR would have been totally unnecessary in the long run.... There is quite a difference between the disappearance of the USSR peacefully and nuclear strikes on it in the 1950s, which would have resulted in destruction of an entire country, deaths of millions of Russians, and an implacable foe for all foreseeable time.” By targeting states such as Iran or North Korea with regime change, is the United States in danger of making these populations hostile for the next 100 years?

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Furthermore, this participant argued, “The US obsession with the irrationality of the enemy leads to the danger of trapping the United States in the first steps of a path straight to ‘regime-icide,’ which is not really thought out or may be impossible in many instances.” Where coercive diplomacy and threats are likely to fail, and the failure of coercive diplomacy will probably lead to war, would it not be wiser to refrain from public arguments about how the regimes in question cannot be deterred? Can US global primacy be based on a diplomatic strategy of constant threats of offensive attack toward enemies or potential enemies?

### The Scope of the Concept “National Security” and the Role of Nontraditional and Transnational Threats

Will a strategy of military primacy provide more security for individual US citizens in an age of transnational terror, failing states, and competition for scarce resources among impoverished societies in the developing world? Should the United States adopt a broader definition of security that encompasses environmental and health threats experienced in other regions? Should US strategy be concerned with domestic governance issues and weak economies in other sovereign states or with transnational crime, the illicit arms trade, money laundering, drugs, and so on? In short, should the United States be concerned with both *intranational* and *transnational* trends that could present a major strategic security threat several years down the road?

Examples of these transnational and intranational trends include global warming; environmental destruction and deforestation; the AIDS pandemic; water shortages and other resource conflicts that cross borders; corrupt, inefficient, and repressive domestic institutions; illicit trade; and increasing “youth bulges” and unemployment in underdeveloped countries. Many task force members stressed that these separate trends can coalesce to present a specific regional or even global threat to US interests and security. For instance, the growing problem of chronically unemployed youth in underdeveloped countries feeds into the development of transnational terror groups or other disaffected groups with anti-US agendas. Also, weak or corrupt governments and chronically underdeveloped societies have already created havens for groups that make their money selling and transporting illicit drugs and arms, which in turn is intimately connected to the funding and training of transnational terror groups. However, there was no majority consensus on whether, and how, these nontraditional security concerns should be incorporated into an overarching security strategy.

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*It is the convergence of trends such as disease, poverty, lack of opportunity, and conflict over scarce resources that lead to an eventual strategic threat to US territory and citizens.*

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In general, there were three broad views on this issue. The traditional viewpoint was that “national security” meant military security and a focus on traditional strategic threats, such as rogue states with WMD (and the transnational terror groups which might be allied with rogues). The idea of “conflict prevention” did not really apply to this view of national security if, by “prevention,” one means that the United States should expend major energies and money on preventing threats from emerging by trying to reverse negative global trends such as AIDS, failing states, resource conflicts over water, and the growth of a “global dispossessed” who do not benefit from economic globalization. Rather, “prevention” according to this school means preventing an eventual attack on the United States once an “intent to do harm” has already emerged in the form of a hostile state or transnational group. According to one of the task force members supporting this view, “If everything becomes national security, the definition loses all value.”

51

A directly opposing view was that general demographic, environmental, social, economic, and resource trends *were* important enough to warrant preventive action by the United States as part of an overall national security strategy. However, the important focal point for policy action is in their convergence rather than in fighting each factor in isolation. It is the convergence of trends such as disease, poverty, lack of opportunity, and conflict over scarce resources that lead to an eventual strategic threat to US territory and citizens.

