

# Starting at Zero: U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1990s

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FOR THE FIRST time in more than four decades, the United States is faced with basic choices and decisions in foreign policy. It cannot escape a root-and-branch reassessment of its role and purpose, both at home and abroad. Following nearly half a century during which habits of acting in the world have become firmly set, the tools of critical analysis have tended to atrophy. The willingness and ability of the nation to make major readjustments have not been tested since the end of World War II and the onset of the Cold War. Factors are coming into play that have not been evident before. New circumstances will confront the nation. And foreign and domestic interests and policies are beginning to interact in novel ways.

In late 1991, the United States is engaged in a significant psychological withdrawal from the outside world of unclear dimensions and duration. A war in the Persian Gulf produces an astounding victory, but within days of cease-fire the American people set aside concerns about the region and let it return to obscurity. Yugoslavia dissolves in civil war without a major intervention by the United States, not

even as peacemaker, as U.S. leaders see the Yugoslav future to be basically an "internal matter." U.S. troops in Europe are reduced substantially with little remark in the media, and once-vital issues relating to nuclear weapons are passed over with scant comment or attention. In the Philippines, the U.S. Clark air base is removed by an act of God and the Subic Bay naval base is removed by an act of the Philippine Senate, yet there is no wringing of hands in the Pentagon or on Capitol Hill. Meanwhile, the American people are mesmerized as the Soviet Union, for so long the vaunted rival of the United States, falls apart; but they soon turn their attention to the next drama being played out elsewhere.

There are calls for the United States to withdraw from the outside world, for America to fold its tents and steal silently away, to celebrate victory—in the Cold War, in the Persian Gulf—then, like Cincinnatus two millennia ago, to return metaphorically to the plow. These calls come amid rediscovery of a pressing agenda in the United States and of efforts deferred: in health and education, infrastructure and investment, drugs and crime, the inner cities and the environment. This agenda must now come first, it is argued, while the rest of the world takes care of itself, without benefit of U.S. leadership, intervention, and, in some cases, even interest.

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Except for challenges from a handful of observers who have little understanding either of the United States or of the outside world, calls for U.S. withdrawal are not harbingers of a new isolationism, like that which ultimately was so threatening to U.S. interests between World War I and World War II. That earlier turning away from the world was an active policy that flew in the face of the facts about America's situation; this one is more passive and, up to a point, is a valid response to recent events.

The twin ideas of withdrawal and turning inward are not unnatural to the American experience. In a profound sense the era just concluded has been the aberration. The classic American way of making war has been to see the threat, engage the enemy, enter the breach, win the victory, and then return to business as usual. The Persian Gulf victory demonstrated that the Korean and Vietnam wars represented exceptions, not the rule: Indeed, two wars ended on February 28, 1991, the one then in progress and the other that had tortured the nation since the August 1964 episode in the Tonkin Gulf. The Cold War itself was part of this pattern of irregular U.S. experience, unlike the great world wars of this century that yielded to clear-cut victories in periods of less than half a decade each. Yet the Cold War, too, has now followed the classic pattern, resulting, like its predecessors, in victory for the United States.

On the morrow of this triumph, it is already possible to assess many of the most salient results of an era's passing. During the last few years, the Soviet Union has been engaged in nothing less than a strategic retreat as profound as any carried out in peacetime history. It has disgorged all the physical fruits in Europe of its success in the Great

Patriotic War. It has dismantled all but a handful of outposts of its external empire and even aided the United States (and allies) in mounting a military venture against a former Soviet client state, Iraq. That venture not only led to Iraq's crushing defeat but also seemed to demonstrate to the world that the United States towered over the Soviet Union in a principal, classic coin of national power—the ability to produce weapons that work.

Even more stunning has been the progressive dissolution of the Soviet Union and, in the process, of the capacity either of the center or of key republics to mobilize military power (still in being) for purposes of intimidating or attacking other countries. Thus the Soviet Union has given up not just external position but also much if not most of its internal capacity to deviate from its new course, at least for many years to come. Soviet retreat is proving to be not just tactical or strategic, but also elemental, removing the Soviet Union and all of its republics from the ranks of major powers for the foreseeable future.

Nor is change in the basic constituents of global power limited to geostrategic factors and concerns. What has happened in the Soviet Union and its external empire is also being widely read as a triumph for two basic tenets of Western power and position: the market economy and the pluralistic society. The Cold War, in fact, was a three-part struggle, only one element of which was a classic confrontation between two opposing great powers. Ideology also played a critical role, in two broad dimensions, economic and political. Here, too, the West is acknowledged to have prevailed, at least for the foreseeable future and in those countries in the Northern Hemisphere that were the primary focus of the

most intense aspects of cold war competition in its many guises.

