

PART I:
**THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
WITH DIPLOMACY AND
MILITARY RESTRAINT**

I. Orphaned Diplomats: The American Struggle to Match Diplomacy with Power

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Benjamin Franklin spent the American Revolution in Paris. He had helped to draft the Declaration of Independence in the summer of 1776, one of the most radical documents of the eighteenth century—sparking rebellion on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Serving as a representative for the Continental Congress in France during the next decade, Franklin became a celebrity. He was the enlightened idealist from the frontier, the man of principled action who enthralled onlookers in the rigid European class societies of the 1770s and '80s. Franklin embodied the American critique of Old World society, economy, and diplomacy. He was one of many American revolutionaries to take aim at the degenerate world of powdered wigs, fancy uniforms, and silver-service dinners where the great men of Europe decided the fate of distant societies. Franklin was a representative of the enduring American urge to replace the diplomacy of aristocrats with the openness and freedom of democrats.¹

Despite his radical criticisms of aristocracy, Franklin was also a prominent participant in Parisian salons. To the consternation of John Adams and John Jay, he dined most evenings with the most conservative elements of French high society. Unlike Adams, he did not refuse to dress the part. For all his frontiersman claims, Franklin relished high-society silver-service meals, especially if generous portions of wine were available for the guests. Franklin was the closest American friend to the very Old World elite that his revolutionary ideals rejected. He practiced high-society diplomacy better than most of his European peers, especially when it served crucial American interests.²

Franklin's astute, sophisticated, and even manipulative diplomacy allowed him to negotiate the Franco-American Treaty of Alliance in 1778. Despite his orders from Philadelphia to avoid alliance with aristocracy and promote an idealistic "Model Treaty," Franklin made commitments to French interests that helped procure necessary military assistance for the imperiled American

revolutionaries. He subsequently appealed to the vanity and interests of the French aristocracy in procuring Versailles's acceptance of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, creating an independent American nation. Franklin was representative of what scholars have identified as the realist streak in American foreign policy that uneasily coexists with the country's consistent urge for moral perfection.³

Historian Jonathan Dull puts it well when he describes Franklin's "calculated ambiguity" about American aims.⁴ Franklin mixed an idealistic zeal for detachment from what he described as British tyranny with a carefully cultivated commitment to friendship with monarchical France that would serve the mutual interests of the revolutionaries and the Old Regime. Franklin coupled this delicate diplomatic dance with a subtle threat that the Americans would negotiate a separate deal with Great Britain in the event that France did not provide sufficient support. Of course, Franklin, John Adams, and Silas Deane did just that after the Battle of Yorktown, when it appeared that they had achieved their aims on the ground, and the British were poised for retreat from the Thirteen Colonies.⁵

During the two centuries since his death, Franklin has remained an object of historical fascination for Americans.⁶ His place in the American political and foreign policy consciousness has remained ambivalent. Was he an eloquent idealist like Thomas Jefferson? Was he a tough-minded realist like Alexander Hamilton? Was he an advocate of political change through persuasion, like Woodrow Wilson? Was he a practitioner of state power, like Theodore Roosevelt? Was he a wide-eyed optimist about American-led international change, like Ronald Reagan? Was he skeptical of radical international programs, like George Kennan and Henry Kissinger?

Franklin was all and none of the above. Scholars of American foreign policy have struggled to fit him into our standard conceptual dichotomies. When this has failed, they have abandoned him and returned to their theoretical and empirical inquiries about the characters in our past who are much easier to categorize. After all, Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt offer what appear to be clearer and more useful contemporary "lessons" than someone as elusive as Franklin.

This is a problem that is deeper than the limits of the scholarly imagination. The American democratic process encourages stark policy dichotomies, rather than extensive deliberation about positions in between. In a two-party system with impersonal mass campaigns, there is a natural devolution to simple, strong, and often unequivocal positioning, rather than complex, contingent, and even contradictory thinking. The world of Obama, like that of Franklin centuries earlier, is filled with contradictions and inconsistencies. The American political system, however, enforces simple logic and consistent claims. This was a problem

in the early days of the Republic, as Alexis de Tocqueville and others observed, and it has become worse with a twenty-four-hour news cycle and instant scrutiny of every policy utterance. American political discourse valorizes Wilsonian eloquence and Rooseveltian realism, but codes a Franklin-like synthesis as weakness, waffling, and confusion. Writing in the shadow of the Vietnam War, Russell Weigley observed that it is easier in the United States to be “for” or “against” a war, rather than to be a proponent of serious but limited uses of force.⁷

American diplomacy came of age in this context. The nation’s most experienced and sophisticated international negotiators have struggled to fit their complicated policy practice within the simple lexicon of domestic politics. Since the Second World War, they have consistently failed. George Kennan gave up, and argued for more policy insulation from public opinion. Dean Acheson endeavored to beat the public over the head with strong rhetoric, making the needs of policy “clearer than truth.” Most controversial Henry Kissinger mixed obsessive secrecy with long, ponderous reflections on the purposes of policy that almost no one had the stamina to read. American democracy has largely orphaned the nation’s diplomats. Unfortunately, their behavior has frequently reinforced this process.⁸

This essay will examine what this orphaning of diplomacy has meant for American foreign policy since the Second World War. How did American discomfort with compromise and contradiction contribute to an overextension of U.S. commitments in the Cold War? How did it hinder effective alliance management? How did it transform a country founded on principles of democracy into an overmilitarized society? Diplomacy did not offer obvious solutions to any of the major postwar challenges confronting the United States, but that is precisely the point. An unwillingness to mix idealism and power with compromise and contingency left the nation overextended, overmilitarized, and somewhat alone in a world of multiplying challenges.

Cold War Overstretch

As late as 1960, leading American policymakers did not intend to fight a global Cold War. It would have astounded (and revolted) men such as George Marshall, George Kennan, Dean Acheson, and Dwight Eisenhower to imagine a time when American forces were fighting on the “front lines” of the Cold War in sub-Saharan Africa and the Southern Cone of South America. They would have found it equally difficult to conceive of a time when industry and education within the United States became so focused on American Cold War purposes that federal research dollars dwarfed all counterparts, erasing many of the divisions between the public and the private economy. This was not a conspiracy.

The Cold War extended the reach of the U.S. government farther at home and abroad than anyone seriously expected or advocated.⁹

Marshall, Kennan, Acheson, and Eisenhower might have lamented this process, as they all did, but they contributed to it as well. Many historians have made that point. In particular, the logic of containment strategy, as articulated by all four statesmen, left few geographic and institutional limits on the expansion of American power. The communist enemy was expansionist and only responded to force, according to containment. Short-term successes for the adversary, even if limited in value, would encourage more expansion, subversion, and conflict. The searing experience of failed efforts to appease Japan, Italy, and Germany in the 1930s made it difficult to see each apparent enemy advance as anything but the promise of more war and suffering in the near future. Signs of weakness anywhere seemed to open the door for danger everywhere.¹⁰

The authors of containment rejected Old World diplomacy. They did not view distant territories as commodities to trade for peace, as Bismarck and Salisbury conceived a half century earlier. They did not treat poor and faraway lands as areas where American interests were minimal, at best—where the nation had little interest in searching for monsters to slay, as John Quincy Adams explained decades before. Instead, the authors of containment viewed “peripheral” areas as ticking time bombs, about to explode in their faces if captured and reprogrammed by communist totalitarians. This was not a point of analytical reflection as much as it was an emotional response to the generational trauma of the world’s most destructive war. Expansion, toughness, and commitment, rather than careful consideration of alternatives, became the default containment reaction to perceived threats. Time and again, cooler heads did not prevail.¹¹

Kennan and Eisenhower, in particular, understood the perils of this position. They warned repeatedly that the United States could not respond to communist advances everywhere. Acting in all corners of the globe, the country would deplete its resources, distort its domestic economy, and inspire more enemies. That was clear to citizens who had come of age in the Great Depression and doubted the wisdom of the new deficit-driven economics espoused by John Maynard Keynes. Caution also appealed to the traditional antic cosmopolitan and fiscally conservative streak that continued to run through American political thought, especially in the Midwestern and Western sections of the country. As Fredrik Logevall has reminded us, many Americans—including influential figures like Walter Lippmann—looked skeptically at the militaristic elements of containment doctrine in the late 1940s. They advocated less expansion and more compromise, even with Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.¹²

This traditional effort to remain strategically aloof, rather than deeply and extensively committed, was destined to lose public support. It appeared too confident and even passive in a world filled with threats and evils. It appeared too ambivalent about the purposes of American power. It appeared to legitimize godless and evil enemies. Frequent criticisms of Franklin Roosevelt's alleged naiveté about "Uncle Joe" Stalin during the Second World War were the kinds of attacks on diplomatic compromise that undermined support for this position in the early Cold War. Feeling both more powerful and more vulnerable than ever before, many Americans would not accept the permanence of an imperfect world where the Benjamin Franklins and Franklin Roosevelts had to dine with the devil.¹³

Force and idealism trumped diplomacy. Expanded strategic commitments abroad replaced the wisdom of restraint. This appeared the safer political approach, at least for the short term. Leaders who prepared for the worst and made conspicuous efforts to deny the enemy any advances would not face accusations of incompetence, even treason. The opposite was true for the advocates of restraint. After the success of the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949, Dean Acheson and many of his subordinates in the State Department learned how difficult it had become in postwar American society to defend the simplest of propositions: some countries were not worth fighting for, and the United States could not fight effectively for these countries, even if the communists were poised to assume power. This wise and realistic position appeared weak and defeatist. In areas that Americans had allegedly "lost," diplomacy looked like a poor substitute for the righteous use of force.¹⁴

For all their later statements to the contrary, Kennan, Marshall, Acheson, and Eisenhower enabled (and often encouraged) this expectation of reactive force, or what Acheson called "situations of strength."¹⁵ These men and their counterparts always emphasized foreign threats and military needs more than necessary limits and potential areas of compromise. They rarely used the latter word in their public statements about foreign policy. When confronted with a communist advance, their instinctive reaction was to respond with some kind of force, or threat of force. They voiced frequent worries about "overextension" and a "garrison state" in private, but never at the key moments of public action and public mobilization—during the Berlin Crisis of 1948 to 1949, the Korean War, the two Taiwan Strait crises of the 1950s, or the Berlin Crisis of 1958 to 1961. The logic of their commitment to restraining communist expansion by force, and the tendency of their rhetorical appeals to strength, contributed to escalating pressures for growing American military, economic, and political commitments around the globe. "Negotiating from strength" in each of these crises meant, in practice, building strength and issuing ultimatums. The only compromise was expected to come from the enemy.¹⁶