Finally, a third view attempted to meld these viewpoints together by focusing on the convergence of broadly negative trends within specific rogue states or failing states. This view attempted to lend concreteness to the broad demographic, social, economic, and ideological trends that could lead to a strategic threat but are hard to combat practically with specific policy options. Historically, the United States *did* in fact make this connection by “shoring up important states and preventing instability during the Cold War” on a regional basis. According to one task force member, the United States did undertake “nation-building,” with the primary criteria for action being that key states could destabilize entire regions if internal crises or other pressures created a regime with hostile intent toward its neighbors and the United States. In the opinion of many task force members, Pakistan represents just such a state, given its large population, large and highly advanced military, struggling economy, lack of democracy, lack of strong and healthy economic and political institutions, lack of legitimate state identity, absence of an independent judiciary, high rate of unemployment among youth, low control over outlying areas

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dominated by tribes or religious extremists, and possession of nuclear and missile arsenals.

Also connected to the question of transnational versus traditional threats was the Bush administration's relative lack of focus on various forms of restricting and securing the ready supply of nuclear materials to all states and groups—as opposed to the primary focus of the NSS on rogue regimes. One participant stressed that in the current policy environment, there has been a notable absence of attention on alternatives to traditional arms control and disarmament such as Cooperative Threat Reduction, Nunn-Lugar programs with the former Soviet states, and other similar initiatives. Currently, such initiatives seem to fall under the category of “nice to have, but not necessary.”

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52

Another task force member expressed outright incredulity and exasperation with the inability of the United States (under both Clinton and Bush) to take meaningful steps toward controlling the supply of fissile material. In his view, the one measure that could do the most to stem proliferation dangers and prevent emerging nuclear threats is to focus on the obvious, available “chokepoint”: existing supplies of fissile material around the globe, especially in the former Soviet Union (FSU) states. FSU nuclear stockpiles amount to about “100 million bombs’ worth of fissile material (for primitive bombs).” In his view, the whole nuclear nonproliferation regime (including the NPT) is built around the notion of controlling technological chokepoints through regulation of fissile materials. And for the past dozen years, the United States and other leading powers have put this same regime in danger by producing “tons of the stuff” and failing to “buy out the supplies of Russia for \$20 billion and moving it all to the Oakridge facility for safe storage.” Experts and officials first identified this threat back in 1991, and “if someone had told me back then that over a decade later 62 percent of the former Soviet Union fissile material would still be lying around unsecured, I would have been incredulous.” Yet the problem remains, is still a huge risk, and “if there is a rupture in the Russian containment system, this spells the end of the NPT regime.” As argued by this task force member, “The world is awash with the stuff and there is a market. There is no greater threat to the US and to world security. If we experience a failure, we will spend hundreds of billions of dollars to deal with it. This should be priority number one.”

In sum: arguments over the necessity of expanding the definition of *national security* implicitly depended on each task force member's assumptions about the *nature of the current proliferation threat*, or as put by the

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*For many US  
decision makers, it  
is a case of “right  
makes might”....*

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Bush NSS, “the crossroads of radicalism and technology.” If one assumes that transnational actors are simply extensions of rogue states and that the rogue regimes in question are led by irrational leaders who will readily turn the materials over to terrorists, then the Bush approach is the only one feasible. If, instead, one assumes that the primary actor is still the nation-state—but that leaders of “bad states” are still rational actors—and there is no meaningful connection between transnational terrorism or states, then this leads one toward traditional, balance-of-power, realpolitik-oriented solutions such as containment and deterrence. Finally, if one believes that there is no connection between states and transnational terrorists, and the *real* threat is from the transnational terrorists (who are undeterrable), then this leads one toward the “Senator Lugar view of nonproliferation,” namely, Cooperative Threat Reduction on a bilateral basis to keep loose fissile material out of the hands of small groups.

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53

### **The Necessity and Feasibility of Spreading Liberal Democracy**

There is a strong notion in the Bush NSS and other presidential statements that the Cold War was a test between disparate value systems and that the United States emerged from this crucible of bipolar competition utterly victorious. The Bush NSS states clearly that the US-espoused values of free market economies and liberal democracy were proven to be universally applicable by the outcome of the Cold War. Based on this conclusion, the Bush NSS implies that international competition itself can be entirely ended if the “proven” principles of free market economics and liberal democracy are applied to nations around the globe. But several task force members believed that competition in the international system is inevitable and legitimate in global politics and that attempts to dramatically transform the international system to be more in line with US political, cultural, and moral values would ultimately fail—or if successful, would be prohibitively expensive and take extremely long to achieve, possibly undermining US strength in the process.