### New Thinking

The aftermath of the Cold War is thus different from and more profound than the aftermath of the two world wars. Gone, in particular, is a set of paradigms or unifying themes that extended far beyond U.S.-Soviet relations to shape U.S. thinking about virtually everything happening abroad and about much U.S. policy at home. Of course, some parts of the globe were insulated from concerns about the Cold War, and most domestic debate made no reference to it. But the basic framework of foreign policy was still set by this overall paradigm—countries and regions might be expected, but that was a conscious act. Whether directly or indirectly, domestic matters were also often swept up in cold war concerns; this was certainly true whenever the allocation of national resources was at issue. Even the great national trauma of Vietnam was, from the standpoint of strategy and U.S. commitment, a tactical matter—that is, whether the prosecution of the war contributed to or detracted from the central purpose of containing the Soviet Union. Few critics of the war, arguing from strategic grounds, also challenged the existence of the Cold War or the settled question of containing the Soviet Union; at most, they argued either that the conduct of the war detracted from that central purpose, that it might provoke cold war-related losses elsewhere, or that it was simply irrelevant and thus should be judged by non-cold war criteria.

There were, in fact, three paradigms—and three paradigms only—for U.S. policy during the Cold War, one of which has been alluded to in the

preceding paragraph: containing the Soviet Union. The other two were as simply stated—containing the spread of communism (whether or not directly related to the increase of Soviet power and position), and promoting a growing, global economy under U.S. leadership. During the Cold War, the great bulk of U.S. concerns and attitudes about the outside world and America's place in it could be organized and explained in terms of these three paradigms. They made for as close to a unified field theory of foreign policy (including domestic components) as any nation has ever had.

One of these three paradigms, containing the Soviet Union, has now become irrelevant; a second, containing the spread of communism, has so diminished in significance as to be important only to the extent that communism still motivates China's and North Korea's behavior; and even the third, a growing, global economy under U.S. leadership, has altered in significance. This is not to say that key elements of the paradigms can be dismissed altogether. The Russian Republic and whatever replaces the Soviet Union can be expected to play major roles on the global scene at some point in the future. For all practical purposes, communism may be dead, certainly as a rallying point for discontents in different parts of the world, but the historic struggle between competitive visions of production versus distribution is far from resolved; indeed, it is likely to intensify in what we have called the Third World. And management of a growing, global economy is still critical, not just for the United States but also for other states, although questions of U.S. leadership and the degree of U.S. engagement in that economy are subject to debate and revision.

Deriving from this experience is the first cardinal lesson for the United States in the post-cold war era: There will be no encompassing paradigm of thought and action to rival those that dominated the past 40 years. This is not a trivial point. Even if new threats or unifying opportunities emerge—from rising tensions with either Japan or the Islamic world on the one hand to global concerns about the future of the environment on the other—none is likely to offer the simplicities of explanation or spurs to action in so many areas of U.S. activity in so many parts of the world. As desirable as it would be to garner global commitment to act on pressing realities like poverty and pollution, this will not happen to the degree that the Western world mobilized in the Cold War. In two words, America's future approach to the world will be far more *decentralized* and *disaggregated* than has been true for half a century. Diversity, not unity, will mark both intellectual and political apprehension of the outside world and America's role in it.

Despite the added complexities and uncertainties produced by a flight from simplicity, this conclusion should not be regretted. A unified field theory for U.S. policy and action at home and abroad was a product more of necessity than of design. The Soviet Union was a competitor geostrategically of near-equal proportions; certainly it passed the same threshold as the United States in having the capacity to cause almost limitless destruction if not also to project power to distant parts of the globe. It was an "enemy," but one with nuclear weapons, which fact meant that it had in major respects to be tolerated, not eliminated like Nazi Germany or Imperial Japan. Its political ideology was a potent competitor in third world areas that, in particular, were rejecting the legacy of Western

colonialism, and it was imposed through military power on captive societies, aided and abetted by Western analysts who proved flat wrong in discounting the resilience of resistance to tyranny. And the United States developed an instrumental role in an economy of global scope because, in the late 1940s, no other nation had the resources or the will to foster widespread economic growth. This course was important to back up Western efforts in the struggle with Soviet power and ideas, whether in Europe, Japan, or contested third world areas. And the major economic benefits conferred on the United States by this role helped generate the underpinning of popular support needed for the nation to assume a deeply engaged, committed role abroad.

### Power and Position

At this moment of rupture with the past, it is critical for the American people and their leaders to be clear-sighted about the United States' situation, the challenges it faces, and the methods and tools it either has or must develop to accomplish those tasks that lie ahead. Today, it is obvious that the nation no longer needs to devote the same level of resources to military defense, that the balance between military and other instruments of national power must be readjusted, that the pattern of engagements of the past 40 years will not suffice for the future, that foreign policies must be rigorously measured against competing domestic requirements and possibilities, and that there must be new, compelling reasons to enlist the engagement of the American people in the outside world. Habit may dictate one set of policies, interests may dictate a quite different set—and it will not be possible to get from one to the other

without fresh analysis, unblinkered by adherence to outdated prejudice, bureaucratic inertia, or intellectual laziness. In the post-cold war era, the United States needs a zero-based foreign policy, in which each element must justify its relevance and importance anew or be discarded in favor of another course that is more pertinent to the future, whether that course emphasizes continued involvement in different parts of the world or a greater detachment in order to master problems and needs at home.

