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A "Return to Normalcy"? The Future of America's Internationalism

When new presidents take office, expectations for change always run high. Such is the case for Barack Obama. Yet a major change in U.S. foreign policy in the next few years is unlikely in the absence of unforeseen events. The United States, after a brief experimentation with the Bush doctrine, has returned to the basic "American Internationalism" (AIM) foreign policy that guided the United States between 1946 and 2001. There remains widespread support for continuing the AIM agenda, featuring U.S. international leadership, military superiority, support for democracies abroad, free trade, and multilateralism. To be sure, there will be "Anything but Bush" tactical adaptations in policy, especially in the Middle East, and a potentially influential change in diplomatic style, but even the George W. Bush administration in its second term had already largely returned to the fold of the AIM postwar tradition. President Obama is likely to remain there, and that is mostly a good thing.

What is possible in 2009 and after, however, is growing friction between the American Internationalism view and emerging international conditions—leading to mounting pressure for change. AIM strategy will be challenged by divergences in the U.S.-European consensus on international order, mounting U.S. economic difficulties, and the rising position of countries like China and India that have different needs.

Yet what is still absent in the United States is a worldview suited to emerging conditions that has enough political support to replace AIM. Policy planning in the years ahead therefore will involve (1) implementing the neo-American Internationalism, (2) attending to failed expectations, and (3) planning for an

alternative set of strategic principles. American internationalism has served the country well, but in order to meet new international problems (such as terrorism and global warming) in the face of slowly dissipating U.S. power and the erosion of post-World War II institutions, it will likely need to be significantly modified over the longer run.

In what follows I discuss why no major reformulation of foreign policy is likely in the near term, what changes we can expect, and what forces will create pressure for change over the longer term. The conclusion addresses the implications for policy planning.

The Puzzling Power of the Status Quo

Although presidential transitions would seem to be the ideal time for major changes in foreign policy, there are several reasons why the Obama administration is unlikely to reorient basic principles. First, major change in U.S. foreign policy is rare, and the conditions that favor such a change are not present. Second, the United States under George W. Bush attempted to shift its foreign policy, and the result was a return to tradition. Finally, even though there are signs of polarization in the United States, there is widespread consensus among Americans for continuity in foreign policy.¹ Support for AIM is also fairly strong abroad.

Major transitions in U.S. foreign policy—ones that affect the U.S. willingness to lead or join international institutions, develop and use its military power, engage in trade, and actively promote political change in foreign countries—are unusual. For example, since the founding in 1776, the U.S. view on how to relate to major-power politics has changed only *once*. In the midst of World War II, the United States discarded its long-standing desire to separate itself from the political-military entanglements of the European-devised system and instead chose to integrate itself, maintain and use its military power, adopt free trade, and promote democracy outside of the Americas.²

The common wisdom is that the United States alters its foreign policy dramatically "when it needs to," such as in response to crises, changes in the balance of power, or a perceived threat. For example, the United States did indeed shift in response to Pearl Harbor, the demands for U.S. involvement in World War II, and the conditions that quickly followed in the cold war.

Yet even in response to crisis, change is difficult; in normal times it takes extraordinary effort. Big events—wars, geopolitical shifts, depressions, revolutions, and even surprise attacks—are often cathartic moments in national politics. The problem is they are not always catalysts of change. Consider for

example how Woodrow Wilson's attempt at change after World War I went down in flames despite unprecedented newfound U.S. power at the time. And all the jawing on the need for a new strategy after the cold war left not a trace, despite the disappearance of the Soviet threat.

It turns out that it is hard to alter foreign policy mind-sets that have been inspired by searing episodes in history, that are embedded in national institutions and educational systems, and that are protected by interest groups that benefit from them. Such mind-sets generate governmental capabilities and abilities that are not easily amended—as the nation found out in its effort to deal with terrorism in the run-up to 9/11.³ It is therefore not surprising that continuity is the norm in foreign policy paradigms.⁴

Even when people can think outside the boundaries of the dominant mind-set (which they often do), those who want to challenge tradition nonetheless face significant hurdles. It can be hard for individuals to know if others desire change, and if they do, how much they will risk in acting on their preferences. Lacking such information, they cannot be sure that their own desire and efforts for change will have any effect. They must mount a case for why the old ideas are defunct, which can involve considerable effort; and because doing so threatens tradition, they invite social and political criticism.