For many US decision makers, it is a case of “right makes might”—adherence to a liberal economic and democratic model not only provides the power of example to other nations but also builds national power and wealth. The US system showed during the Cold War that freedom of opportunity for individuals was a positive goal and that technological innovation under free markets is more likely because of individual creativity (which in the military sense allows for the creation of more powerful, more accurate weapons).

Meanwhile, the problem of unconsolidated states in the developing world is now reaching its peak in the form of failed and failing states, a trend



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that could give rise to further catastrophic terrorism at the global level. Bush has advocated the spread of democracy and free markets as the solution to this problem over the long term. The basic argument is that repressive regimes and nonperforming economies can indirectly feed into transnational terrorism, while an open economy that is supported by institutions and backed by enforceable rules tends to increase the welfare of most citizens.

Why is democratization seen as the solution? There are several assumptions widely held in Washington about the democratic peace: democracies are less likely to fight wars; human rights are more likely respected; democracies will favor free markets and integrate themselves better into the globalized economic order; and all other political alternatives have been discredited.

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54

However, task force members identified several problems with these assumptions:

- What about the election of radically anti-US groups?
- It might be too expensive a task for the United States to transform entire regions.
- It might be seen as hypocritical unless the United States works equally to transform all regions, or all countries within a specific region. Currently, the US strategy in the war on terror is to rely on Pakistan and various Central Asian states rather than strongly criticizing those regimes for repressive, corrupt, and inefficient domestic practices.
- Democratization may not bring about real reform, but only superficial change (elections rather than creation of strong, enduring institutions such as an independent judiciary).
- Unresolved ethnic, ideological, religious, and nationalist divisions between and within states may be translated into interstate war if democratic elections are put in place without accounting for local conditions. Historically in Europe (such as during the 19th century), democratic change allowed nationalism to flourish and made European foreign policies more bellicose, not less.

Furthermore, many task force members believed there was some contradiction between economic strategy and the goal of democracy promotion. There are an increasing number of illiberal democracies—ones in which there is a surface veneer of free elections and political parties, but the



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operating reality is one of weak or corrupt judicial and economic institutions. For the US economic strategy of “openness” to work as assumed, there is a requirement for strong liberal institutions (bond markets, stock exchanges, securities commissions, and an independent judiciary); however, the Russian example shows how premature democratization can actually engender further corruption and weakening of these very institutions. Thus there may be a need to have economic freedom before political freedom in the developmental sequence.

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*A more realistic goal...might be to consistently support the liberalization of polities and economies where reform is already starting to occur indigenously....*

In the end, the United States is not concerned just with elections, but with “liberal constitutionalism”—that is, the creation of domestic institutions that enshrine core liberal values such as freedom of speech and rule of law. This type of domestic transformation can lead to better integration of societies into the global economy, which would then lead to a domestic distribution of gains where everyone is better off.

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But while the United Nations has some well-developed procedures to construct a new election process, the move to liberal constitutionalism is a decades-long effort that requires the transformation of elite values as well as political institutions. Does the United States have the patience to commit to this kind of transformation project? The complexity of the task raises questions of affordability and commitment across presidential administrations, especially since it could mean “nation-building” in many failed or failing states across the globe.

A more realistic goal, in the view of many task force members, might be to avidly and *consistently* support the liberalization of polities and economies where reform is already starting to occur indigenously—through economic aid, preferential trade agreements, aid for education and health programs, advice for constructing liberal political institutions, and general diplomatic support. But some pointed out that to implement this goal, the United States would have to put less emphasis on “stability” in the domestic governance of key developing countries that the United States relies upon in the international fight against terrorism. Instead, the United States would have to allow for domestic uncertainty and change even if this means that some developing states will refuse to be fully supportive of US efforts. This cautionary note was connected to specific examples such as Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and other Central Asian states. Rather than depending on governments that are completely predictable, the United States might have to put more emphasis on supporting positive changes in domestic governance over long stretches of time. As argued by one analyst, “Stability is not static: a stable government will have to be able to adapt to changing circumstances.”