In creating such a zero-based foreign policy, the starting point must be a strategic reassessment. There is no doubt that the United States and its partners won the Cold War, although Western leaders mute that point out of concern to avoid repeating with the Soviet Union the post-World War I experience in stigmatizing Germany. Less evident is the fact that the United States emerged from the Cold War, as from the two great hot wars of this century, not only as the world's most powerful nation according to classical calculations—this time the sole surviving superpower—but also relatively better positioned overall than any other major nation. It is a continent-sized country with a thriving economy that still produces nearly one-quarter of the world's goods and services (the historic norm of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries); it is a vast storehouse of natural and human resources, tied to an economy that is highly productive if no longer keeping pace with some others; it is an undivided nation with a high degree of civil peace and a functioning government; and it is now recovering another quality, once lost, that is of inestimable value: the psychological sanctuary provided by two broad oceans, which was breached during the 1950s by the direct and unprece-

dent threat to the nation posed by Soviet strategic nuclear bombers and then intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Equally important as this statement about relative U.S. advantage is a statement about absolutes: the perception that, in the wake of the Cold War, the United States has no natural enemies. This perception has been underscored by the victory in the Persian Gulf War, which set the seal on the Cold War and its practices and preoccupations. There is, in fact, in the immediate offing no other apparent source of military threat to major U.S. interests, anywhere in the world. That will continue to be so in the absence of three possible developments: the renewed overarming of potential adversaries, which remains possible, even likely, in the Middle East with its risk of radical changes in regimes; a last-gasp aggression by a dying North Korean regime; or military actions by either the Soviet Union (Russia) or China, even though such actions would be at direct variance with these countries' compelling interests in gaining access to the global economy and Western support for economic transformation.

If this perception of U.S. security is accurate—and it is not easy to construct a case, covering at least the next several years, that would confound it—then it is also clear that today the United States has a greater range of geostrategic choice than it has had since the beginning of the Cold War and in fact since before Pearl Harbor. No doubt, the United States will want to maintain significant military forces for reasons that include guarding against unexpected but not inconceivable threats in the Middle East. No doubt, their presence at some reduced levels both on land in Europe and at sea in the Western Pacific will have considerable value, both as insurance,

especially in Europe, against untoward events in the Soviet Union, and as general reassurance for many countries in the Far East. Neither the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nor U.S. bilateral pacts with allies like Japan should become obsolete so long as the Soviet future is indeterminate. But the United States does now have latitude to decide, to a degree it has not known since it emerged full-blown upon the world stage, where to be engaged abroad and where to keep its distance.

### A Geoeconomic Future

The expanding range of U.S. geostrategic choice can, of course, also be used to argue that, at least for now, the United States can lessen its engagement abroad, certainly in military terms, and that it can instead attend more to issues and challenges at home. At first look, this argument seems to be supported by two other profound developments: the progressive shift away from military instruments of foreign policy in shaping the global future, and the continuing rise in the importance of economic instruments and issues. These changes are especially relevant to a world that appears to be safe for the foreseeable future from catastrophic global war, although not from the possibility of limited regional conflicts.

Thus, as the basic East-West confrontation dissolves and the Persian Gulf War writes *finis* to an era of world affairs, there is new clarity to the importance of economic strength and practice for the shaping and conduct of global politics. The promise of the Single European Act for the European Community, the steady rise of Japan's economy and its tentative forays beyond an insular politics, and new pockets of economic prosperity and

power—especially in the newly industrializing economies of East Asia—all help define an era no longer dominated either by the struggle of the past 40 years or the military instruments that were so central to its conduct.

In this world, however, the United States does not have the comparative advantage that it had before, despite its unchallenged status as strategic superpower and its overall economic potential. Already, economic bargaining across both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans has lost a key ingredient: the special weight in the scales, favoring the U.S. position, that was for so long provided by America's once-leading export, security. Thus the two-way street in transatlantic defense trade has ceased to favor the United States, the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations is not assured success on the basis of U.S. pressure to gain concessions on agriculture from the European Community, and earlier this year the United States was hard-pressed to gain contributions from allies for its efforts in the Persian Gulf.

Victory in the Persian Gulf underscored the shift from the old to the new eras by reducing Iraq's military potential and leaving the United States the preeminent outside power in the region—the region that for many years has produced most disruption in the broader security interests of the United States and other industrial countries in major part because of its precious commodity, oil. Ironically, with the elimination of the only currently extant regional threat, with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from regional competition, and with the resulting sea change in Syria, even the military dimension of securing this most basic of economic interests has been dramatically reduced.