Even when powerful political actors can agree that the old ideas must go, they still have to agree on a new set of ideas. Yet the formation and institutionalization of new ideas breeds strife and uncertainty because particular orientations offer differing costs and benefits to domestic groups, which can stalemate over which, if any, new direction is more desirable. For this reason, continuity is again a potent force.

Given these hurdles, elections are typically not occasions for major change. They do not provide the ammunition that critics need to undermine a standing orthodoxy. Consider, for example, the cold war period. Different presidents had different approaches to American Internationalism, but the basic strategy remained fairly stable throughout the period—until 2001. As the 9/11 Commission report concluded, despite changes in the world that made terrorism a threat, the United States was trapped in a cold war mentality and constrained by cold war capabilities.⁵ Then, as now, elections alone are unlikely to alter that mind-set.

A second reason that change is not likely is that we have already seen one major attempt—the Bush revolution—to reorient foreign policy. The failure of that effort only strengthened the return to a neo-AIM mind-set.

In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States adopted what the Yale historian John Lewis Gaddis called *potentially* “the most sweeping shift in

U.S. grand strategy since the beginning of the Cold War.”⁶ The Bush doctrine’s “American Supremacy” view (in contrast to AIM) was a three-legged stool emphasizing unilateral action (as a rule, not the exception), the preventive use of force (rather than reactive containment), and an expanded geographic reach (that is, outside the Western hemisphere) for intervening overtly (not covertly) in the domestic affairs of other countries—including forcible regime change. None of the legs of this stool were new; each had precedents in earlier eras.⁷ Yet cumulatively, especially as declared national strategy (not just tools used in unusual situations), the three legs represented a potential sea change in U.S. thinking about how to relate to the world.⁸

That effort achieved some successes but, mired in Iraq, resented by international opinion, and largely perceived as ineffective, lost significant support. In the 2008 presidential election, both the Democratic and Republican candidates promised a retreat from the Bush agenda, and a return to the AIM consensus.⁹ Indeed the Bush administration itself, in 2005 and after, had already largely returned to a position that was more akin to its predecessors than that of the doctrine initiated after 9/11.¹⁰

So when a major shock of the type that can spark major change in strategy occurred (the 9/11 attacks), the Bush administration undertook an effort to reorient U.S. strategy according to what came to be known as the Bush doctrine; but because expectations were undermined by results, defenders of the AIM view have largely succeeded in reestablishing that foreign policy.

The third reason why a major change is unlikely in the next few years is elite and mass support for the foundational principles of AIM. In a 2008 volume that included the views of experts on U.S. foreign policy representing a range of partisan and ideological perspectives, all agreed on the desirability of U.S. leadership in world affairs, U.S. preponderance in power, the spread of democracy, open trade and finance, and collaboration with other countries.¹¹ In short, right or left, libertarian or socialist, elite thinkers largely embrace an agenda that resembles AIM thinking.

This consensus, moreover, is not just limited to elites. Opinion polls indicate that the public supports the same principles, with some nuances:

—Americans do not want to foot the bill or be the sole leader, but 70 percent of those polled want to see the United States take an active part in world affairs—a proportion akin to that in the early 1950s and that has remained relatively steady since then.¹²

—Fifty-five percent of Americans today agree that maintaining military superiority is an important goal, and 53 percent believe the United States should retain the majority of its overseas military bases.¹³

—On free trade, the public is increasingly less enthusiastic than elites, but support for expanding openness does exist. When asked about connections between the U.S. economy and others abroad, 60 percent believe that expansion is mostly good, while 35 percent believe it is mostly bad.¹⁴

—On international collaboration, the majority of those polled in recent years think the United States should work more closely with allies (91 percent), consider the views and interests of other countries (90 percent), deal with problems like terrorism and the environment by working through international institutions (69 percent) and strengthen the United Nations (79 percent).¹⁵

Support for these principles is not limited to the United States. Perhaps surprisingly, they also receive encouragement from opinion abroad. To be sure, there are some variations—for example, fewer numbers abroad welcome U.S. military preponderance. Still, there is noteworthy international support for U.S. leadership, the spread of democracy, globalization and economic openness, and international cooperation.¹⁶

In sum, the difficulty of enacting major changes in foreign policy, the failed effort at transformation represented by the Bush doctrine, and the enduring considerable support at home and abroad for AIM suggest that a major change is both unlikely and undesirable in the near future.