Vietnam is the most revealing case. An entire generation of detailed historical scholarship has shown that few Americans were optimistic about the opportunities for long-term political stability and capitalist economic development in South Vietnam. A small cohort of optimists—social scientists and religious activists—argued strongly for an American-supported “miracle” in Southeast Asia, but they never persuaded the key political decision makers in Washington, or the American public for that matter. Instead, presidents from Eisenhower to Nixon gradually and consistently escalated the American military and economic presence in South Vietnam with grave reservations. These men never really believed they were poised for “success” in Southeast Asia, whatever that would mean. There were few “true believers” in the prospects for Vietnam, from the early days after the Geneva Conference through the dark days of the final American withdrawal.¹⁷

Despite their grave reservations, American policymakers firmly felt that they had no alternative but to increase force for the purpose of containing communist advances—even in territory distant from core American national interests. The logic and the politics of containment pointed inexorably in that direction. Advances for the communists far from home would only encourage their strength and aggression in more vital neighborhoods such as Japan and Germany. The communists would only respond to clear evidence that they could not steal territory from the free world. Images of “falling dominos” and “salami tactics”—where the enemy sliced away at the meat of the free world—drove presidents and their advisers to see diplomacy as delay and immediate force as a necessary reaction.¹⁸

Even in his most clairvoyant moments about the problems in Vietnam, John F. Kennedy, like his counterparts, recognized that perceived weakness in Southeast Asia would have enormous political and perhaps strategic costs. He would face accusations of tolerating another Democratic party “loss” in Asia. He would confront foreign allies—such as Konrad Adenauer and Chiang Kai-shek—who would now question the reliability of America commitments to contain communism where the stakes were much higher. The irony, of course, is that Kennedy’s strong and eloquent advocacy of “paying any price” to force the retreat of communist power had reinforced this political bias to military containment.¹⁹

Lyndon Johnson fell into the same trap, particularly in the wake of Kennedy’s perceived victory through strength during the Cuban Missile Crisis. (Observers at the time did not give sufficient attention to the careful diplomacy that brought the Cuban Missile Crisis to its peaceful denouement.) Johnson’s graphic phone conversations from 1964 and 1965 reveal his profound pessimism about Vietnam. “I don’t see what we can ever hope to get out of this” he

exclaimed to his national security advisor, McGeorge Bundy. Echoing the apparent lessons of appeasement, Bundy reaffirmed the president's axiomatic belief that he could not give the communists a victory of any sort. Johnson agreed, warning that if the communists advanced in a region they would soon "chase you into the kitchen." The only solution, as the president and his advisors saw it, required the United States to bolt the door and punish trespassers, despite the obvious difficulties. Talk about compromise and cooperation could only follow security enforcement.²⁰

The election of Richard Nixon in 1968 marked a partial turning point in policy. The new president and his closest foreign policy advisor, Henry Kissinger, recognized (as Johnson did too in his last presidential year) that diplomatic negotiations with North Vietnam, and perhaps the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam, would be a necessary component of any cessation to the war in Southeast Asia. Kissinger, in particular, pursued negotiations with a vigor and determination not seen in any previous Cold War administration. His efforts, however, continued to hinge upon the use and frequent escalation of American force in the region. As scholars of the period have shown, massive U.S. bombings in the region were more than just a stick to prod Kissinger's interlocutors in negotiations. They were also a fundamental part of a Nixon-Kissinger strategy designed to convince American and foreign observers that the United States would not back down from communist containment. The massive destruction represented a continuing American commitment to show strength before diplomatic compromise.²¹

Kissinger's calls for more sophisticated American diplomacy in the 1970s, and later decades, echo many of the insights from Benjamin Franklin's experience in late eighteenth-century France. The idealistic urge for reform in the international system must be tempered by a willingness to negotiate and compromise, even with evil enemies. Effective foreign policy is always about choosing lesser evils, not perfect solutions. As Kissinger has argued repeatedly, containment strategy in the Cold War overvalued unilateral military responses to communism, and it undervalued diplomacy. Containment made diplomacy a second response, after the guns and bombs.²²

Unlike Franklin, however, Kissinger refused to accept that diplomatic negotiations could not always occur on American terms. He engaged diverse interlocutors, but he never showed a willingness to revise the fundamental assumptions about American moral righteousness and material dominance that underpinned his policies. Even when the United States killed thousands of innocent civilians in the name of communist containment, Kissinger refused to acknowledge that the nation had departed from its moral purpose. Even when the nation supported forces that impoverished local communities, he refused to

acknowledge the failures of American development strategies. Real diplomacy begins with talk, but it also requires compromise on fundamental assumptions as societies work together for mutual gain. Franklin's diplomacy in eighteenth-century France redefined the American Revolution in these terms; Kissinger's diplomacy, like that of other American Cold War policymakers, reaffirmed reasonable but often misguided U.S. definitions of power.²³

The Cold War locked the United States into assumptions about forcing enemies to change. These assumptions reduced the effectiveness of diplomacy abroad, and its persuasive potential at home. As the United States grew more powerful and more vulnerable after 1945, it also became more unwilling to embrace real diplomatic compromise on difficult issues. This was the greatest failure of containment doctrine, predicted by its earliest and most consistent critics, especially Walter Lippmann. It is a failure that recent practitioners of U.S. foreign policy, in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, have re-created. Since the Second World War Americans have commonly thought that they can and should get their way in international disputes. They expect opponents to make all the concessions. This assumption of victory for Americans and sacrifices for others is the single greatest impediment to effective diplomatic practice. At home and abroad, Americans must re-educate themselves to accept compromise rather than containment.

Alliance Mismanagement

The post-1945 American aversion to diplomatic compromise did not only affect conflicts with communist adversaries. It created a peculiar view of alliances. In addition to the balancing and partnering functions traditionally associated with alliances, Americans came to see their agreements with friendly states as mechanisms for furthering U.S. military and economic purposes *without* serious political bargaining. Americans spent heavily on their foreign alliances, and they made extensive security guarantees, but they rarely gave deep consideration to compromises or negotiations with foreign figures. American alliances were economically rich and diplomatically impoverished.

The United States treated the political concerns of its allies as a second thought, at best. Alliance diplomacy was, in fact, quite limited and one-sided. Allies who questioned U.S. political aims confronted forceful opposition and frequent American efforts at leadership replacement. Washington's alliances after the Second World War were intolerant of political diversity. The more the United States invested abroad, the more it demanded support in containing communist aggression, as defined by Washington, despite contrary local nationalist inclinations.²⁴

Comparing the American-led NATO alliance in Western Europe with the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact in Eastern Europe, John Gaddis appropriately emphasizes the far greater role for consent within the U.S. sphere of influence.²⁵ As Geir Lundestad has argued, many American allies “invited” U.S. protection, influence, and especially financial assistance after 1945.²⁶ They recognized major benefits from American alliance. The same could not be said for the Soviet satellites. The differences in the nature of the alliances had a considerable influence on the last decades of the Cold War, when the Warsaw Pact proved incapable of adapting to meet the financial and political demands of citizens in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and even the Soviet Union itself. The events of 1989 displayed the real gap between alliances—East and West.²⁷

Europe, however, provides an extreme example of the differences between an imposed Soviet empire and invited American influence. Scholars of other regions—particularly Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa—have not found the same degree of consent for U.S. policies. In these areas the United States consistently rejected relationships with legitimate nationalist figures who expressed serious interest in working with Washington, but with some American compromise on standard anticommunist, anticollectivist, and anti-protectionist policies. Figures such as Mohammed Mossadeq, Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, Patrice Lumumba, Cheddi Jagan, Sukarno, and perhaps even Salvador Allende were open to U.S. partnerships, but they required political compromises for domestic nationalist needs.²⁸

As almost every scholar of these countries has agreed, Washington never pursued serious diplomacy with popular nationalist leaders. Economic sanctions, political isolation, and covert operations became an easy American alternative to discussion of mutually beneficial compromise. Even in Egypt, where the Eisenhower administration recognized a need to negotiate with Gamal Abdel Nasser, the foremost scholar of the subject shows that the White House never escaped an overwhelming commitment to anticommunism that, in the end, hindered the administration’s sincere efforts to accommodate Arab nationalism. As Salim Yaqub explains, the United States overinvested in military containment and underinvested in diplomacy in the Middle East.²⁹

Throughout the Cold War the evidence was clear that American anti-diplomacy undermined alliances and left the United States dependent on unpopular, unreliable, and undemocratic strongmen. The United States rejected viable national leaders and found itself stuck with surrogates who simultaneously depended on U.S. support and undermined American long-term capabilities with foreign populations. Despite this sad record, even the most clairvoyant American policymakers failed to embrace a fuller and more sophisticated

approach to alliance diplomacy outside Europe. The U.S. record on alliance management is remarkably consistent, and often counterproductive, in the Cold War.

Henry Kissinger is again the best example. During the 1960s he repeatedly criticized his predecessors for neglecting the political needs of allies, particularly in Europe. The United States could not keep the West Germans, the French, and the British at the front lines of the Cold War, he argued, while Washington stubbornly denied them more of a say in their own military defenses, their own foreign economic policies, and their own relations with Eastern Europe. As soon as Kissinger became national security adviser, however, he further subverted European efforts to assert more equality and autonomy in the Western alliance. Kissinger's activities in office presumed that the United States could act unilaterally and secretly in the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, and the Middle East, consulting the Europeans (and other allies) only after the fact. He spent far more time cultivating relations with adversaries than with allies. Even someone acutely sensitive to the complexities of alliance diplomacy could not escape the American penchant for self-centeredness. Kissinger, like his predecessors and successors, was far too limited in his efforts to author diplomatic compromises with allies that would encourage greater long-term cooperation and stability.³⁰

Why has the United States proven so poor at managing alliances? Franklin's experiences in late eighteenth-century France show that alliance diplomacy was once central to American foreign activities, even at a time when the Revolutionaries sought to separate themselves from the aristocratic Old World of Europe. Franklin left a model of alliance building for idealistic purposes that should inspire his successors.