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Whatever the methods used, a majority agreed that US national security in the 21st century mandates a new emphasis on the question of domestic governance in developing societies. US security will be more easily guaranteed in a world that includes some elements of democracy or “liberal constitutionalism” across multiple regions, in particular, greater respect for human rights and the creation of new opportunities for domestic participants to be incorporated in dialogues with their own governments (rather than facing the choices of demonstrations, jail, or exile). Ideally, institutions should be created that are regarded as legitimate by a majority of the population.

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56

### The Future of Arms Control and Disarmament

Is it reasonable or possible to draw a credible moral distinction between those states that *should* be allowed to have nuclear and other WMD and those who *should not*? Or, in other words, are the weapons themselves to be uniformly banned or are they to be pursued by “good guys” to deter or preempt the “bad guys”? Is arms control a competitive exercise meant to give relative advantage to one party over another or is it a cooperative exercise that makes security a “collective good” by constraining the actions of all nations equally? And if some states are allowed to have WMD and ballistic missiles while others are not, then who judges the legitimacy of the various national security concerns that can lead to WMD acquisition? For instance, who defines whether Israeli nuclear weapons, or Indian or Pakistani, are more or less legitimate than North Korean or Iranian? Should arms control agreements assign equal duties, responsibilities, and constraints on all parties to agreements, or should arms control be *purposely selective* in assigning rights, duties, and constraints on weaponry?

According to one task force member who was generally supportive of the “Bush Doctrine,” there are four essential, enduring aspects of arms control:

- It is a competitive undertaking: You are dealing with an adversary or potential adversary, and in a sense you are there to disarm them and not yourself. The idea is to improve your security situation vis-à-vis the other and come out relatively better in security terms—a situation that is actually beneficial for those nations supportive of a legitimate international order, because US interests overlap with the interests of other responsible countries. If political decision makers do not accept the process as inherently competitive from the outset, “then arms control will be so detached that it will inevitably get offtrack.” It will be a utopian enterprise and will fail. If the United States adopts the view that it does not have to “enter the fray” and compete with nations who wish to

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challenge the emerging global order, it will “fritter away the sources of its power.” In the end, the United States must be willing to get its hands dirty and enter the fray. An “in-your-face” arms control policy is actually more humble than standing above other countries in an abstracted, idealized cooperative multilateral process, because this would demonstrate that the United States is recognizing its practical duties and responsibilities as the world’s global power.

- Quite frequently and appropriately, arms control can be a tool for confrontation, as was the case with UN resolutions toward Iraq.
- Technological progress is inevitable in the weapons field; the idea that the international community can stop or eliminate whole categories of weaponry is illusory and impossible (or even if it was possible, it would be detrimental to the United States). Quantitative arms control is usually well grounded, whereas qualitative arms control “can get you into a lot of trouble.”
- The most difficult issue to deal with: There are moral distinctions between states in the context of arms development. Simply put, nuclear weapons in the hands of the United States, Israel, or France is not the same as nuclear weapons in the hands of North Korea or Iran.

In regard to “moral distinctions,” according to this second task force member, there are minimum requirements that a state has to meet in order to be considered a legitimate partner in arms control:

- It must have a representative government and not simply be exploitative of its population.
- It must be a “responsible international player,” which in practical terms means it “can’t fight above its weight” through imposing unreasonable and unrealistic demands. The state must have “good ends in mind” such as peace and stability.
- Finally, there might be a “just war” equivalent to questions of raising armies and disarmament—i.e., in addition to existing “just war” principles and codes of conduct on the fighting of wars, the United States and its democratic allies might enunciate a new code about what constitutes legitimate, reasonable, and moral forms of national armament, defense policies, and national approaches to arms control.