Adaptation, not Transformation

To suggest that major changes are unlikely in U.S. foreign policy is not to rule out all changes. President Obama will certainly bring a different style of diplomacy and different approaches to particular countries, such as Iran, and issues, such as global warming. There is likely to be some movement in reaction to unpopular policies of the prior administration and to fulfill campaign pledges. Likewise there will be important disagreements over the tactics of implementing AIM that could produce notable adaptations. But for the most part these differences will be incremental and not affect the basic tenets of AIM.

A new presidency always brings some changes and alterations. In the United States large numbers of political appointees come and go, especially when there is a change of political party in the White House. George W. Bush's policies in 2000 were often described as "ABC" (Anything but Clinton) and his administration did much to try to distinguish its approach from that of its predecessor. That pattern is not unfamiliar: Reagan was anti-Carter, who was anti-Nixon, who was anti-Kennedy/Johnson, who were anti-Eisenhower, who was anti-Truman. President-elect Obama made some notable gestures to

dampen anti-Bush rhetoric, but given that one of the first acts of his administration was to close Guantanamo Bay, a symbol of the Bush presidency, the dynamic seems alive and well. All this "anti" sentiment in the past, of course, produced adjustments, but not the remaking of fundamental principles.¹⁷

A second reason to believe that we will see adaptations in 2009 and beyond is that campaign promises are a source of new initiatives. Many people believe that such promises or campaign pledges are just cheap talk that is jettisoned when the candidate reaches office. In some cases that belief has proven correct—consider Eisenhower's 1952 pledge to liberate Eastern Europe and Johnson's pledge in 1964 not to enlarge the U.S. presence in Vietnam.

Still, the broader evidence seems to suggest that politicians actually do a reasonable job of fulfilling their campaign promises. By the measure of one study, between 1912 and 1976, presidents fulfilled some 65 to 70 percent of their foreign policy campaign promises.¹⁸ Other studies suggest similar dynamics.¹⁹

Disputes over how to implement AIM are also likely to produce adaptations. While there may be consensus on such broad principles as leadership, military preponderance, democratization, globalization, and cooperation, how those actually get turned into policy are matters for heated discussion. For example, leaders and parties may approach them with distinct emphases. "Red state" Republicans see leadership as having more to do with authority and competence in the use of power, whereas "blue state" Democrats believe it rests in adherence to international law and respect for foundational U.S. principles such as human rights. How to pursue other broad principles will also be open to debate and variation in policy.²⁰ For example, many agree on the need to maintain U.S. military preponderance, but may disagree on how to do it and what to do with our capabilities. Should the United States preserve its traditional conventional battlefield emphasis or instead encourage a new counterinsurgency strategy? The spread of democracy may be widely embraced, but should it involve the use of force, a focus on electoral democracy, or developing responsive institutional competence in foreign countries? And although most see the need for better multilateral cooperation in the years ahead, the schemes for achieving it come in many colors. Should the United States attempt a new world concert with the European Union, Russia, and China? Or should it focus more on bringing the world's democracies together? Should it work within existing institutions or create new ones?

These are important questions, and the way they are answered will be another source of adaptation in U.S. foreign policy in the years ahead. One issue that will most influence the immediate future of U.S. foreign policy is the fate of intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan. How U.S. involvement in those

countries plays out, how it is handled, and the implications that follow will importantly shape U.S. policy. Those results will again be a source of adaptation in the AIM emphasis of U.S. foreign policy (especially regarding when to intervene and where), but probably not a cause of fundamental change. Recall that Vietnam did not fundamentally alter AIM in an earlier period, though it did affect the U.S. inclination to intervene with its own military on the periphery.

The Sources of Potential Change

To say that a major transformation in U.S. foreign policy is improbable is not to say that it is impossible. In general, such changes are likely when inflated expectations for current policy are subsequently dashed by events with significant and unwanted consequences. Such circumstances undermine the defenders of tradition and allow their critics to coalesce. When that happens *and* when critics are able to coordinate on an effective alternative strategy, U.S. foreign policy is prone to change.

The two most likely triggers of major transformation in U.S. foreign policy are: (1) an unexpected shock and (2) the growing tension between AIM and the demands of emerging international politics.

Shock

The first trigger is widely recognized—that is, an unforeseen major crisis or unexpected event that forces decisionmakers to return to first principles and reorient the prior pattern of international activity. One can imagine several possibilities that might undermine AIM (though the events we cannot imagine are often the most powerful).