Indeed, U.S. success at military

containment and force of arms has produced a paradox of preeminence: its capacity to meet military challenges is unrivaled, but in the process of achieving that status it has reduced the relevance of these instruments in shaping the future of global politics. This is clearly a blessing, but it also exposes the United States as being less than well prepared to confront the world that its past policies and actions have helped make possible.

America's relatively weak position geoeconomically as opposed to geopolitically is made evident by several factors, including a widespread global dispersion of several key components of power and influence: human and technological resources, exportable capital, the efficient production of modern goods, influence over global economic decision making, and the will to mobilize economic capacity for national ends. The U.S. economy's nearly one-quarter of world output is still unmatched, but that fact confers upon the United States far less significant advantage over other countries than the one it enjoyed when the world was dominated by geostrategic issues and instruments.

Furthermore, the United States has an evident insufficiency of economic tools for influencing global economic decision making, for affecting the political behavior of other nations, or for shaping the global political-economic environment. Most obvious are the large and swelling U.S. trade deficits, which, within a decade, transformed the United States from being the world's largest creditor nation to being its largest debtor. The political leverage derived from its being a large net capital exporter has been vastly reduced. Even though it is not as vulnerable as other debtor states—its political stability and the size and weight of its massive economy provide unpar-

alleled collateral for borrowing—the United States does lack the capacity or at least the will to mobilize large-scale resources for specific purposes. Thus, since the Berlin Wall opened the United States has committed in Eastern Europe only a tiny fraction, far less than 1 percent, of the resources it once devoted in order to contain the advance of communism in Europe and the expansion of Soviet power there. And the act of demanding financial support for the Persian Gulf War, while merited, also revealed a weakness of economic leverage and affected U.S. political stature.

If the United States wishes to have a significant impact on the world of the 1990s and beyond, it must reevaluate the tools it needs to play an effective role in foreign policy. In short, while it was building military tools that provided a backdrop to the final phase of the Cold War and permitted the stunning defeat of Iraq, the United States was also disinvesting in the domestic tools of national economic power needed to be effective in the world beyond the Cold War. U.S. actions played a major part in changing the rules of the game; but in the new game the United States finds itself not just relatively less able to compete for power and influence but potentially below the threshold of what it will require in the years ahead simply to secure its minimal interests.

The proponents of major U.S. disengagement from the outside world thus see not only a dramatically lessened need for the United States to act for strategic purposes, but also an increased need for it to turn inward in order to retool. By this reasoning, it should concentrate on building a basis for competing in the new terms that are likely to dominate relations among states for the years ahead, so that it can later choose to turn outward again.

This retooling would focus on education, infrastructure, research and development, and other components of competitiveness, not just to promote greater economic success in a global trading environment but also to produce output that will give the United States the margins for employing capital in support of foreign policy.

Yet it is not obvious that this is a real choice, that the United States can gain such a breathing space, thereby mimicking, in far less critical terms, the search for a breathing space (*pere-dyshka*) that is the central foreign policy preoccupation of the Soviet Union and its republics. In fact, the concept of withdrawal without consequences is an illusion. While the United States was engaged in what proved to be the endgame of the Cold War, it was also becoming progressively more involved economically in the outside world. Much of this development was obscured during the 1980s by the focus on Soviet power and the resurgence of U.S. military strength. Measured over a period of two decades, however, the change is dramatic: a quadrupling of the fraction of U.S. gross national product tied up in foreign trade, the ceding to others of primacy in determining the prices of basic factors of production and consumption (notably food and fuel), and the loss of control over setting the value of the dollar. With the revolution in communications, the outside world is no longer remote for most Americans; it is certainly no longer remote, economically, as measured in terms of jobs and standard of living.

These and other evidences of change in the U.S. global economic position have many implications, but for the future of U.S. foreign policy one stands out. At the very moment that the United States has expanded its latitude for making geostrategic

choices, it has also become more constrained economically in its dealings with the outside world. To a degree never before true, it simply cannot retreat economically, yet it also cannot act as it did before. By the same token, although it is true that the geopolitical world is no longer linked together from one end to the other, that condition has developed in the geo-economic world. There are no longer islands of economic isolation that can hope for prosperity, and that fact impinges upon the United States almost as much as any other major state; in its own self-interest it can only choose to try shaping its external environment, because it will surely be shaped by that environment.

### The New Soviet Agenda

Against this backdrop, it may seem surprising that a zero-based U.S. foreign policy begins, as it did during the past four decades, with the Soviet Union. Yet the point is consistent. Despite the progressive collapse of the Soviet economy, government, ideology, and integrity, that country—along with its successor and major components—will remain a significant presence for the years ahead in each of the regions on which it abuts. Probably no development in the world today is more pregnant with possibilities, for good or ill, than the revolution sweeping the Soviet Union. Russia alone is by far the world's largest nation and the greatest repository of natural resources. The successors to the Soviet Union will still have major foreign interests and a desire to secure frontiers if not, immediately, influence abroad. Military power will not be totally dismantled, even if there are massive cutbacks and diversion of resources to civilian uses. And there is the con-



tinuing conundrum of Soviet nuclear weapons.