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*In the end, the United States must be willing to get its hands dirty and enter the fray.*

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However, others believed that a key difficulty is how to address the inevitable international perception that a practice of dividing states into legitimate and illegitimate actors is a fundamentally immoral position in and of itself because it discards the long-held belief that arms control is good for all of humankind and that the United States, like any other country, should be subjected to it. What kind of incentive would other countries have to buy into a competitive view of arms control that favors only the United States? It is the nature of arms control that those agreements with the greatest chance of endurance are those in which the major parties feel they all have something to gain—that the agreement is part of an ongoing relationship involving mutual constraints and policy gains. If arms control is by its very nature a compromise relationship based on equal rights and duties, then the more competitive vision of arms control proffered by some neoconservatives would have little chance of success.

Ultimately, the task force was split between those believing in a competitive view of arms control and disarmament—in which friends and foes are clearly defined and treated differently—and a view of arms control and disarmament that espoused mutually beneficial, “positive-sum” agreements between equal sovereign states.

### **Conventional Weapons Proliferation**

As argued by one task force member, “We ignore conventional weapons proliferation at our peril.” While most of the discussion on arms control and disarmament focused squarely on WMD and missiles, a vocal minority of the task force argued for a more encompassing definition that integrates conventional weapons into arms control efforts, including both “heavy” systems such as tanks and fighter planes and “light weapons” such as small arms that kill hundreds of thousands of people annually. Massive destruction will not necessarily come from ballistic missiles as carriers of WMD—for instance, antiaircraft weapons could bring down commercial airliners. In general, greater and greater destructive capacity is going to be available to smaller and smaller groups of people in the future, both with conventional arms and WMD.

According to this minority viewpoint, conventional weapons proliferation should receive new emphasis because:

- “This is the stuff of day-to-day conflict.” Since World War II, 99.9 percent of casualties have been caused by conventional weapons, approximately 25 to 40 million casualties in all. Small arms and light weapons have received

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increasing attention by the scholarly and nongovernmental community since the end of the Cold War due to “the pernicious interaction between weapons and underdevelopment” in large parts of the developing world.

- These arms are the weapons of choice for ethnic militias, insurgents, warlords, brigands, and other nonstate actors who threaten stability and precipitate state collapse in areas of the world where terrorists can find a safe haven.
- The most probable terrorist threats will continue to come from conventional weapons rather than WMD—for example, anti-aircraft missiles.
- Conventional proliferation interacts with questions of the US defense industrial base and defense relationships/cooperation with US allies. How should the needs of keeping the industrial base intact be balanced against the dangers of a relatively unrestrained arms sale policy? How do the dangers of proliferation impact technology-sharing with allies in key regions?
- Conventional proliferation may endanger the Bush administration’s search for indefinite global preeminence. According to a Defense Science Board Report on Globalization and National Security, there are a few key conventional technologies that could be exploited to leverage gaps and exploit weaknesses in US weaponry to undermine US military dominance.

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*The most probable terrorist threats will continue to come from conventional weapons rather than WMD—for example, anti-aircraft missiles.*

Unfortunately, there is nothing in the conventional weapons area that remotely approaches the treaty regimes, institutions, and procedures set in place during the last three decades for WMD, such as the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions or the NPT. As problematic as these latter regimes are, they are “light years ahead” of the policy discourse and institutional commitments associated with the conventional weapons proliferation problem. It is very hard to come to any consensus on conventional weapons—there is no agreement domestically or internationally on the nature and severity of the threat or the optimal response. This is symbolized in the chronic inability of the US government to reinvigorate and redefine the Export Administration Act—what one participant called a “decade of failure.” Meanwhile, the United States has become interested in security assistance again—including new arms supply relationships with India and Pakistan, both of which are locked in a tense and hostile relationship that could erupt into major war at any time. This said, the Bush administration has an “arms trade policy review” in operation, but there is very little publicly said about it. It does not seem to be based upon multilateral agreement, cooperation, or strategic restraint.