This could occur if another significant terrorist attack against U.S. citizens takes place, especially one on U.S. soil. If, after all the effort extended abroad in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States still cannot prevent such attacks, any form of forward-based internationalist defense and diplomacy will face a difficult test of validity from an onslaught of critics. This is especially true if it is accompanied by continuing or heightened international criticism of the United States. After all, if U.S. efforts to help itself and the world are met by the hostility of friends and enemies alike, Americans will wonder, what is the purpose of the whole effort?

In such circumstances it is not unthinkable that the relatively marginalized anti-internationalist groups in the United States would gain new momentum. Pat Buchanan and his fellow travelers would look prescient. “Off-shore

balancing”—code words for a significant political-military withdrawal—would look more inviting. The challenge of terrorism would no longer be confronted abroad, but instead be met with ever more vigorous “homeland defense” efforts, especially those focusing on immigration, border and trade controls, and antimissile measures.

The main brake on such a strategy is the continuing economic internationalism of the United States. How could the United States shrink its perimeter with so many interests abroad? Such a potential shift would not involve, at least at first, the economic internationalism that has characterized U.S. foreign policy in both the AIM and Supremacy views. Yet the question correctly presumes a link between economic and political-military stability, and it is not clear to what degree this interdependence is appreciated, especially by those unfamiliar with the history of the interwar period. There are sectors of the American public that favor a renewed economic nationalism and who would take advantage of the same conditions to “defend American jobs”—largely by reining in the liberal trading order developed since World War II.

Another scenario that might motivate change is closely related to this last thought—that is, some sort of meltdown of the global economic architecture. This of course happened before in the interwar period. Given the ongoing financial crisis, it is once again thinkable. The rapidity with which economic events are transmitted through the system can be alarming. The fallout from housing market turmoil in the United States and other countries has produced a global financial meltdown and recession, and as of this writing may still unravel into something worse. It is difficult to say how such a dramatic event would alter U.S. foreign policy, but it could have far-reaching consequences. In the interwar period, the Depression first affected U.S. foreign economic policy (much the same as today), but through its influence on the rise of fascist regimes and their subsequent aggression ultimately nurtured American internationalism during World War II.

As noted above, shocks and major events only destabilize foreign policy to the extent that the strategy does not anticipate them and that they present undesirable consequences. Not all shocks actually undermine policy. Consider again the end of the cold war, which did not contradict the expectations of the existing U.S. approach or bring unwanted results. Thus, despite the vastly altered international arena after 1989, with no challenge to the U.S. orthodoxy and no negative results for critics and reform-minded strategists to use as ammunition, there was no stirring America’s transformational tendencies. The defenders of AIM easily dismissed the whining of change advocates. A series of sound-thinking commissions on terrorism and other new

threats in the 1990s were virtually ignored by the mass media and marginalized in Washington.

Plate Friction

The second and more likely source of transformation will gain momentum slowly in the years ahead. The best way to understand it is in terms of plate tectonics. Like earthquakes, which are often caused by the slow compression of massive geological formations moving against each other, in U.S. foreign policy the two plates now starting to collide are American expectations for its neo-AIM strategy and actual international conditions.

Both major party candidates in the 2008 presidential campaign argued that their foreign policies would be more successful because they would return to the prior pattern of multilateral consultation and cooperation. In short, they said that the wrongs in U.S. foreign policy could be righted by pursuing AIM foreign policy—that doing so will allow the United States to better achieve its interests. Much is expected of this correction to the supposed faults of the Bush era.

The problem is that the high expectations that are now being attached to neo-AIM thinking are likely to be frustrated by emerging conditions in the international arena. One concerns U.S. standing in the world. A legacy of the Bush administration is mistrust and diminished stature of the United States in world politics—a situation that may make U.S. efforts at collaboration in 2009 and after more difficult than they need be. It might be that President Obama's considerable popularity worldwide will ameliorate the anti-Americanism that developed in the last five years of Bush's presidency. But such sentiments are often the product of different factors, could be somewhat embedded at this point, and thus could prove slower to change. To the extent that U.S. standing is being driven by forces other than the policies or personalities of the past administration, or the attractions of the new, then the challenges could be more significant.