The problem is not American ideals, but the scope and definition of American power. Between the early nineteenth century and the decade surrounding the Second World War, Americans defined their power in terms that were self-consciously opposed to the imperial and balance-of-power diplomacy of the European powers. This meant explicit and consistent opposition to traditional alliances—from the Monroe Doctrine to the Open Door to America's "associate power" status in the First World War. American leaders were more than comfortable asserting U.S. dominance throughout the Western Hemisphere, but they believed they could best assure American interests by steering clear of commitments in other regions. The Open Door Notes of 1899 to 1900, as William Appleman Williams famously argued, were an expression of American expansionist desires without accompanying political obligations. Williams called this indirect empire. We might more accurately describe it as influence and profit on the cheap.³¹

The American occupation of the Philippines after 1898 was particularly controversial within the United States—not among foreign powers—because it exposed the complications and costs of Washington’s efforts to expand abroad without political or diplomatic preparation. With very little thought, Americans quickly found themselves unilaterally fighting a nationalist insurgency and rebuilding a distant society. Rejecting imperial diplomacy, the United States might have reaped the costs of empire without many of the benefits.³²

During and after the Second World War Americans continued to see their power in opposition to traditional imperial and balance-of-power diplomacy. Instead of trade-offs and compromises, Washington would rely on its preponderant power to assure better results. This meant commitments from the United States to fight communism through an overwhelming variety of means—economic, military, cultural, and covert. It also meant greater promises from the United States to “democratize” and “modernize” regions of the world on an accelerated timetable. Global power reinforced an inherited urge to escape the opportunity costs of the Old World and assert leadership abroad unilaterally. Global power made diplomacy appear as a sellout of America’s anti-imperial potential. Idealist modernizers from the United States would replace diplomats of empire from the past.³³

At the root of this expansion without diplomacy is the assumption of American exceptionalism. Democrat and Republican, Americans see themselves above history. They recognize that all other global powers have relied upon elaborate diplomatic processes for managing alliances. They understand that the United States, especially since 1945, has created a similar process for its own foreign relations. Americans, nonetheless, see this as illegitimate at worst, or a temporary evil at best. God’s chosen country can and should lead by simply being itself. Diplomacy implies imperfection, and Americans are convinced that they are perfect, or nearly so. Our popular rhetoric reinforces this supposition, our history of remarkable peace and prosperity gives evidence to God’s hand, and our global power provides a tempting tool for messianic purposes. Self-confident, hubristic, and empowered, Americans have trouble identifying a need for diplomacy, especially among friends who apparently recognize our goodness. The only real way to improve U.S. diplomacy is to convince Americans that they are not as exceptional as they think.

Militarized Democracy

The clearest evidence of a departure from American exceptionalism, in practice, is the recent redefinition of democracy within the United States. Despite the popular reverence for the “founding moment,” the U.S. Constitution is no longer an accurate guide to the functioning of American government. The founders

were profoundly skeptical of any prominent and permanent role for the military in American society. They worried that it would imperil free government, free economy, and free intercourse with other countries. They also believed that the military would entangle the nation in unnecessary wars. The founders were not antimilitaristic in any sense, but they believed that the military functions of government should be subordinate to the work of politicians, administrators, and diplomats. Conspicuously, the secretaries of treasury and state had the highest standing in the president's constitutional cabinet. War functions were divided between two relatively weak secretaries of war and navy.³⁴

The Cold War transformed this constitutional structure of government because of decisions made by *civilian* leaders. The National Security Act of 1947 created a unified Department of Defense, a permanent Joint Chiefs of Staff, a Central Intelligence Agency, and a National Security Council—all of which allowed a more rapid integration of American military capabilities for foreign policy purposes. Through these institutions the executive branch of government focused on controlling and deploying military force in times of near-perpetual Cold War crisis. American military power became less immediately accountable to congressional and public approval.³⁵

Perhaps the creation of what some have called the “national security state” was necessary in the Cold War.³⁶ Perhaps it even serves certain purposes after the Cold War and the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Most troublesome, however, is the asymmetry these changes have created in domestic priorities and visions of foreign policy. The military is not only one of the most respected institutions in the United States; it is also one of the best-organized and politically potent parts of our society. Defined broadly, the institutions that most conspicuously define national power by armed capability are positioned to mobilize more attention than those institutions, especially the State Department, that define power in diplomatic terms. The precise opposite was the case before the Second World War, when political power in the United States was centered in a relatively small group of legal and corporate figures who had few military connections, and even fewer good things to say about the Army or Navy. If there was an antimilitaristic bias in American politics during the 1930s, the equation reversed a decade later, and it has never (with the partial exception of the last years of the Vietnam War) reversed again. The only part of the U.S. government to retain a high degree of public trust since the 1960s is, in fact, the military.³⁷

This is not a conspiracy but a reflection, in classic institutionalist terms, of how the post-1945 reforms of U.S. government structures transformed political behavior. Simply stated, the military won the institutional battles and the State Department lost. The pressures of international conflict at the dawn of the

nuclear age probably made this probably unavoidable. The failure to compensate in any significant way since 1947 for the growth of military institutional presence, relative to the nation's diplomatic organs, has meant that diplomacy necessarily gets short shrift. For all its internal divisions, the military is a recognized and ubiquitous voice in Washington. The State Department is not.

The consequences of this institutional asymmetry are obvious. As the United States has developed and maintained for sixty years the most powerful military in the world, with significant "overkill" capabilities, it has underfunded the Foreign Service. As the United States has developed major institutions and related mechanisms for educating some of the best military officers in the world, it has refused to invest similarly in diplomatic training and related research. Most startling, as American political discussion has given significant attention to the needs and purposes of the military over the last decade, it has neglected any serious discussion about the needs and purposes of the nation's diplomatic organs. The importance of the military is evident to most Americans, even if they disagree about its appropriate size and scope. The importance of the Foreign Service is a mystery to even some of the best-informed citizens. They can learn about the military every day in their standard news sources. These sources offer little of value on our nation's diplomatic corps.³⁸

Violence has a deep historical root in American history. The valorization of the cowboy, the warrior, or the general is nothing new. The problem is that the democratic allure of force is not tempered any longer by an equally democratic case for the peacemaker. The framers of the Constitution and their successors anticipated this problem, and they went to great lengths to limit the influence of the military and boost the clout of civilians. The United States did not create a professional Foreign Service until after the Civil War, but the nation's politics were dominated in its first century by men who traded in words and ideas—Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, and Abraham Lincoln—not guns and soldiers. To be a good American democrat before 1945 was to be a leader who avoided major foreign wars.

In the shadow of the Second World War the U.S. military outgrew its constitutional restrictions. Although it has become more professionalized and committed to civilian control than ever before, it is also a billion-pound gorilla that distorts public debates about foreign policy toward questions of armed capability, and away from inquiries about diplomacy. More sophisticated diplomatic practice in the United States will require a rebalancing of the post-1947 institutions to give the State Department more relative weight. Constitutional change undermined diplomacy after the Second World War; only a new effort at constitutional reform can redress this problem.

Conclusions

At the dawn of the twenty-first century the United States is far removed from its revolutionary origins. Americans continue to use the idealistic rhetoric inherited from the eighteenth century, but words like *independence* and *liberty* mean different things when the country is governed by such a powerful, wealthy, and expansive set of institutions. Americans continue to espouse their strong anti-imperial sentiments, but words like *self-determination* and *national sovereignty* have much more complicated connotations in a world where the United States exerts such direct global influence. Barack Obama's America is indeed distant from Benjamin Franklin's America.

Franklin remains relevant because he points, like all significant historical personalities, to alternative paths for American policy. At the nation's founding, Franklin embodied a fruitful mix of eloquent high-minded idealism and skillful high-society diplomacy. He spoke for the deepest urges of the American people and he worked closely with the mightiest elites of his day. He was steadfast in his determination to build a new nation, and he was sophisticated in his recognition that the revolution could only succeed if it made compromises with those on the side of reaction. For Franklin, and the early Republic, politics was diplomacy.

Over the course of the last two centuries, and particularly since 1945, the American people and their governing institutions have abandoned Franklin in favor of simpler images of Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson. These modern men of marble represent false dichotomies between idealism and realism, engagement and force. The impoverishment of the historical imagination in the United States has meant the impoverishment of foreign policy. The intoxication of wealth and power, and the seeming ease with which they can be used, has only reinforced the popular search for easy answers to contradictory, contingent, and complex international problems.

The United States has orphaned Benjamin Franklin and other diplomats who would follow his legacy. After the searing experience of the Second World War, and the failure of appeasement policies in the 1930s, the nation made *diplomacy* a synonym for weakness, even treason. This self-defeating phenomenon grew out of a long history, but three factors emphasized here reinforced pre-existing trends. First, the adoption of containment doctrine as a touchstone for policy degraded diplomacy as a primary instrument of power. Second, the effort to build expansive alliances on American-defined terms discredited compromise, especially with friends. Third, and most striking, the emergence of more powerful military institutions in the United States shifted political influence away from the traditional institutions of peacemaking. Again, this was not a conspiracy of militarists. It was the result of a false consensus *among civilians*

on Cold War national security, American exceptionalism, and preponderant power. Americans orphaned diplomats because they were unpopular and unpersuasive to a mass electorate.

If this argument is correct, or even partially correct, reviving the quality and scope of American diplomacy will require serious work. The United States will not embrace the sophistication of Benjamin Franklin overnight. Nor will the nation easily overcome its inherited international habits. Political and intellectual leaders can help the country think beyond containment in addressing global problems. Citizens can invest in building the sustained personal relationships—through language study, area expertise, and efforts at mutually beneficial cooperation—that provide the basis for effective alliance management. Perhaps most immediate, American opinion leaders can open a serious public discussion about the importance of diplomacy, and the constitutional revisions necessary to give diplomacy a chance.

Benjamin Franklin was only the first of many American statesmen to extol the nation's capacity for renewal. The end of the Cold War, the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and the frustrations of subsequent years call for another moment of policy renewal. Among other things, this endeavor will require extensive global diplomacy with diverse actors, many of whom we abhor. New ideas and new institutions will provide the foundation for a return to the best of the old diplomacy.

Notes

- 1 On the early American rejection of traditional diplomacy, see Walter McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997); and Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World* (New York: Knopf, 2001).
- 2 See Edmund S. Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 242–97; and Walter Isaacson, *Benjamin Franklin: American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), 325–435.
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II. Between Power and Partnership: The Prudent Uses of Multilateralism

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An idea is always grasped in relative association, never in absolute isolation, and no idea, in history, keeps a changeless self-identity.

—Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy*, 1965

The British don't know how to make a good cup of coffee. You don't know how to make a good cup of tea. It's an even swap.

—Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain, 1942

For the last 500 years, world politics has been dominated by states located on the shores of the North Atlantic. As these states competed with one another for treasure and power, they in effect established the North Atlantic region's world-wide imperial supremacy.