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# Appendix

## Dissenting Viewpoints

### Baker Spring

F. M. Kirby Research Fellow in National Security Policy,  
The Heritage Foundation  
August 18, 2003

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60

I want to commend the Stanley Foundation for convening the Strategies for National Security Task Force. The chosen topic for review is both important and timely, and the discussion allowed a full airing of the differing views of the Bush administration's National Security Strategy. However, I find it necessary to dissent from the report in several significant areas.

Generally, the report tends to overestimate both the costs and negative international repercussions of a national security strategy based on strength and furthering American interests. Likewise, the report tends to underestimate both the benefits and positive international response to American leadership. This imbalance is derived from a description of the strategies of preventive war and preemption as products of an ambitious neoconservative agenda, despite the fact that these strategies are derived from the internationally recognized rights of self-defense and furthering national interests.

For example, the body of the report warns against the United States pursuing a policy of "revising the international status quo to its own liking" because such a policy will somehow create an American empire and carry high psychological and financial costs. This warning is remarkable because the basic purpose of any country's foreign policy, no matter how strong or weak that country may be, is to revise the international status quo to its own liking. There is no reasonable explanation of why applying such a universal principle of foreign policy is inappropriate in the case of the United States.

More specifically, I disagree with a significant number of the report's findings and recommendations. This is particularly the case regarding recommendations related to the provisions of preventive war and preemption found in the Bush administration's National Security Strategy.

It is unclear how a policy of maintaining American military primacy constitutes espousing a strategy of empire. It is equally unclear why

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maintaining military primacy necessarily raises questions of affordability. American military primacy is commensurate with America's global responsibilities. Defense budgets are not likely to exceed 4 percent of gross domestic product. American military primacy does not necessarily reflect a policy of empire, and 4 percent of GDP devoted to defense is affordable by historic standards.

The report warns against ignoring the disadvantages of a strategy of preventive war. If this warning merely constitutes a call for balance and prudence in deciding whether or not to engage in a specific preventive war action, it is, of course, unexceptionable; on the other hand, however, if accounting for the long list of disadvantages listed in the report effectively precludes the preventive war option in virtually all cases, it is counterproductive. The appearance that the report is making a broad argument against preventive war is reinforced by a contention that only the adoption of elements of entirely different national security strategies will offset the disadvantages.

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61

The report implies that a national security strategy that contemplates resorting to preventive wars calls into question the viability of the policies of deterrence and containment. There is nothing inconsistent about a national security strategy that relies on all three policies to one degree or another.

The report demands that the Bush administration clarify three areas of ambiguity in its preventive war strategy. These areas are (1) the circumstances for preemptive actions, (2) the priority given to promoting democracy versus prosecuting the war on terrorism, and (3) the role of existing alliances versus ad hoc coalitions. While there are ambiguities in the Bush administration's National Security Strategy in these three areas, it is unclear why there is a compelling need for clarification. Indeed, some ambiguity is necessary for an effective strategy. For example, the United States has had a purposeful policy of ambiguity regarding the circumstances for resorting to the use of nuclear weapons. At some point, clarifying the ambiguity on nuclear use undermines the policy. This leads to the question of whether the report's demand for clarification is designed to undermine the policy of preventive war rather than to improve or refine it.

There were clear differences of opinion among task force members regarding the Bush administration's National Security Strategy, particularly regarding the provisions related to preventive war and preemption. One approach to bridging these differences is to adopt recommendations that



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highlight the problems as a means to guide policymakers, as opposed to specific recommendations to opt for one view over others. At some point, however, the approach of highlighting problems ceases to be a tool for building consensus and becomes a tool for criticism. In the several instances described here, I believe that the report crosses this admittedly fine line.