Another reason why neo-AIM thinking is likely to be difficult is that the international architecture of that program looks increasingly brittle. Many of the institutions at the heart of the internationalist project—the United Nations (UN), the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the World Trade Organization (WTO)—are not working as envisioned.²¹ There are ways to duct tape and refurbish them, but it seems they are less suited to the world that is ahead. Equally problematic, few new institutions have been created even when there is a clear functional need, such as combating terrorism or dealing with global warming or managing the distribution of scarce resources.

A plausible solution is to establish new institutions better suited to the twenty-first-century global arena.²² Yet the conditions for doing so are now very different than in the wake of World War II. International order in the past has been primarily a function of deals cut among the great powers, and the collapse of order a product of their clashes.²³ Although there is still considerable support abroad for U.S. AIM thinking, the longer-term viability is being challenged by a shifting pattern of power and interests in the international arena involving the United States, Europe and Japan, and China.

The decline of contemporary order is at least in part due to a fissure between Europe and the United States on the purpose and process of global management. This divide is not about the end of transatlantic cooperation. In the scheme of things the United States and Europe continue at a relatively high level of amity. Nor is it about the end of NATO, the security pact at the heart of the Atlantic bargain. NATO still serves a shared desire to provide stability on the continent and protect from either anarchy or domination from the East. It is likely to remain intact for some time (especially with the reemergence of an assertive Russia).

Though they had significant clashes during the cold war, in recent years Europe and the United States have seemed to diverge more often, perhaps as the central issues of global politics have moved beyond the geography of the continent, and especially on basic approaches to order. As Robert Kagan has famously articulated, the Americans are from Mars and Europeans from Venus.²⁴ Europe has favored an international order that is based on robust multilateralism, autonomous international institutions, "rule-based" global governance, and the avoidance of the use of military force.²⁵ The United States in contrast has tended to favor the exercise of its dominant power through the military and in other forms. It has preferred the unilateral exercise of power where possible, and especially in recent years in bilateral deals when unilateralism doesn't work. Socioeconomically, the United States favors a more *laissez-faire* capitalism than the social welfare mentality on the Continent. Europe believes the authority-commingling EU model should be extended to the global level; the United States has often preferred to protect its sovereignty. The U.S.-EU divergence has affected progress in a number of institutions, including the UN, the WTO, the NPT, and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

New rising powers such as China and India will also challenge the premises of AIM thinking. These countries have immense populations and are growing quickly in economic might. They retain some traits and preferences of developing countries, but are gaining the political weight of developed countries. They have good historical reasons to be dissatisfied with the current

distribution of power in the American-built system and good reasons to join as well.

China, for example, has often not thrived under Western hegemony—that is, in its “century of humiliation.” It has portrayed itself as the champion of the third world. Yet it has also been on the UN Security Council, has benefited from economic liberalization in the AIM world, and increasingly attends the G-8, the elite club of super-rich nations. Because of its crossover identity as developing country and superpower, and especially because of its snowballing economic clout, China will be increasingly important in the governance of world politics.

The issue for the United States and the fortunes of its AIM thinking is that the deals it will want to cut and what others are willing to agree to have shifted and are due to shift more. Americans believe that a return to AIM will help them get what they want through better diplomacy. But it will take more than diplomacy to conclude new major agreements. Other countries will likely demand more inclusion for their interests, and their values may differ from the current ones. What is not clear is whether Americans are willing to cut deals that allow for those differences or whether they can seal deals when interests overlap.

In the past, U.S. economic and military resources were often used to paper over gaps in values and interests and get deals done.²⁶ The United States had a surplus of economic and military goodies that gave it great leverage. Today it retains military might that still provides influence, but its relative economic clout has weakened. The United States faces significant constraints in the form of budget and international deficits, it has challengers in the global marketplace (such as the EU), the power of the dollar has waned, and the technological lead of the U.S. economy is smaller than it used to be. Yes, the United States still has leverage, but it is unclear whether it is enough.

Cutting deals to establish order will require more and greater concessions on the part of traditional U.S. interests (for example, deals with an authoritarian China). This could begin to hit home when even a skillful diplomacy by a popular leader encounters other significant countries that nonetheless are still unwilling to agree to the U.S. agenda. Hence over the longer term the friction caused by the shortfall between expectations and results will be a potential source of change and an opening for reengineering U.S. foreign policy.