—Zbigniew Brzezinski, “An Agenda for NATO,” 2009¹

Multilateralism has become one of the most loaded terms in international politics. In the United States the word has become both a target of derision and a source of aspiration. The desire to behave “democratically” (engaging, debating, listening, persuading) by building partnerships in the world has long competed with the need to put the U.S. national interest first and the desire to assert a measure of control in the international domain. Too often the idea of multilateralism is couched as a simple choice between the unfettered use of American power and the constraints of partnership. In reality, the U.S. has adopted a multilateralist stance in the past to enhance its power and influence: NATO’s development during the Cold War offers the most successful example of American-managed multilateralism.

In addition to transatlantic alliances, this paper uses occasional examples from the history of empires to explore how a superpower can avoid coercion and facilitate international cooperation. This is not to say that empires offer an

ideal model for multilateralism, or that the U.S. should be encouraged to build an empire, but rather to demonstrate that from the history of empires we may draw lessons for the successful management of relations between states with unequal levels of power. The historian Henry Kamen interpreted the networks of empire that existed around Spain as akin to “transnational organisations that aimed to mobilize the resources available not only within their areas, but outside them as well.” Once those resources had been mobilized, the networks established as a consequence brought increased unity to Spain’s empire.² Multilateralism, at its core, concerns connections or networks and how best to use them.

A quick (electronic) search of the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) volumes reveals that the term *multilateralism*—including its first appearance in 1938—has most commonly been used in connection with trade relations.³ While military or defense alliances have always been controversial in the United States, multilateral trade relations have tended to be somewhat less contentious. The reasons for this could form the basis of another research project, but, to generalize, it seems that American history has provoked profound scepticism regarding the benefits of military alliances, whereas the benefits of a multilateralist approach to trade have been easier to sell to a suspicious public.⁴ This is all the more peculiar given that both military alliances and economic and trade cooperation have been used to build security. The Cold War period amply demonstrates this; NATO supported an American and European initiative for closer integration of trade as part of the Atlantic community project. Far earlier than 1949, however, European empires sought to build security through trade and mutual reliance: using Britannia’s naval supremacy to facilitate trade was always, for example, a key aim of the British Empire; conquest and coercion were not.

Spain’s empire began with an alliance between Castile and Aragon through the most common means of political alliance in the fifteenth century—marriage. Nonetheless, despite their union, Ferdinand and Isabella’s lands did not yield a state rich in money or manpower. Henry Kamen argues that Spain was consequently so heavily reliant on the people and resources of other nations that the Spanish Empire does not deserve the label *Spanish* at all.⁵ Only a minority of those who fought for the Spanish Empire were in fact Spanish, and Kamen shows further that the empire’s cultural capital was international too: Spain’s printers were German, its scholars Italian and Sicilian, its financiers Genoese—as, of course, was the most famous explorer of the Spanish Empire, Christopher Columbus. The Spanish Empire was based on collaboration more than on cooperation or even coercion; Spain succeeded in inducing non-Spaniards to labor intensively to meet shared goals. While cooperation and collaboration may seem synonymous, this essay emphasises degrees of difference in the level

of engagement among coercion, cooperation, and collaboration. At one end of the spectrum, coercion implies action under duress. Cooperation, in the middle of the spectrum, implies the acquiescence of one state to work alongside another state. At the other end of the spectrum from coercion is collaboration. Collaboration, in this essay, is taken to illustrate a situation in which states do not simply operate alongside one another but work together with a mutual sense of the importance of a successful outcome. Where cooperation implies a certain degree of passivity, collaboration implies a shared stake in the energetic pursuit of actions to meet mutual goals. Collaboration, most commonly, is also brokered by vigorous debate rather than uncomplicated submission. The Spanish were, through collaboration, able to forge their international power by drawing strength from many other nations—the ideal behind any multilateral venture.

To be effective, multilateral engagement must be conceived strategically, as a shared process among states each with a stake in meeting shared goals. The United States' greatest successes with multilateral ventures have acknowledged this model and the early American attitude toward multilateralism contributed to a distinct way of thinking about international commitments.

American Ambivalence Toward Multilateralism: Commitment Without Committing

In 1778 the American alliance with France helped secure independence, and yet for the next century and a half the United States retained a deep suspicion of alliances and avoided openly cooperating with other powers. That distrust stemmed from the heavy emphasis at America's founding on being "different" from Europe, avoiding anything resembling the Concert of Europe and inhibiting any instinct to cooperate with European powers. As Timothy Garton Ash has described, "in the beginning, the United States was the new Europe. It defined itself against what Alexander Hamilton called 'the pernicious labyrinths of European politics.'"⁶ Herman Melville summed up the American determination to look for *new* ideas on governance when he wrote that "the Past is the Textbook of Tyrants" and "the Future the Bible of the Free."⁷ The U.S. sought to avoid balance-of-power politics and "entangling" alliances with undesirable obligations. The founding fathers literally struck out on their own, and their independence imbued them with a distrust of relying on anyone else. The American desire to be self-sufficient, a leader rather than a follower, exceptional, and unfettered by obligations to other powers, endures today.

In reality, however, even as early as the nineteenth century the U.S. found strength in cooperating with other nations. Although President Monroe would never officially acknowledge it, the Monroe Doctrine was enforced in large part

by the British navy. The U.S. and Britain cooperated closely to keep other European powers out of the Western hemisphere. The absence of any official acknowledgment of Britain's role did not prevent the U.S. government, determined not to allow any other European power to take over Spain's ailing colonies, from working successfully within the Pax Britannica. In fact, while historians have tended to focus on America's unilateralism up until Franklin D. Roosevelt's push for "four policeman" to secure the world, the U.S. often advocated unilateralism more in theory than in practice.

In 1917 Woodrow Wilson, acknowledging Americans' desire to remain above the European fray of World War I, insisted that even if the U.S. shared a common enemy with the powers united by the Triple Entente (Great Britain, the Russian Empire, and France), the country would not "ally" with them against Germany, but would only be an "associated" power. In retrospect, however, it is hard to understand just what the difference was in practice. Wilson eventually justified the commitment of more than four million American troops to the fight in terms that emphasized Americans' moral obligation to participate in this "war against all nations." The president declared to a joint session of Congress, "American ships have been sunk, American lives taken, in ways which it has stirred us very deeply to learn of, but the ships and people of other neutral and friendly nations have been sunk and overwhelmed in the waters in the same way. There has been no discrimination.... The challenge is to all mankind."⁸ The New York *Daily News* reflected on the degree to which Wilson's decision marked a change in American thinking: "President Wilson has abandoned, as no previous President has ever done, the exclusively national outlook that has been for 130 years the most sacred canon of American political thought."⁹

Although the United States' "associated" status made it possible for the president to refrain from declaring war on the Ottoman Empire in conjunction with the Triple Entente powers, there was very little else that distinguished the U.S. from being an ally in the truest sense of the word. In the same speech to Congress quoted above, Wilson detailed the contributions the U.S. would be making. Multilateral cooperation, the president declared, was "the utmost practicable cooperation in counsel and action with the governments now at war with Germany." The United States may have arrived late to the conflict, but the American contribution would be total and vital.

The entry of U.S. forces into the European theater during World War I also planted the seeds of the idea of a multilateral Atlantic community. Henry Adams wrote to a friend, "Here we are, for the first time in our lives fighting side by side and to my bewilderment I find the great object of my life thus accomplished in the building up of the great Community of Atlantic Powers

which I hope will at least make a precedent that can never be forgotten.”¹⁰ The first course in Western Civilization at Columbia University was “designed to teach soldiers what it was they would be fighting for in Flanders Fields.”¹¹ Common cause may have inspired the United States to act multilaterally to achieve American security objectives, but American leaders took great care in enunciating why it was in America’s interest to engage in an alliance.

Woodrow Wilson hoped to extend the multilateral example during wartime into peacetime when he set sail in December 1918 to help draw up a peace treaty for Europe. No other American president had ever gone to Europe while in office; Wilson ended up staying in Paris for six months in an attempt to make multilateral negotiations work in America’s favour.

Wilson drew on the American experience with multilateralism to inform his ideas on how to build multilateralism in Europe. The president saw the Monroe Doctrine as a framework within which all the nations of the Americas worked peacefully together, and therefore as a model for the European continent. Secretary of State Robert Lansing, however, thought the Monroe model entirely inappropriate: he argued, “the [Monroe] doctrine is exclusively a *national* policy of the United States and relates to its national safety and vital interests.”¹² Lansing missed the point that national policy objectives could translate into shared international goals and obligations. Moreover, multilateralism would be a much easier sell in each nation if it did relate to “national safety and vital interests.” The U.S. Senate, however, did not believe that the covenant of the League of Nations (comprising the first twenty-six articles of the Versailles Treaty) was congruent with American interests, and, ultimately, declined to ratify it.

Multilateralism in the United States remained closely associated with the idea of entanglement. While Wilson was feted by rapturous crowds and leaders in Europe, critics back home questioned whether he should even have made a trip that symbolized America’s assumption of responsibility for sorting out the mess that Europe had made for itself and the world. In August 1919 the Republican chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Henry Cabot Lodge, echoing George Washington’s Farewell Address, argued:

The United States is the world’s best hope, but if you fetter her in the interests and quarrels of other nations, if you tangle her in the intrigues of Europe, you will destroy her power for good and endanger her very existence. Leave her to march freely through the centuries to come as in the years that have gone.

It was the American role, Lodge and many other key figures believed, to remain above the fray, for if America became sullied by European politics,

who would be left as the “world’s best hope”? Lodge added, however, that Washington “did not say that we should keep clear from ‘entangling alliances’ in the Farewell Address. He said that we should keep clear of *permanent alliances*, and that temporary alliances would be sufficient to meet an emergency—as they were in the war just closed.”¹³ Multilateralism could be suffered as a short-term fix, but it was not to be used to promote U.S. interests over the longer term.

The U.S. may have gained a place at the Versailles negotiating table by acting multilaterally during wartime, but with Europe at peace once more multilateralism came to be seen by many Americans as dangerously idealistic and an inappropriate means for the prudent exercise of American power. Lodge did not suggest that the U.S. resort to isolationism, but he was determined that the country should not fall into the perceived traps of multilateralism: the abrogation of U.S. sovereignty through binding covenants and institutions, and the overextension of American power and responsibility. America’s strength should prompt her to reject the fetters of treaties and lead by doing. This of course presumed that other nations would be prepared simply to follow, cooperating rather than collaborating.