The prospects are bleak for a peaceful transition from a single, centralized country, with a statist economy and one-party rule, to a series of smaller entities with market-oriented economies and pluralistic politics. Strife and turmoil are more than likely; and more than likely is some spilling over onto neighboring states, if only through a peaceful invasion of civilian refugees.

The possibilities were dramatized during the brief period of the abortive coup in August 1991. In those few hours when it appeared that the clock of change was being turned back, however briefly, the West rapidly reassessed the risks and potential products of internal conflict in the Soviet Union. In Eastern Europe, anxieties rose about refugees, the loss of markets and raw materials, and the re-emergence of Communists imperfectly purged from power. Both NATO and the European Community began reevaluating their respective roles regarding Eastern Europe. In the Middle East, hostage diplomacy was suspended, prospects dimmed for Arab-Israeli peacemaking, and there was risk that the traditional Great Game of Russian-Western competition in southwest Asia would be revived. Meanwhile, hopes for a new world order, based in part on improved East-West cooperation, seemed to have died aborning.

The events of August are unlikely to be repeated. But they underscored both the uncertainties about the Soviet future and the stakes for its neighbors, not excepting the United States. At the same time, two other observations about the coup attempt and its aftermath are pertinent: despite the temporary success of hard-liners, they made no attempt to turn the Cold War

back on and reiterated the importance to the Soviet Union of access to the global economy; and although developments at the center and in the republics will profoundly affect other states, whatever the outside world does there will be dwarfed by challenges that the Soviet peoples must meet on their own.

The drama of change in the Soviet Union provides a vivid illustration of the nature of the post-cold war world facing the United States, as well as the nature of useful instruments and patterns of power and influence. Most evident, in none of the events this year has there been cause for reversing the general downward trend of U.S. military spending. Even during the coup attempt, there was no apparent reason for reenergizing U.S. defense preparations. Opportunities for cooperation with the Soviet Union might have been foreclosed, but any new dangers did not foreordain a revision of attitudes about the transition beyond a world dominated by military strength and relationships.

What has become clear is the difficulty for the United States in becoming engaged in the Soviet Union, or in neighboring Central and Eastern Europe, in ways that could make a difference and promote U.S. interests. U.S. debate in late 1991 has turned mostly on whether to provide economic support for the transformation of the Soviet Union, its republics, and neighboring states. Where Moscow is concerned, this is part of what has been a basic strategic bargain. In exchange for its strategic retreat from its external empire, the Soviet Union has sought access to the global economy (ratified by President George Bush at the December 1989 Malta Summit) and direct subventions (denied at the July 1991 Group of Seven Economic Summit).

U.S. debate includes whether economic assistance, in the form either of public aid or private investment, could be beneficial and effective. Debate also turns on symbolism: whether some support should be held out as an earnest of the West's willingness and desire to see the Soviet territories progressively integrated in the global economy rather than isolated from it. Indeed, a "democracy fund" of, say, \$10 billion could be held ready to provide humanitarian assistance (if needed), to promote training of workers, managers, and public officials, to help stimulate investment interest over the long term on the part of the U.S. private sector, and—in general—to symbolize U.S. and allied determination to welcome the various Soviet peoples to the outside world.

However these debates are resolved, there is also the matter of funds. Because of decisions taken several years ago, the United States does not have the latitude to appropriate moneys without deepening its budget deficit or raising taxes; there continues to be little inclination on the part of the American people to finance new ventures abroad, especially with the budget squeeze at home; and the 1990 federal budget agreement between president and Congress makes it impossible without new congressional action (subject to presidential veto) to move funds from defense to other uses. This obtains despite the evidently diminished utility of high levels of defense spending to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives and the rising value of having funds to spend in other ways, including domestic renewal.

Of course, these decisions represent choices, not imperatives: the United States is the richest country in history, and its people are the least taxed in the Western world. Such facts do not themselves create political incentives,

however, and the latter are noticeably lacking in terms of identifiable U.S. interests that the American people both understand and accept. Nevertheless, it should be clear that, although it might be good politics to persist with the budget agreement, it is surely bad foreign and domestic policy, especially when idle defense resources are needed to bolster national strength in so many other areas. Furthermore, in making judgments about national purpose, proponents of reducing U.S. engagement in the outside world in order to attend to domestic needs must confront the fact that moneys are not being spent to promote economic strength at home any more than on the new agenda abroad. The choice for major increases of funding for America's future, financed out of the defense budget, should not be either foreign policy or domestic needs but both.