## **Additional Viewpoints**

**Michael Klare**

Director and Five Colleges Professor, Peace and World Security Studies,  
Hampshire College

August 1, 2003

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62

In the otherwise excellent discussion of conventional weapons, I would add a “bullet” stating that the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons is an area of particular concern because such arms are the weapons of choice for ethnic militias, insurgents, warlords, brigands, and other non-state actors who threaten stability and precipitate state collapse in many unstable areas of the world. And it is in these settings—Afghanistan, northern Pakistan, Somalia—that terrorists most often find a safe haven.

**Anatol Lieven**

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August 18, 2003

### **Nation-Building: A Necessary Task Requiring Patience and Time**

The report in general was excellent and summarized the various viewpoints very well and fairly. The only thing I would add is a comment on “nation-building,” a task which is an integral part of the new strategy in the war against terrorism. There is an urgent need to draw much more on the lessons of the Cold War in this regard. The Cold War historical experience suggests that such a strategy can be immensely successful (e.g., South Korea), but it requires immense patience, a great deal of money, and a willingness to defer democracy for a generation while encouraging socioeconomic transformation. Regarding democracy as a cheap, quick road to stable development is historically vacuous.

Perhaps also in the recommendations you could have drawn on the reminder in the text that we won the Cold War not through actual military action but through a mixture of toughness, patience, and the economic and cultural success of Western (not just US) society. Remember

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Marshal Kutuzov's maxim, with which he defeated Napoleon: "Patience and Time." Terrorists have to be destroyed, but when it comes to rival states, there is usually quite a lot to be said for adopting a judo strategy and basically helping them to destroy themselves. It worked for the Soviet Union, and seems to be working (in a different way) for China.

**Mike Moore**

Senior Editor,

*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*

July 28, 2003

### **The Hubris of Empire: The Lessons of Athens**

Timothy Garton Ash, a conservative scholar who hangs out at both Oxford University and the Hoover Institution at Stanford, wrote of his love for America in the April 9, 2002, issue of *The New York Times*. But he was also worried about the future of the United States, the world's sole remaining superpower.

"Contrary to what many Europeans think, the problem with American power is not that it is American. The problem is simply the power. It would be dangerous even for an archangel to wield so much power. The writers of the American Constitution wisely determined that no single locus of power, however benign, should predominate; for even the best could be led into temptation. Every power should therefore be checked by at least one other. That also applies to world politics."

We have entered a new and puzzling conceptual world in which the military power of the United States is very nearly unchecked. Timothy Garton Ash—and many others—are inclined to reach back to the Roman Empire to find an analog. There are some similarities between the United States and imperial Rome, but perhaps the story of ancient Athens is even more to the point.

In 431 B.C.E., Athens was in its Golden Age. Most surveys of Western history are likely to have a chapter or section titled "Athens: Wonder of the World" or a suitably reverent variant thereof. That year was the first year of the Peloponnesian War, the generation-long conflict between Athens and Sparta and their respective allies.

The war was chronicled by Thucydides, an Athenian and a reasonably objective historian. A peak moment in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* is the funeral oration by Pericles, the unofficial first citizen of Athens.

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The speech is often compared to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, a reasonable conceit. In each, the speakers eulogized the men who had died in battle by describing the transcendent worth of the nation that sent them to war. A few excerpts capture the flavor:

- Our form of government does not enter into rivalry with the institutions of others. Our government does not copy our neighbors, but is an example to them.
- Because of the greatness of our city the fruits of the whole earth flow in upon us, so that we enjoy the goods of other countries as freely as our own.
- The [Spartans] come into Athenian territory not by themselves, but with their whole confederacy following; we go alone into a neighbor's country—and although our opponents are fighting for their homes and we on a foreign soil, we have seldom any difficulty in overcoming them.
- We alone do good to our neighbors not upon a calculation of interest, but in the confidence of freedom and in a frank and fearless spirit.
- To sum up: I say that Athens is the school of Hellas, and that the individual Athenian in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace. [Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* is widely available in various translations. Key portions of it, such as the Funeral Oration, can be easily found online.]