At the first meeting of the League of Nations in Geneva, Georges Clemenceau directed that an empty chair be left for an American representative. But the impact of the absence of the United States was felt in more than merely symbolic ways. Britain, France, Italy, and Japan (the remaining members of the steering committee that had led the negotiations at Versailles) found it easier to resort to their national prerogatives in Wilson’s absence. Each member was also granted a veto, in accordance with the requirement that council decisions be unanimous. Americans may have thought they were better protecting their sovereignty by leaving their representative’s chair empty, but the U.S. lost the ability to influence the course of the discussions and the chance to ensure that their vote mattered—even, if worse came to worst, by resorting to use of the veto.

By 1921 Warren Harding was, however, already resorting to multilateralism in an effort to reassert American influence when he convened the International Conference on Naval Limitation in Washington. Eight other countries, four of which were major naval powers, participated. The purpose was to regulate sea power, especially battleships, and to defuse tension in the Pacific and East Asia. No treaty was produced—in line with the American rejection of anything “permanent”—but the gentlemen’s agreement that resulted from the conference limited the tonnage of capital ships, restricted the use of submarines in war, and banned poison gas.

Calvin Coolidge *did* commit the United States to a treaty that he signed, the Treaty for the Renunciation of War (the Kellogg-Briand Pact), in 1928. Fifteen major powers signed the agreement and the U.S. Senate ratified the

treaty, but there was a catch: the Senate insisted on alerting all the signatories that the U.S. would not accept that the treaty curtailed the right to self-defense, nor was it prepared to take action automatically against any nation that violated the treaty. These caveats effectively killed any seed of a theory of collective defense that might have developed from the pact, and the effectiveness of the treaty, as became abundantly apparent when it was invoked in 1929 after the Soviet Union and China came to blows in Manchuria, was null.

Three months after Coolidge signed the treaty, the 1929 stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression forced the U.S. to consider multilateral engagement once again. The United States was the largest creditor nation in the world, but the U.S. Federal Reserve decided that rather than engaging in multilateral negotiations to come to an agreement to make it easier for debtor countries (principally Britain, France, and Germany) to service their loans, the U.S. would revert to a protectionist and isolationist stance, halting foreign lending and raising tariffs on imports. Economies around the world went into free fall; the resulting depression inflamed nationalist feeling throughout Europe. By rejecting multilateralism as a strategic approach to solving an international problem, the U.S. limited its options to influence the consequences of the Great Depression worldwide.

Franklin D. Roosevelt sought to increase his options in the 1940s by engaging in multilateralism under conditions that enhanced the American ability to lead partners in the United States' preferred direction. Zara Steiner concludes that the League of Nations failed because "it was an experiment in internationalism at a time when the currents of nationalism were running powerfully in the opposite direction."¹⁴ Could the United States have redirected that flow if it had remained more committed to fostering multilateralism? The U.S. was presented with a second chance to answer that hypothetical question. "The League is dead," declared the British diplomat Lord Robert Cecil in April 1946, "Long live the United Nations." This time the United States would take its seat at the head of the table and have a second chance to explore what might have been if it had pushed Europe more resolutely toward collaboration for peace.

In his January 1941 State of the Union address, Roosevelt's proclamation of the Four Freedoms was explicitly intended as a guide for American foreign policy based on universal principles as "a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation." The president insisted that "the world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society." Roosevelt wanted the UN to have an American blueprint and he was determined that the U.S. should play a leading role within the organization. FDR acknowledged that national interests were not going to disappear, but he argued that this should not preclude the

emergence of collective interests; a prudently multilateralist approach would ensure that national interests and partnership could be compatible and mutually reinforcing.

The Grand Alliance that had emerged in World War II, however, arose from necessity rather than from any sense of community: Stalin was not interested in a world safe for democracy or capitalism; even Churchill had very different views from FDR on what the postwar world should look like. Nonetheless, Roosevelt recognized that the war (and the close cooperation it had required) could provide a catalyst for the construction of a new world order shaped by American ideas and interests. One fundamental premise for such a strategy was the rejection of the traditional idea of American exceptionalism. Rather than assuming that the United States was unique and therefore had no chance of reforming the world, FDR focused on spreading capitalism and democracy through the prudent, but open, use of American power.

FDR developed the concept of the Four Policemen (the U.S., Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China) as a multilateral means of embedding national interests within a multilateral framework: entanglement, he believed, could work in America's interest. The Atlantic Charter, though negotiated bilaterally between Churchill and Roosevelt, formed the basis for the multilateral General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the UN Treaty. FDR happily encouraged the Bretton Woods system (negotiated by forty-four nations) as a means to prevent a postwar economic collapse that would again undermine international cooperation, as it had in the 1930s. FDR believed that the American interest could be better served by binding nations together to negotiate multilaterally on trade, economics, and war and peace—not least because he knew that American influence was so great that the United States could retain a great deal of control.

While the language used by Roosevelt in the 1940s was heavy with idealism, the reality that underpinned that idealism was the use of multilateralist strategies to further the U.S. national interest. China was included as one of the Four Policemen because FDR understood that China's inclusion could amount to a surrogate American vote; veto power in the UN Security Council demonstrated that the U.S. could have multilateral influence and the ability to prevent the Council's acting against American interests too; Bretton Woods was calculated to be an insurance policy for the American economic hegemony that emerged at the end of World War II.

Building international cooperation in the pursuit of shared goals made sense for the United States. Using American power to spread the burden of promoting international stability seemed prudent. The U.S. wanted to be able to influence the behavior of other states without resorting to costly coercion

wherever possible. Demonstrating some degree of concern for local or regional entities affected by the behavior of a greater power helped the U.S. to win friends and build partnerships rather than provoking antipathy or antagonism. Most importantly, FDR's focus on the details of not just why but *how* to build partnerships made multilateralism easier to justify by making it appear less risky.

How to Win Friends and Influence People?

If you want to win friends, make it a point to remember them. If you remember my name, you pay me a subtle compliment; you indicate that I have made an impression on you. Remember my name and you add to my feeling of importance.

—Dale Carnegie

The United States, through the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, engaged in more multilateral behavior than it is typically given credit for. Roosevelt, did, however, engage in considerably more *overt* efforts at American leadership through multilateral means. It is in this context that it is useful to consider what the history of empires can illustrate about techniques for managing cooperative relations among states of unequal power.

The Romans were, for example, forced to think creatively about how to foster stakeholders in their imperial enterprise in order to make Rome's expansion manageable. The early roots of what would be termed "indirect rule" in Britain were already apparent in the Roman Empire by the end of the Latin War in 338 B.C.E. Unilateral leadership over Rome's vast territory would have been too time consuming and resource draining to be sustainable. The Romans discovered that one of the easiest ways to win cooperative partners in their imperial enterprise was material reward and some degree of membership in the Roman "club." *Coloniae civium* were self-administering civic units in which colonists enjoyed full Roman citizenship and received a plot of land; their stake in the Roman Empire thus became both material and ideological.

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States provided a material stake for Europeans through the Marshall Plan, which, arguably, permitted sufficient economic recovery to inhibit the growth of communism but also established the U.S. as a beneficent power prepared to give monetary backing to its rhetorical promises. The Marshall Plan made Western Europe's recovery a genuinely transnational effort, one that even included the western parts of occupied Germany. Truman argued he was committed to Marshall Plan aid "because it is necessary to be done if we are going to survive ourselves."¹⁵ Perhaps even more important than the aid itself, however, was that the way in which the plan was negotiated and the aid distributed promoted a role for the U.S. in Europe that accorded with U.S. postwar aims.

There was, of course, a measure of suspicion and concern among Europeans that Marshall aid would bring undesirable American influence. An editorial in *Le Monde*, for example, called for a militarily self-sufficient and neutral France that would be able to stand up to both Uncle Sam and Uncle Joe. In 1952, the same Parisians who had welcomed American forces as liberators in 1944 returned to the streets to protest the arrival of General Matthew Ridgway as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. The U.S. had to strike a balance between partnership and control; between acting multilaterally and alienating both international and domestic publics. France would long remain America's most difficult ally, but the multilateral ties the U.S. built with other European countries helped to manage the challenges the country encountered in its relationship with France.

At home in the U.S., successive administrations had to show Congress and the voters that granting aid was in the U.S. interest, forcing policymakers in a healthy way to ensure that American priorities meshed with the multilateral means they were pursuing in Europe. Ultimately, the U.S. did win friends and influence American public opinion to support unprecedented American intervention in European affairs, but it took great diplomatic skill and planning to do so. Moreover, Stalin made it easier for the U.S. to promote multilateralism, and for Western Europe to accept it, by making it clear that his plan was to impose a unilaterally controlled sphere of influence in Eastern and Central Europe. By 1945, rather than holding out the United States passively as the "best hope" for the rest of the world, American policymakers had the strongest incentive to show how they wanted the world to work in contrast to the Soviet model.

Both Rome and the United States accepted that the increased autonomy made possible by material generosity facilitated a sense of ownership and mutual reliance: healthy precursors for effective multilateral relations. The Roman *municipium* was a self-governing community of people that had originally been outside Rome's territorial orbit. *Municipii* lost their sovereignty when they were integrated into the Roman Empire, but they gained dual citizenship in their own city-state and in Rome. During the Cold War, Western Europeans were promised a type of "citizenship" in an Atlantic community with the hope that European nationalism could be softened if not subsumed in a new spirit of internationalism. American policymakers, notably Dean Acheson, deliberately advocated for something broader than NATO and collective defense to encourage the sense of community across the Atlantic. Dwight Eisenhower emphasized that

NATO should not for all time be primarily a collective defense organisation.... We have common traditions which have been passed on from

generation to generation. We should continue to work together as a growing community.¹⁶

Acheson focussed on the North Atlantic Treaty as “the product of at least three hundred and fifty years of history,” and, emphasizing the values that brought an “Atlantic community” together, he made it clear he believed the Atlantic Alliance should continue even if the Soviet threat diminished, encouraging Europeans to believe that the United States was committed to a peaceful and prosperous Europe even beyond the Cold War context.

Having built up the impression of a shared enterprise among powers of unequal strength, the challenge becomes to *sustain* the impression that “friends” matter. This was a problem that imperial powers faced with their colonies and the United States wrestled with in NATO. In the nineteenth century Britain’s method of imperial management in India morphed into an authoritarian, centralized, bureaucratic approach far different from the hands-off approach the East India Company had earlier adopted. Britain ultimately found that its efforts to create an educated middle class in India backfired when that elite reached the limits of its potential influence.