U.S. reluctance to become engaged in Eastern Europe, even to be generous in opening up the U.S. market to trade, is less easy to explain. The prospects are certainly better than in the Soviet Union that moneys invested today will produce attractive economic payoffs tomorrow. Following the August coup in the Soviet Union, there should also be a clearer understanding of the value of helping the East European states meet the triple threat to their independence and stability: difficulties in the transition to democracy, the weak underpinnings for market economies, and the rise of ethnic, religious, and national strife—as witnessed most dramatically in Yugoslavia. Yet in this region, as well, U.S. economic engagement (public and private) has been minuscule in absolute terms, even though in terms of direct grants of public moneys it does not compare unfavorably with Western Europe.

It is far from self-evident to the American people, however, that the United States has a long-term interest in these countries or, if it does, why it should continue to bear European burdens at a time when its allies and other partners have the capacity to do so. The answer certainly does not lie in the arguments of the past: that this is part of the seamless web of containing Soviet power and Communist influence, two of the three cold war paradigms. Of course, if worse comes to worst in the Soviet Union and internal turmoil spills over massively into contiguous territories, that might inspire a U.S. response.

It is the remnant of the third cold war paradigm that comes into play in Eastern Europe: the importance of a growing, global economy. In the future as in the past, the direct benefits provided for the United States and the American people will be critically important, and properly so, in determining U.S. engagement. Indeed, the most compelling argument for a forthcoming U.S. response to East European needs—and to a lesser extent that of peoples in the Soviet Union—derives from the economic future: These countries represent potential markets of huge dimensions, although when those markets will be realized cannot be forecast with confidence. As America's West European allies become more engaged economically and politically in the East, it is also likely that future markets—which mean jobs and profits at home—will favor exports and investments from those countries, especially if the European Community develops special association agreements or speeds up the widening of membership. As in the cold war functioning of the global economy, therefore, creating and sustaining popular U.S. support for measures of longer-range significance require the devel-

opment of a sense of future economic payoff for current efforts.

### Promoting Ideology

What is happening from the old inner-German border to Vladivostok is also engaging basic Western values, especially democracy and the free-market economy. There is deep U.S. interest in these developments, in part because the evident appeal of the two Western models has helped to validate the entire cold war struggle. It will therefore be natural for the United States to continue promoting these twin concepts in many parts of the world, although so far it has shown little interest in advancing democracy in the Middle East for fear of producing potentially unfriendly regimes.

For one specific aspect of U.S. ideology—human rights—the end of the Cold War offers the United States opportunities because it relieves longstanding dilemmas. There are no longer geopolitical reasons to modulate support for human rights because of conflict with concerns about potential Soviet inroads. Thus Washington has felt free to end its support for Cambodia's Pol Pot, the world's leading butcher, now that it has no reason to counter the influence of Vietnam and hence of the Soviet Union. Vigorous debate can take place in the U.S. Congress on whether to continue extending most-favored-nation treatment to China: there is no longer need for a "China card" to play against the Soviet Union, and thus revulsion over the killings at Tiananmen Square is given preference. Of course, both in the congressional vote on China and in U.S. reluctance to press the case for democracy in the Middle East, commercial arguments intrude, reflecting the new era of geoeconomics. In the former case, China's \$15 billion trade

surplus with the United States was an important factor; in the latter case, the United States continues to be concerned about the security and price of oil.

It is unlikely, however, that U.S. popular commitment to democracy, human rights, the market economy, and the rule of law will on its own be sufficient to sustain an outward-looking view of the world without other, more direct evidence of either threat or opportunity. There is also risk both of disillusionment and of error. The concept "market economy" conjures up a clear picture in the West of a variety of approaches to economic organization and management, ranging across a wide spectrum of possibilities. In the former Communist countries, however, the term is still more abstract than real, a goal based upon appreciation of success rather than an agenda for action. What emerges in some countries may not look like the market-economy model as it is understood in the United States, and that development could inhibit U.S. willingness to support economic and social experimentation.

Even more problematic is the matter of democracy. Its appeal in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and in many other parts of the world has been clearly demonstrated as a negative quality—the flight from oppression and tyranny. The positive quality of building a democratic society is far more difficult to achieve and far less certain of success, especially in countries that have little or no experience of Western or alternative democratic traditions. Throughout Latin America, societies are engaged in promising political-economic experiments, and more states in the hemisphere have democratic forms of government than ever before. But from Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, and Serbia eastward,

transition to a politics of compromise will be long and painful, and the American people may be disappointed by the results during the next several years. These would not be the first nations to experience "one man, one vote, one time." And disillusionment in the United States, especially if several "liberated" countries fall under new tyrannies, could undermine enthusiasm for an active, ideologically sustained, foreign policy.

There is also risk of error or misjudgment in overzealous promotion of a current U.S. idea: the supremacy of the free market, with its emphasis on impersonal forces and the primacy of production over distribution. The struggle between capitalism and communism in the developed countries may be over; the struggle for social and economic justice in what we have called the Third World has hardly begun. A free-market model is now in the ascendancy and colors everything from the economic policies of the United States to the latest papal encyclical, but demands for redistribution of resources, not just sharing of economic and political philosophy, are likely to dominate North-South debate for years to come. The United States has its recent triumph over the Soviet Union in strategy, political philosophy, and economics; and a free-market economy has unchallenged practical merits in mobilizing productive resources. Nevertheless, whether in political or psychological attitudes or availability of resources, the United States is still clearly unprepared for the underlying debate with the Third World.