Alternatives to AIM

Of course, whether major changes are realized depends as much on there being a new foreign policy as it does on the implosion of the old policy. It is

not possible to change from something to nothing. In the absence of some approach that has political support and that offers a solution to the problems faced, countries have sometimes stuck with the old ideas regardless of their fit with the circumstances.²⁷

One of the reasons the Bush revolution was even possible as an experiment was because a dedicated and energetic set of social activists—commonly referred to as neoconservatives—had developed and promulgated a coherent worldview in the 1990s.²⁸ These thinkers held influence and positions in the government in the Bush administration. Thus when the 9/11 attacks unsettled the commitment to the AIM ideas, they had an approach ready to go that could replace it.

Today it is not clear what strategy will take the place of AIM. The two alternatives from America's past—a type of neo-isolationism or a new manifestation of American nationalism akin to the Bush doctrine—have their advocates, but both appear to be minority positions. Intellectuals are again arguing over, and attempting to build support for, new alternative strategies.²⁹ Yet because there is little consensus around any particular vision, the absence of a viable alternative strategy may be the most difficult hurdle in the way of a transformation of U.S. policy.

Implications for Policy Planning

If this portrait of U.S. foreign policy has any validity, then the main tasks for policy planning in the years ahead will lie in three areas: implementing the AIM policy; attending to the fallout from the shortfall of expectations; and helping to nurture longer-term alternatives.

First, AIM is not dead, and it is the best feasible framework that exists today. Still, policy planners will have to help resolve the important debates about the most effective way to implement the consensus behind leadership, military preponderance, democratization, economic integration, and cooperation. As noted there are significant and serious divides about how to do this, and policy planning can help governments pressed by immediate challenges understand which choices have better long-term prospects.

Policy planning might also play a role in managing the failed expectations that are likely to result from that implementation. In the past, presidents have often exaggerated challenges and overpromised, with deleterious effects on strategy. Woodrow Wilson overpromised on the results from intervening in World War I. Yet people's expectations went unfulfilled and disillusionment set in, internationalism suffered, and throughout the interwar years the United

States was constrained from playing a constructive role in the international system. After the 9/11 attacks, President Bush also sought to steel Americans' attention around a terrorist threat of global reach. That focus mobilized a consensus behind military intervention in Afghanistan and then in Iraq, but the rhetoric also may have blurred critical distinctions (between terrorist and insurgent) in a way that stymied those conflicts and the broader campaign against Al Qaeda.

Finally, policy planning can play a role in generating new paradigms in U.S. foreign policy thinking both inside and outside the government. The goal would be to help nurture a base for policies that might one day replace the current orthodoxy. Admittedly this is a more difficult and non-doctrinaire use of policy planning, but there are some precedents. For example, Franklin Roosevelt and his administration, in conjunction with societal actors, did much to nurture support for American internationalism, even as popular sentiment and most of the policies of his early years as president favored the then dominant "no-entanglement" approach to U.S. foreign policy.³⁰

In the 1920 election, Warren Harding promised a "return to normalcy" after all the turbulence of Wilson's presidency. In the 2008 election, both John McCain and Barack Obama pledged a return to the "normalcy" of American internationalism following the rollercoaster of the Bush doctrine. Yet just as Harding's embrace of tradition ("no entanglement") was not suited to the international conditions the United States faced in the interwar period, so too is the U.S. embrace of AIM likely to be increasingly at odds with the emerging conditions the country will confront in the years ahead. At a minimum U.S. leaders will need to reorient public expectations for AIM and recognize the necessity to cut deals, in light of pressing problems, that may involve more give from the United States than has been necessary since World War II.

The challenges for policy planning are those that confront the country beyond the short term. An increasingly complex and dynamic world makes designing foreign policy a difficult task. But that same complexity also makes the need for understanding and charting possible futures more important. Government officials with pressing daily demands can rarely look too far ahead; still, as George Kennan illustrated in his logic of containment, a long-term view can be essential to successful strategy.

Notes

1. On polarization see Charles Kupchan and Peter Trubowitz, "Dead Center: The Demise of Liberal Internationalism in the United States," *International Security* 32, no. 2 (2007): 7–44.

2. In the Americas, the United States has been more prone to using overt force for democratization efforts. In other places it has tended to rely on political, economic, and covert means.

3. See, for example, Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, *The 9/11 Commission Final Report* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2004), pp. 399ff (www.gpoaccess.gov/911/Index.html [December 22, 2008]).