British governance of India became closer in constitutional terms to European enlightened despotism than to Anglo-Saxon concepts of liberty and representative government. Indirect rule through native princes allowed the collaborators greater autonomy and status while signifying that Britain’s main allies were a territory’s traditional ruling elite rather than the new semiwesternized middle classes that had grown up under imperial rule. Britain discovered firsthand through its failure to manage the “jewel” in its imperial “crown” that rulers alone cannot control the effective conduct of multilateral relations; they have to win friends in the military, in the rank and file of business and industry, and at the nonelite, grassroots level. Britain also discovered the continuing need to sell the concept of empire to an increasingly sceptical audience at home.

Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles understood that the Atlantic Alliance was an alternative to isolationism and a means to sway the American public away from enduringly negative feelings about foreign entanglements. The rhetoric justifying American commitments to Europe therefore had to be couched in the same strident terms used to justify isolationism and neutrality in the past. In a speech on the Mutual Security Program, Eisenhower emphasized that collective security was the “least costly form of peace insurance” and that “mutuality and security” met the objective of U.S. foreign policy to keep the nation “militarily, politically and economically strong.”¹⁷ The concept also had bilateral appeal, with conservatives supporting the apparent extension of Anglo-American partnership to Western Europe and liberals supporting the Atlantic

community as a project in the mold of Wilsonian internationalism. In a draft of a December 1957 presidential speech to the North Atlantic Council, the Policy Planning Staff urged Eisenhower to use a line from his second inaugural address, applying it specifically to his vision of NATO as an alliance of equals: “We recognize and accept our own deep involvement in the destiny of men everywhere,” the president had said, acknowledging that “Each of us has a share in the work to be done. For we are all, each one of us, free men, citizens in a free society. It makes no difference whether you are a citizen of a small nation or a citizen of a large nation; a citizen of an ancient state (as many of you here today claim with true pride to be), or a citizen of a younger state (like mine) in the family of nations.”¹⁸ In this way Eisenhower was able to endorse multilateralism by coupling respect for other nations with an unmistakable exhortation to share the burden of defending Europe against communism.

Dean Acheson used the carrot of anti-isolationism to sway key international allies toward supporting the Truman administration’s efforts. German rearmament was the first major concession France and Britain made to American priorities, and Acheson couched his diplomacy in sweeping terms, arguing that it marked “the complete revolution in American foreign policy.” This “revolution” was however “based on the expectation that others would do their part.”¹⁹ Multilateralism was thus used effectively as both a carrot and a stick.

For the United States, planning beyond the conquest of World War II required multilateralism. Europe wasn’t conquered by American troops, but American policymakers did want to ensure that the “empire by invitation” Geir Lundestad has described would end when the U.S. chose, not when the Europeans withdrew the invitation. The U.S. committed to stationing American troops in Europe, but made this commitment more palatable at home and abroad by doing so in the context of NATO, ensuring that those troops (and the bases and weaponry accompanying them) were viewed as part of a multilateral defense effort with European nations. Of course when one country, France, objected to American troops being stationed on French soil, the United States elected to accept withdrawal without (much) complaint; Lyndon Johnson recognized that fighting Charles de Gaulle’s decision would undermine the spirit of the democratic alliance NATO was intended to be.

The parallels between British efforts at indirect rule and American engagement in postwar Europe are in some ways striking, particularly the attempt to gain influence without devoting unsustainable numbers of troops and expenditures of treasure.²⁰ But such an approach did not eliminate the challenge the U.S. faced in trying to remain a partner in an alliance in which all states were ostensibly equal and had chosen to be members, while simultaneously ensuring

that the U.S. national interest was protected and that America retained influence and control when it mattered.

American policymakers during the Cold War not only made a conscious effort to encourage exchange programs facilitating transatlantic understanding but inculcated an informal elite on either side of the Atlantic with a belief in the importance of European integration. This concept would have gained less traction had it been limited to the realm of bilateral negotiations between governments. However, with the emergence of this international constituency—including influential (if sometimes controversial) figures such as Jean Monnet in France, Paul-Henri Spaak in Belgium, Konrad Adenauer in Germany, and Americans Dean Acheson, George Ball, and Walter Lippmann—the U.S. could count on multilateral efforts to develop ideas for improving transatlantic relations that could then be encouraged within national bureaucracies. These men on both sides of the Atlantic frequently met socially, sharing dinners and rounds of golf and regularly staying in one another's homes. The Americans among them took their friends' ideas seriously and transmitted them to the U.S. policy planning staff, and even the president, regularly. Formal multilateralism worked considerably better than it otherwise might have because of such informal multilateral connections.²¹

What happened when multilateralism was no longer considered to further the American interest? Having promoted the sense of a shared stake in a transatlantic community of democratic states in the 1950s, the U.S. faced the challenge of a growing expectation through the 1960s that its allies should have access to nuclear weapons and the results of nuclear research, and a say in nuclear strategy. Multilateralism was enormously useful to the U.S. in planning for a *conventional* response to the Soviet threat, particularly because it permitted the rearmament of West Germany, but when it came to nuclear weapons the U.S. continued to act bilaterally or unilaterally. The rhetoric surrounding the Atlantic community was one of unity, but the McMahon Act (even in its amended form, permitting limited sharing of nuclear technology with the U.K.) reflected the American determination to retain control over both nuclear weapons and nuclear strategy.

The Multilateral Force (MLF), as it developed through the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations, never solved the problem of how to work with Europeans on nuclear sharing in a credible way. In a speech to the Canadian Parliament in 1961, Kennedy took the earlier idea developed by Robert Bowie and expanded it into an American commitment of five Polaris submarines to the NATO command, with a view to establishing a force “truly multilateral in ownership and control...once *NATO's non-nuclear goals have been achieved*.”²² This last caveat met the State Department recommendation that

the U.S. should ensure “the appearance of progress,” without actually conceding control.²³ The real goal behind the MLF was to halt nuclear proliferation: as George Ball described, he was won over to the concept because “as the French increasingly flaunted their force de frappe as a badge of great power status” he “began to fear that the Germans might...develop a sense of grievance.”²⁴

Robert McNamara was even more open about the problem. In a widely reported speech early in 1962, the secretary of defense condemned the British and French nuclear forces as “dangerous, expensive, prone to obsolescence, and lacking credibility as a deterrent.”²⁵ France and Britain were furious, but McNamara subsequently developed a set of guidelines on nuclear weapons that was successfully adopted by NATO. Apart from France, European countries came largely to accept that control of nuclear weapons would ultimately remain with the United States.²⁶ On 4 July 1962, Kennedy made his famous “declaration of interdependence,” emphasizing “a mutually beneficial partnership” in NATO based on “full equality.”²⁷ Yet in a meeting between the ambassador to France and Walt Rostow, the head of the policy planning staff, acknowledged the reality of U.S. multilateralism regarding nuclear weapons: “whether its allies want it or not, [the U.S.] must play its role as leader and impose its will when the superior interest of the West required it.”²⁸

How much, however, did that nuclear roadblock undermine the multilateral spirit—and practice—of NATO? Charles de Gaulle, while maintaining that he understood why the U.S. preferred to act as it did over nuclear weapons, used the issue to highlight his own belief that the American defense guarantee to Europe was unreliable. Nonetheless, while several other countries were disappointed at the American reluctance to give Western Europe a greater say in when and how nuclear weapons could be used on the continent, the North Atlantic Council continued to discuss the problem multilaterally, the Nuclear Planning Group emerged in the late 1960s, and de Gaulle’s arguments had little practical impact other than encouraging U.S. policymakers to consider how to present American concerns about nuclear weapons more sensitively to U.S. allies.

The development of the French force de frappe was not what the U.S. had wanted, but it was not as catastrophic to American aims as West Germany’s developing a nuclear bomb might have been. Failure to gain French support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was also a blow, but with the bulk of U.S. allies signing on to the treaty, the French abstention had little serious impact on American goals. In fact, de Gaulle’s recalcitrance pushed other European allies into a more unified position under American leadership.²⁹ Moreover, Germany never developed nuclear weapons, and in that regard a key U.S. goal was achieved multilaterally.

The U.S. was, in short, able to adopt a largely multilateralist stance during the Cold War while retaining flexibility. Even Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty allowed the U.S. more flexibility than is commonly assumed. The wording of Article 5 affirms that each ally will react to an attack on any member state “by taking forthwith . . . such action it deems necessary, including the use of armed force.” Washington retained the right to determine *how* it would react if Soviet forces were to invade Western European territory, and—as demonstrated in 2001—the U.S. president retained the right to reject the offer of multilateral action (though not without damaging consequences in the diplomatic domain).

Legitimacy and the United Nations

Everyone wants to have it, but there is little agreement on where it comes from, what it looks like, or how more of it can be acquired.

—Edward C. Luck³⁰

Justinian began his key text, *Institutes*, with the declaration that “[t]he imperial majesty should be armed with laws as well as glorified with arms.”³¹ While its wealth was admired and envied, the Roman Empire also spread its intellectual culture: Roman law (including the Roman laws of warfare) became the law of the whole of Europe and has remained the basis of civil and public international law throughout most of the world.³² Similarly, the United States sought to build legitimacy for American actions through multilateralism. Repudiation of the use of force through the United Nations was coupled with collective defense in NATO and both were backed by binding multilateral treaty obligations. Again, however, bilateralism subsumed multilateralism when controversial issues arose that went to the heart of the American national interest, but which were viewed differently by other states. Thus, for example, both SALT I and SALT II were largely negotiated bilaterally between the U.S. and the Soviet Union despite having multilateral consequences for both nations’ allies.

Cicero argued that men should resolve their differences through language (which he considered a tool of reason), resorting to war only when language fails.³³ In the twenty-first century, the aspiration to resolve conflicts through negotiation endures. However, the legitimacy of any nation’s resort to the use of force inevitably remains contested. As Edward Luck has concluded, “legitimacy is the product of innumerable interactions between national and global politics on a spectrum of policy issues” and it “is not an all or nothing condition.”³⁴ Member nations of the United Nations, required to ratify the legitimacy of one member state’s use of force against another nation by a vote for or against, seldom achieve unanimity; national differences and interests endure. Roosevelt’s idea of the UN Security Council as a global police force quickly

fell victim to the Cold War reality of national interests trumping international opposition to conflict.