The United States, even more than its Western partners, also risks confusing the terms of this debate, which will often be strident, with the development of a new ideological confrontation. This could take many guises,

as we have seen during several decades of North-South struggle. Today the prime candidate for ideological confrontation with the West is Islam, unvariegated in most U.S. commentary and little understood in any of its forms. Islamic political reaction against the United States and the West in the wake of the Persian Gulf War may yet become potent beyond those few countries in which it has so far appeared. Islam in different forms and places can also become a rallying point for economic and social discontents, appealing to people who have no stake in the religion as such. There is thus risk of a new ideological struggle. It can be avoided, however, if mutual efforts are made to deal with North-South economic issues on their own terms and to avoid the simplicities that so often lead peoples toward either great achievements or great wrongs. Having moved beyond an era dominated by a rigid ideological competition, the United States can hardly profit by succumbing to old prejudices born of that era or by adopting new ones that produce an avoidable confrontation.

### A New World Order

The promise contained in President Bush's concept of a "new world order" can also be viewed at first blush in the negative: a world that has moved beyond cold war, beyond sterile competition, beyond the corrosive effects of communism, and indeed beyond the U.S.-Soviet nuclear age—the last-named representing one of the most stunning achievements of human history. Some observers see the promise of a new world order in a Pax Americana; others fear it for the same reason, and both are wrong because of arguments presented above: There can be no such U.S. dominance. If

there is "order," and that point can be debated, it will surely not be premised on the primacy of the United States, save where, as in the Middle East, military power can still be a major arbiter of events with implications far beyond the region.

The concept of a new world order was born at a time when the United States had put together an unprecedented coalition of states to act for a common purpose. The most unlikely collection of 30 countries joined the United States in confronting and then defeating Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The coalition's purpose was not primarily military: the United States had the necessary capacity on its own, although it welcomed the efforts of key European allies. Instead the coalition served political purposes: first, to convince the American people that the United States was not acting alone to secure an asset, oil, that was more important to other countries; and second, to counter Saddam Hussein's charges that he was championing the cause of the downtrodden against the "imperialists and Zionists."

The coalition's success does not necessarily set a precedent, however. There is, in fact, no other place on earth about which so many countries care so much, because of that precious resource, oil. Thus it is most unlikely that the pattern could be repeated: U.S. identification of the threat, an initial U.S. response, U.S. development of a coalition, and U.S. management of the strategy from beginning to end. In the future, it may again be important that one nation take the lead—as was clearly so following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait; but it is unlikely that next time only costs and responsibilities will be shared and not also the power of decision. The defeat of Iraq has reduced the chances that another military coalition will be needed

in the near future; but if other coalition efforts were required, it is increasingly likely that the United States would have to accept a greater degree of self-limitation in defining problems, suggesting remedies, creating strategies, and assigning roles.

Properly understood, however, this does not have to be seen as constraining U.S. power and influence; instead, it could extend and expand them. In an era dominated by issues that do not respond to military solutions—although war, obviously, is far from abolished—there is merit for the United States in using diplomatic tools that are “force multipliers,” analogous to some modern combat weapons. Today, the United Nations (UN) has begun to come into its own, partly because of the changing global agenda but primarily because of the transformation of Soviet policy and attitudes. Moscow, first to understand the futility of continuing to prosecute the Cold War, was also first to understand the value in ceding to the UN sufficient sovereignty for common action that would also achieve some Soviet goals. Washington is in the process of learning a similar lesson, and the combination offers promise not evident since the UN charter was signed.

In the post-cold war era, there will also be benefit for the United States in expanded rule-making—international law—as mediated through the UN, which must not act as an agent of great power dominance but rather in areas where coalitions of states have common interests. Indeed, further codification of practice, observance of rules already accepted, and appropriate use of institutions like the UN that draw their legitimacy from international law can provide a partial paradigm, at least a reference point, for direction in a world that will otherwise

have few certainties or universal practices.

The intersection of legal codes and multilateral institutions can also help provide a higher degree of predictability about world events and nations’ responses to them than would otherwise be the case—a predictability that was a hallmark of the cold war era and that has been missed by some commentators as they survey the future of the global system.

This role for codes and institutions will be especially valuable as the world, including the United States, is forced to confront an emerging agenda of global issues whose time has come, partly because of the press of circumstance and partly because their importance is no longer obscured by superpower confrontation. Notably, these include proliferation, pollution, and the iron nexus between poverty and population.