To be sure, said Pericles, Athens *was* an empire but there was no shame in that. The virtues of Athens and the superiority of Athenian men in battle had been so frequently demonstrated that even her "subjects" had no reason "to question her title by merit to rule." Far from needing a Homer to sing her praises, Athens had "forced every sea and land to be the highway of our daring, and everywhere, whether for evil or for good, have left imperishable monuments behind us."

Athens and Sparta were seldom on cordial terms in the 5th century B.C., although they had earlier made common cause against invading Persia. But after the defeat of the invading Persians, Athens became evermore insistent on exporting its democratic values, says Thucydides, values that were anathema to the oligarchic city-states including Sparta.

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By midcentury, Athens was the most powerful city-state in the Hellenic world. Its defensive alliance, the Delian League, which at first operated according to reasonably democratic principles, had evolved into a collection of about 150 city-states, all subservient to some degree to Athens. The prosperous city-state that had virtually invented democracy now spoke of the city-states it “controlled.” A few states rebelled and tried to leave the empire, but the rebellions were put down, sometimes brutally. As Thucydides dryly notes, “the Athenians were not the old popular rulers they had been at first.”

According to Thucydides, Sparta, which had been loath to definitively challenge Athens, eventually led the war against Athens because it and its allies had come to fear the presumed imperial intentions of the Athenians. Sparta, an oligarchy, would liberate Hellas. That was an appealing idea to many Hellenes, Thucydides says, “so general was the indignation felt against Athens, whether by those who wished to escape from her empire or were apprehensive of being absorbed by it.”

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65

Three years into the war and during a plague that hit the overcrowded city with deadly force, some Athenians began to talk of a negotiated peace. Pericles counseled his fellow citizens to stay the course—because they were in the right.

More important, Pericles said, Athens had no choice. Athenians could not now “decline the burdens of empire” by negotiating with Sparta. Its empire had brought honor to Athens, but it had also encouraged “animosities.” It would be dangerous for Athens to loosen its imperial grip. “For what you hold is, to speak somewhat plainly, a tyranny. To take it was perhaps wrong, but to let it go is unsafe.”

No analogy should be pushed too far. The differences in scale are staggering. Athens was a tiny city-state, important only in a Mediterranean and Asia Minor context; the United States, the global hyperpower. And yet some parallels are striking. Just as the history books say, Athens fostered public and private virtue to a degree unequalled for its time. But as it built a reasonably democratic edifice at home, it became an arrogant imperial power that sought to export its democratic vision to the rest of Hellas, using its considerable military wherewithal when necessary.

The ins and outs of the Peloponnesian War are complex and often mysterious. The war is a tale of honor and deceit, wisdom and stupidity, bravery and treachery. But above all, it is story of hubris. Athens—the birthplace

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of democracy and systematic Western philosophy—came to be envied and feared. Athens was finally defeated in 404, but its Golden Age had ended before that when the war began. Overweening arrogance, suggests Thucydides, brought down Athens. Today, political scientists call it “imperial overstretch.”

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66

Since Thucydides, many historians have come to similar conclusions about empires East and West, ancient and modern, regional and meta-regional. Empires collapse for many reasons—overextension of lines of communications, the rise of a great-power rival, climate changes, exhaustion of resources, endemic corruption. But the common thread seems to be arrogance—the growing belief that because of its virtue, there are no limits to what the imperial state can accomplish. According to the provocative 20th-century historian Arnold Toynbee, “Great empires do not die of murder, but suicide. And the moment of greatest danger is their moment of greatest strength, for it is then that complacency and hubris infect the body politic, squander its strength, and mock its virtues.”

The National Security Strategy of the United States issued in September 2002 has much to recommend it, as many members of the Stanley Foundation task force have noted. Nevertheless, the National Security Strategy also embodies a dangerous degree of hubris, one that Thucydides would have understood.

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67

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68

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