Nonetheless, particularly in the early Cold War period, the U.S. attempted to exploit the intrinsic multilateralism of the UN to its own advantage. Dwight Eisenhower condemned the British-French-Israeli attempt to depose Nasser in Egypt in 1956 by arguing that their actions “could scarcely be reconciled with the principles and purposes of the United Nations.” Working with Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN Secretary General, Eisenhower called an emergency session of the General Assembly. Writing in *The New Yorker*, E. B. White adopted a more realistic attitude when he wrote of “president Eisenhower’s determination to make U.S. foreign policy jibe with the UN Charter” that he “would feel easier” if the president “would just make it jibe with the Classified Telephone Directory, which is clear and pithy.”³⁵

Nonetheless, the USSR and sixty-three other nations voted (against five other nations) during the Suez Crisis to establish the first ever UN peacekeeping operation to provide a buffer between Israel and Egypt. Six thousand troops from Scandinavia, India, Indonesia, Colombia, Canada, and Yugoslavia participated, helping to restore traffic through the Suez Canal. The leadership of the United States made the peacekeeping operation possible, but opposition at home to using the UN quickly emerged. Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. (the grandson of Wilson’s key opponent) was quick to emphasize that the U.S. had only worked with the UN because Eisenhower’s judgment of where American interests lay coincided with Hammarskjöld’s interpretation of UN principles. It was one thing for the UN Charter to trump the actions of Britain, France, and Israel; it would be quite another for the UN to suggest that the United States was subject to its authority. Even more damningly, the UN failed to do anything in Hungary where, almost simultaneously with the Suez crisis, a revolt against the Soviet-dominated communist government was brutally repressed by Soviet forces.

During the Congo crisis of 1960 to 1964, the UN deployed its largest force of peacekeepers up to that time. Hammarskjöld was determined to prevent the Congo’s disintegration because of the example it would set for the rest of the African continent. Again working with the U.S. president, the secretary general persuaded the Security Council to permit the use of force. Foreshadowing the tribulations of future UN peacekeeping missions, however, blue helmets with insufficient arms arrived in Africa to find themselves unacceptably vulnerable.

Hammarskjöld chose to use force in order to make peace. This choice, however, only worked in defeating the mercenary-led Katangese army because the U.S. helped to airlift the necessary arms to the UN forces: the multilateral initiative still had to be equipped with available materiel from a single powerful country. The cooperation between the U.S. and the UN was necessary, but it

also had political repercussions. Khrushchev demanded Hammarskjöld's resignation on the grounds that he was making the UN an extension of American power—precisely the consequence the U.S. had hoped to avoid by securing the legitimacy of acting through the UN.³⁶

Another unforeseen development also occurred; because the UN provided the Soviets with a public arena in which to criticize the U.S., elements of the American public turned against the UN. Growing unease among the American public about the UN was expressed by the 1987 ABC television miniseries *Amerika*. Playing on imagery that had its roots in the 1960s, the series presented American viewers with a dystopian scenario in which the United States suffers under Soviet occupation enforced by UN peacemakers. Increasingly, to many Americans, the United Nations became inextricably associated with ineffective multilateralism that hindered the pursuit of the U.S. national interest. The battle to convince Americans of the value of the UN in augmenting the prudent use of American power took several severe blows during the 1960s and the right capitalized on the bruised image of the UN to challenge the usefulness of the concept of multilateralism. Toward the end of the Cold War the impact of this assault had reached beyond rhetoric. Since 1985, the U.S. Senate has refused to appropriate the full amount of the standard United States contribution to the UN, arguing that the UN often acts in a way that is contrary to American interests.

Avoiding Overstretch and Justifying Multilateralism at Home

Many Americans not only began to worry during the Cold War that the U.S. would import other peoples' problems by engaging in multilateralism; they also feared that the U.S. would squander its prosperity by spreading its power too thin. Again, Rome provides a precedent for this concern. Despite being careful to consolidate its regional power before setting about imperial expansion farther afield, Rome had failed to set limits on its empire's power and ambitions. Livy, the Roman historian, declared that Terminus, the god of boundaries, had refused to be present at Rome's birth. By 75 B.C.E., coins had been struck with emblems of a scepter, globe, wreath, and rudder; all these metaphorical images made clear that Rome aspired to world government and never intended its empire to be restrained behind a wall, as China's Qing Empire would later be.³⁷ Seneca suggested that Rome should "measure the boundaries of [its] nation by the sun." Future empires would aspire to nothing less, and overstretch was, most often, the consequence.³⁸

For the United States in the twentieth century, avoiding overstretch was one of the reasons for building multilateral institutions during the Cold War, in the hope that burden sharing would lessen American obligations. Yet multilateral

institutions were also criticized for obliging the United States to commit to more than it wanted. With the escalation of the Vietnam War there was a renewed insistence that the U.S. should focus on American interests and move away from multilateral concerns, particularly given the lack of support offered by America's allies during the war. How could the U.S. continue to justify a multilateral approach to world problems in an era of détente, when the Cold War increasingly began to be perceived as a rivalry between the U.S. and the USSR alone?

Empires most frequently justify governing dependent peoples with claims to a higher mission, usually with divine sanction, but reputation and credibility have also always played a role. To work well, multilateral engagement requires great powers to think strategically about how to ensure that engagement continues to meet, rather than detract, from the national interest. Moreover, the historiography of empire increasingly reveals that influences tend to flow in both directions between the metropole and the periphery. Productive and effective multilateral relations should realize the value of a multilateral check on power by preventing any one nation's risking the overall objectives of the multilateral enterprise by indulging its ambition for dominance. A clear view of the balance of ends and means in a nation's foreign policy strategy should ensure that multilateralism works both to support key national goals and to inhibit the imprudent use of power—a balance that John Ikenberry has termed “strategic restraint.”

Lyndon Johnson's “More Flags” campaign marked an attempt to encourage European allies to help defend South Vietnam, but the campaign was a spectacular failure. As Fredrik Logevall points out, European opposition stemmed from deep scepticism about the possibility of any lasting victory against the Vietcong and uncertainty over how much Vietnam really mattered to Western security.³⁹ Kennedy opted against military intervention in Laos in part because of the opposition of Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle and his concern that unilateral action would alienate the international community and increase domestic opposition. LBJ, however, confidently ignored the opinions of his overseas allies.

Imperial headquarters tended to worry (more than is often acknowledged by historians) that their own political and economic systems, even the morality of their people, would suffer under the burden of imperial enterprise. The more others could be persuaded to cooperate with the imperial enterprise therefore, the lower the costs and risks and the less this burden was felt at home. The Roman, British, and Spanish publics, for example, took pride in their imperial role, but also demanded that their leaders prioritize national survival over that of their empire.

Empire has often been seen as a corrupting force. Josiah Tucker, attempting to dissuade the British from continuing the American War, wrote in 1776 that the “heroic spirit [and] thirst for glory merely increase exponentially the range of imperialists’ desires and artificial wants, draining the spirit of industry.”⁴⁰ Empire was also seen to breed a false sense of security: the Spanish Royal Secretary, Fernandez Navarette, argued in 1621 (a time when the Spanish Empire appeared highly successful) that people are inclined naively to believe that wealth and reputation gained by conquest are sufficient for national preservation. Navarette also revealed a degree of paranoia regarding the dangers Spain faced by continually expanding; “were it not that reputation obliges her to preserve them,” he wrote, “Spain should give up some of her territories and certainly cease to expand.” The Vietnam War invoked a similar lesson: the attempt to maintain credibility should not lead to cognitive rigidity; the desire to prove to allies that the U.S. would come to their defense if necessary should not have influenced strategy in Southeast Asia.

Many Americans, of course, took away a different lesson from Vietnam: the necessity of a return to self-reliance. Navarette, adviser to Spain’s Philip V, saw “proof of the little valor and spirit of the Chinese” in the Qing Empire’s construction of a restraining wall around their empire.⁴¹ François Quesnay, however, maintained that the true greatness of a state is defined by its ability to *limit* the ambitions of its subjects. Other students of the history of the Qing Empire have admired Chinese restraint. Quesnay emphasized that the object of empire was not honor or wealth but *shared* prosperity. Quesnay, like many other European commentators, was impressed by the ritual known as K’eng-chi, in which the Emperor ploughed the first furrow and planted the first seed of the season. This ancient rite was taken to symbolize the importance of China’s being self-sufficient and free of reliance on external trade, unlike the countries of Europe. The United States, to some degree, took the same lesson away from the Vietnam War. The belief that American power should be used to promote self-sufficiency and security rather than international change and broader multilateral engagement during the Cold War led to an insistence on maintaining the status quo in Europe. The West German policy of Ostpolitik was discouraged by U.S. policymakers anxious to retain American control over European relations with the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, however, Nixon and Kissinger sought to improve bilateral Sino-American relations without consulting European allies in advance because of the restraining influence of multilateralism on the potential for dramatic change in international relations.⁴²

Throughout its history, the U.S. has shifted periodically from an emphasis on cooperation (working alongside other nations, using various means to attain a common goal) to an emphasis on collaboration (engaging more closely with

other nations, sharing both means and ends, with each holding a greater stake in the outcome). The American brand of multilateralism (whether in trade relations or in security alliances) has required a balance of autonomy and engagement. *Managing* that balance has been a tough challenge but also a necessary one.

The Past as Prologue?

John Lewis Gaddis is right to conclude that “the history of American grand strategy during the Cold War is remarkable for the *infrequency* with which the United States acted unilaterally.” John Ikenberry, too, has emphasized that the U.S. “acted as though it had less power than it did, sacrificing short-term flexibility and advantages by embedding itself in multilateral institutions to secure a long-term preeminence.” It is essential, however, to understand that multilateralism during the Cold War was adopted because it meshed with American needs and wants; whether considering the GATT or NATO, multilateralism entailed the calculated use of American power. Successive U.S. governments understood that power and partnership *could* be compatible. When multilateralism was thought through in a strategic way, power could even facilitate partnership. By the end of the Cold War, using multilateral means, the U.S. had established a preponderance of American power—not a balance of power—just as Wilson wanted. However, the question of how to manage that power after the Soviet Union was vanquished posed new challenges.

A great deal of rhetoric regarding multilateralism emerged in the 1990s and, most impressively, that decade brought the expansion of NATO to include former Warsaw Pact states and a reunified Germany. But it is notable that the more that decade is considered by historians and policy experts, the more a picture emerges of multilateral U.S. action pursued as an end in itself, without necessarily any concomitant understanding of why a multilateralist approach represented a prudent use of American power and what the consequences might be.⁴³ As Zbigniew Brzezinski has eloquently described, NATO’s expansion eastward, for example, “was less the product of strategic design than the result of history’s spontaneity.”⁴⁴ Multilateralism, in effect, was becoming too unwieldy to serve American purposes.