### **Leadership in a New Age**

The emotional and psychological adjustment facing the United States is not limited either to changes in agenda or in the tools most likely to be prominent in conferring power and influence. Changes in America’s relative station in influencing great events will also affect its role of leadership. During the Cold War, this was an instrumental quality: if the United States did not lead, then little would follow that would promote U.S. interests. For the American people, however, it has never been clear that U.S. leadership has had value for itself, or that it should be sustained beyond the requirement for meeting U.S. needs. The answer is perhaps already evident in the relative U.S. passivity in the face of momentous events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but that

conclusion may be unfair: It is not yet clear what challenges will most dominate America's apprehension of the outside world and what role will be demanded of the nation in securing its interests.

There is certainly merit in sharing leadership with other, like-minded nations, notably Japan and key allies in Europe (and the European Community). Sharing leadership, like sharing burdens, requires accommodating to the views of others, however. For the United States, it will neither be automatic nor easy to adjust to the idea of accepting the lead of another state, even a like-minded state.

Emphasis must also be placed on the term "like-minded." In the post-cold war era, the three major Western partners are likely to continue sharing a similarity of geopolitical outlook: They were held together for four decades not just by the negative influence of Soviet power and ideology but also by their shared attitudes and experiences. But it is less clear that they will now cleave together either in defining less-central issues and outcomes (as in the Middle East) or in geoeconomics. Indeed, current trends argue the opposite, whether in the failure to elevate the Uruguay Round of the GATT negotiations to the political level that its importance for the future of the global economy justifies; in the possibility that the global economic system will fall prey to the growth of regional trading blocs—with uncertain geopolitical consequences; or in the reduction of U.S.–Japanese relations in the minds of too many people to a single statistic: the bilateral balance of trade.

In all these cases, geoeconomics must be meshed with geopolitics—in short, economic issues must be integrated with broader concerns about

strategic challenge and opportunity, shared democratic outlook, compatible social structures, and common global problems. In 1991, it is still too early to expect either Japan or the European Community to demonstrate the attitudes and practices of outward-looking states, with a developed and reflexive sense of responsibility for the effective functioning of the global economic and political systems. It is equally inappropriate to chastise Japan and Germany for resisting the creation of military capabilities and domestic political license in order to send forces abroad, or to criticize the European Community for inadequacy in dealing with a Yugoslav crisis that both defies easy solution and elicits little U.S. involvement.

On its agenda for the post-cold war era, the United States has a special item of unfinished business from the post-World War II era: to help nurture both Japan and Germany (the latter through the European Community) to assume political roles appropriate to their stations as major economic powers without at the same time becoming major military states. In a geoeconomic world, that would make little sense on any grounds. At the same time, in its own self-interest the United States must join other leading economic powers to fashion new rules and practices for the global economy that will preserve and extend its effectiveness without also requiring the leadership and capital surpluses of any single country.

### Abroad and at Home

The end of the Cold War can also be seen as the end of an aberrant era, one uniquely marked, as argued earlier, by the dominance of a handful of paradigms. It was also an era in which

preoccupation with stability in the global system distorted the balance that has been traditionally struck between that value and the continual changes in power and position among nations that are endemic to human society. The fall of the Berlin Wall symbolized the coming together of several trends in historical development: the playing out, at long last, of the endgame in Europe from World War II; the amelioration of irrational fears of one another on the part of the two superpowers, plus their mutual recognition that neither had anything to gain from continued conflict; the widespread perception of the success of Western market systems in comparison with centrally planned economies; the penetration of closed societies by modern means of communication; and the propagation and popularity of ideas fundamental to human dignity and self-realization.

Today's world is less stable and less predictable; but for all that it is a safer world, one that has moved decisively beyond the U.S.-Soviet nuclear age and also beyond the interconnection of political conditions and events that could produce a cataclysm out of a Sarajevo. In this world, the United States plays a different part, its earlier, post-World War II role having been successfully completed. It would be strange if it were otherwise.

For the United States, the premium in the future will be on clear-sighted analysis, at each step of the way, of

four key factors: the changing nature of the world and its constituent parts, the individual and collective U.S. interests in that world, the tools appropriate to secure those interests, and the choices preferred by the American people—without which grounding there can be no successful foreign policies or sufficient incentive even to meet evident requirements. This analysis must be segmented, avoiding the search for simplicities or paradigms where these do not naturally exist. This is especially true where a paradigm is little more than a prejudice and produces invidious results for the interests both of the United States and of others. But the analysis must also be holistic. In the modern era, there is no merit in attempting to segregate politics or security from economics, foreign from domestic policy, or any of them from an underlying national strategy, or method, that is based on enduring democratic politics. It is no doubt true that, to be effective abroad in the years ahead, the United States must be better prepared at home, especially in strengthening those economic tools and revitalizing those social relationships that will be critical in helping the nation compete in the global economic and political marketplaces. But it is also true that, in the process, the United States and its people cannot retreat from the outside world and expect either that it will leave them alone or that they will prosper thereby.