4. For a fuller exposition of this issue, see Jeffrey W. Legro, *Rethinking the World: Great Power Strategies and International Order* (Cornell University Press, 2005).

5. See Kean and Hamilton, *The 9/11 Commission Final Report*, esp. chap. 11, "Foresight—and Hindsight."

6. John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation," *Foreign Policy* (November–December 2002): 50.

7. Melvyn P. Leffler, "9/11 and the Past and Future of the U.S. Foreign Policy," *International Affairs* 79, no. 5 (October 2003): 1045–63; John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Yale University Press, 2004).

8. See Philip Zelikow, "The Transformation of National Security," *National Interest*, no. 71 (Spring 2003): 17–30; he noted, "The Bush administration has helped spur a worldwide debate not only about the purposes of American power, but about the objectives of the international system as a whole."

9. John McCain, "An Enduring Peace Built on Freedom," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2007): 19–34; Barack Obama, "Renewing America's Leadership," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2007): 2–16.

10. See, for example, Mike Allen and Romesh Ratnesar, "The End of Cowboy Diplomacy," *Time*, July 9, 2006; and Philip H. Gordon, "The End of the Bush Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2006): 75–86.

11. Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro, eds., *To Lead the World: U.S. Strategy after the Bush Doctrine* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

12. Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Public Opinion Study, 2006 (www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brunitedstatescanadara/256.php?nid=&id=&pnt=256&lb=brusc [December 9, 2008]).

13. *Ibid.*

14. Chicago Council on Global Affairs, "Globalization and Trade," April 2007 (www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/btglobalizationtradera/349.php?nid=&id=&pnt=349&lb=btgl [December 9, 2008]).

15. "Comprehensive Analysis of Polls Reveals Americans' Attitudes on U.S. Role in the World," WorldPublicOpinion.org, August 3, 2007 (www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brunitedstatescanadara/383.php?lb=brusc&pnt=383&nid=&id=) and "United Nations" (www.americans-world.org/digest/global_issues/un/unI.cfm [December 9, 2008]).

16. See Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro, "Dilemmas of Strategy," in *To Lead the World*, edited by Leffler and Legro, pp. 250–76.

17. See, for example, John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford University Press, 1982).

18. Michael G. Krukones, *Promises and Performance: Presidential Campaigns as Policy Predictors* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984), esp. pp. 123–25.
19. Jeff Fishel, *Presidents and Promises: From Campaign Pledges to Presidential Performance* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1985); Ian Budge and Richard I. Hofferbert, “Mandates and Policy Outputs: U.S. Party Platforms and Federal Expenditures,” *American Political Science Review* 84, no. 1 (March 1990): 111–31.
20. For more on these debates see Leffler and Legro, “Dilemmas of Strategy.”
21. Kishore Mahbubani, “The Impending Demise of the Postwar System,” *Survival* 47, no. 4 (2005): 7–18; G. John Ikenberry, “A Weaker World,” *Prospect* (November 2005): 30–33; James G. Poulos, “The Exhaustion of the International Order,” *American Spectator Online*, March 14, 2006; Hanns Maull, “The Precarious State of International Order,” *Asia-Pacific Review* (2006): 68–77.
22. See, for example, the writings of John Ikenberry.
23. See Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (Columbia University Press, 1977); Daniel Drezner, *All Politics Is Global: Explaining International Regulatory Regimes* (Princeton University Press, 2007).
24. Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness: Why the United States and Europe See the World Differently,” *Policy Review*, no. 113 (June and July 2002): 3–28.
25. John Peterson and Michael E. Smith, “The EU as a Global Actor,” in *The European Union: How Does It Work?* edited by Elizabeth Bomberg and Alexander Stubb, pp. 195–215 (Oxford University Press, 2002).
26. See, for example, Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton University Press, 1987); Michael Mandelbaum, *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World's Government in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005).
27. This was the case with Tokugawa Japan in the 1800s, and then with China later in the century. The U.S. aversion to entanglement in great-power politics, even when it was the greatest power after World War I, also has some of these tendencies.
28. See, for example, Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).
29. For example, Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008); Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams* (New York: Knopf, 2008). Also see the Center for a New American Security's “Solarium II” project (www.cnas.org/solarium2/ [December 9, 2008]).
30. Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America during World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967); Inderjeet Parmar, “Engineering Consent: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Mobilization of American Public Opinion, 1939–1945,” *Review of International Studies* (2000): 35–48.

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