The prudent use of American power was more important than ever after the collapse of the Soviet empire, and there were key policymakers arguing that the most prudent way to use American power would be to apply it through institutions that the United States had fostered at the beginning of the Cold War and could now expand and strengthen with the end of that struggle.⁴⁵ There were also those that argued that if the U.S. fell back on being an “unchallenged” power and took friends and allies for granted, they would start to find ways to thwart U.S. power and influence.

With the end of the Cold War, however, successive governments began to reconsider how much of America's immense power it was ready to concede to partnership. Little serious consideration, however, was given in either the Bush or the Clinton administrations to the need to overcome the fear and resentment of other countries as American power dominated the international scene. At the same time, the wars in Yugoslavia, the horrors of Mogadishu, and the failures of the international community to act effectively in Rwanda did the reputation of multilateralism and U.S. military power no favors. Desirable ends and appropriate means became increasingly confused, and with that confusion multilateralism suffered. In 1993, Henry Kissinger accused the White House of "trying to submerge the national interest in multilateral ventures."⁴⁶ In 2000 the newly elected president, George W. Bush, pulled the U.S. out of multilateral negotiations on a small-arms treaty, announced he would not seek ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and said that he would withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The treaty establishing the International Criminal Court was left "unsigned." These were all very public gestures of America's intent to stop signing multilateral agreements that were not perceived to advance the U.S. national interest. The overall message was, arguably, more important than the individual turns away from the carefully constructed multilateralism of the previous fifty years.

Dean Rusk had said to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1965, "We are every day, in one sense, accepting limitations upon our complete freedom of action.... We have more than 4,300 treaties and international agreements, two-thirds of which have been entered into in the past 25 years.... Each one of which at least limits our freedom of action." George Bush would have heartily nodded his head at this statement, but he ignored what Rusk argued next: that international agreements and treaties *can* create stability and an environment where it is easier for the U.S. to pursue its national interests, in conjunction with more willing partners.

Rome, Great Britain, and Spain all offer examples of empires that became much more imperialistic, at least in the ways in which they defined and justified their existence, as their power was challenged. The Roman Empire abandoned its idealism and the search for stakeholders and resorted to brutality as an (untenable) means of ensuring its survival; Britain lost support for its empire at home and abroad the more it had to resort to intervention rather than indirect rule; Philip of Spain moved away from his predecessors' allied imperial project toward an empire stamped more authoritatively as Spanish, even though it continued to rely on international financing and military resources. All three empires collapsed for a variety of reasons, but it is noteworthy that all came

over time to rely more on costly coercion rather than on the collaborative approach to imperial rule that characterized them in their earlier periods.

The United States needs to recognize how to use multilateralism as a flexible strategy to manage power and control, acting as a leader without provoking fear of domination. Truman, Acheson, and Eisenhower led the United States into a managerial role. The difference between managing and dominating is similar to Eisenhower's distinction between commanding and leading:

Put a piece of cooked spaghetti on a platter. Take hold of one end and try to push it in a straight line across the plate. You get only a snarled up and knotty thing that resembles nothing on earth. Take hold of the other end and gently *lead* the piece of spaghetti across the plate. Simple!¹⁴⁷

The more the U.S. acts unilaterally or through ill-conceived, half-hearted efforts to act multilaterally, the more difficult it will be for the country to use its power prudently and strengthen the power of multilateralism, as the history of the Roman, British, and Spanish empires shows. American policymakers need to reconsider the balance between power and partnership and recognize that the national interest can be served prudently through multilateral engagement, provided that multilateralism is considered in a strategic, long-term way. Multilateralism also takes practice. As journalist Gideon Rachman pointed out in his observations of the September 2009 G20 summit, Europeans have become practiced in the art of multilateralism, making it easier to extend the practice into different contexts:

[T]he Europeans seemed much more tuned into what was going on than some of the other delegations. Puzzling over the new powers given to the IMF to monitor national economic policies in the Pittsburgh conclusions, I was interrupted by an old friend from the European Commission, who recognized the language immediately. "Ah yes," she said, "the open method of co-ordination."¹⁴⁸

Multilateralism takes time and energy, and the U.S. has to show that it is prepared to expend those treasured resources. To justify doing so, American policymakers must think through how to use multilateralism to their own advantage and sell it to a sceptical international and domestic public. Managing multilateralism is not, of course, simple, nor should it be. To be effective, a multilateral approach must incorporate flexibility, creativity, collaboration, long-term thinking, tough but constructive initiatives, and the ability to engage in diplomacy that works by persuasion, all while outlining clear goals. A genuinely

multilateral mentality has no place for the “you’re either with us, or you’re against us” attitude. Historically, the U.S. has done well to embed its leadership in multilateral engagement; it *should* be able to bring that history to bear on the future. There are lessons to be learned from the history of empire: think strategically about how to mesh national interests with international concerns, and power can be used prudently; lose that clarity of thinking and overstretch, and loss of public support and the growth of international fear and suspicion may well lead even the most super of superpowers to undermine its own strength.

Notes

- 1 Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), xxviii; *Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain* (Washington, DC: War Department, 1942), n.p.; Zbigniew Brzezinski, “An Agenda for NATO,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 5 (September/October 2009): 3. This volume of *Foreign Affairs* also proclaimed NATO “the world’s most important alliance,” or as Brzezinski explained: “NATO today is without doubt the most powerful military and political alliance in the world. Its 28 members come from the globe’s two most productive, technologically advanced, socially modern, economically prosperous, and politically democratic regions. Its member states’ 900 million people account for only 13 percent of the world’s population but 45 percent of global GDP” (*ibid.*, 9–10).
- 2 Henry Kamen, *Spain’s Road to Empire: The Making of a World Power* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), 491.
- 3 United States Ambassador to Turkey (MacMurray to Secretary of State), October 12, 1938, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1938, vol. 2, *The British Commonwealth, Europe, Near East, Africa*.
- 4 The Doha Development Round of the World Trade Organisation was one of the few instances in which President George W. Bush supported multilateral negotiations.
- 5 Henry Kamen, *Spain’s Road to Empire*; see, in particular, chapter 4. (See note 2).
- 6 Timothy Garton Ash, *Free World: Why a Crisis of the West Reveals the Opportunity of our Time* (London: Penguin, 2005), quoting Alexander Hamilton, in James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton, *The Federalist Papers*, no. 7 (London: Penguin, 1987), 113.
- 7 Herman Melville, *White Jacket* (Charleston, SC: Bibliobazaar, 2006 [1st ed. 1850]), 160.
- 8 President Woodrow Wilson’s speech to a joint session of Congress, 2 April 1917.
- 9 *Daily News*, 5 March 1917, quoted in “London Press Sympathetic: Appreciate Wilson’s Difficulties, Which Are Compared to Lincoln’s,” *The New York Times*, 6 March, 1917, 2.

- 10 Letter to Charles Milnews Gaskell, quoted in Alex Zwerdling, *Improvised Europeans: American Literary Expatriates in London* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), 73.
- 11 William H. McNeill, "What We Mean by the West," in *Orbis* 4, no. 47 (Fall 1997): 513–24, at 520.
- 12 Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), vol. 2, 461.
- 13 The first quotation is from Henry Cabot Lodge's speech in Washington, D.C., against the League of Nations, on 12 August 1919, the second from a speech he gave in the Senate on 19 September 1919.
- 14 Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History 1919–1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 349.
- 15 Quoted in David McCullough, *Truman* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 583.
- 16 *Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1957* (Council on Foreign Relations, 1958): 100.
- 17 "Mutuality and Security," 18 November 1957, Presidential Speech on Mutual Security Program, September 1957, John Foster Dulles Papers, Draft Presidential Correspondence and speeches, box 3, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library (DDEL).
- 18 Policy Planning Staff Memorandum for John Foster Dulles, from Gerard C. Smith, 7 December 1957, John Foster Dulles Papers, Draft Presidential Correspondence and Speeches, box 3, DDEL.
- 19 Telegram, Acheson to Truman, 15 September 1950, Student Research File (B file), no. 34A, NATO, box 1, folder 9, Harry S. Truman Library (HSTL).
- 20 For an introduction to the concept of indirect rule, see John W. Cell, "Colonial Rule," and Toyin Falola and A. D. Roberts, "West Africa," in Judith Brown and W. M. Roger Louis, eds., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 4, *The Twentieth Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- 21 The Bilderberg Group met for the first time in 1954 to allow off-the-record discussions among policymakers, leaders in business and finance, and former statesmen in an effort to enhance mutual understanding. No votes were taken, communiqués issued, or policy statements made; even the names of those attending a Bilderberg meeting were until recently only ever disclosed by the invitees themselves. Sadly, because of the off-the-record nature of the discussions it is hard to track how influential informal meetings have been on the development of policy, but the evidence historians do have seems to suggest that these forums, as much as formal summitry, were used effectively in the past to permit more candid multilateral discussions among key transatlantic players on global challenges. See Thomas Gijswijt, "Uniting the West: The Bilderberg Group, the Cold War and European Integration, 1952–1966" (PhD thesis, Universität Heidelberg, 2007). My own archival research on France and NATO has included examining a plethora of letters among transatlantic policymakers that frequently refer to candid discussions on the golf course and around the dinner

- table; such discussions frequently led to carefully written reports that policymakers and planners dutifully considered.
- 22 “Early History of the MLF,” undated, Lyndon B. Johnson Library (LBJL), NSF, box 23 (emphasis added).
 - 23 “A New Approach to France,” 21 April 1961, JFK Library, NSF, Country File, France, box 9.
 - 24 George W. Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern* (New York: Norton, 1983), 261.
 - 25 Full text (unclassified version of McNamara’s Athens comments given at a speech at the University of Michigan) printed in *The New York Times*, 7 June 1962.
 - 26 NATO Defense Ministers Meeting, Paris, 31 May 1965, LBJ Library, NSF, Agency File, Department of Defense, box 11.
 - 27 Audio and text versions of Kennedy’s speech, 4 July 1962, available at <http://www.jfklibrar.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Speeches/JFK/003PoF03IndependenceHall7041962.htm> (accessed December 2007).
 - 28 Telegram, Alphand to Couve de Murville, 9 May 1962, French Foreign Ministry Archives (FFMA), Amérique 1952–1963, États-Unis.
 - 29 See Carolyne Davidson, “Dealing with De Gaulle: The United States and France,” in Locher, Nuenlist, and Martin, eds., *Globalizing de Gaulle: International Perspectives on French Foreign Policies*, Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010).
 - 30 Edward C. Luck, “The United States, International Organizations and the Quest for Legitimacy,” in Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, eds., *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 47.
 - 31 John Baron Moyle (ed.), *The Institutes of Justinian*, Prooemium 1.
 - 32 Together with a theory of just and unjust wars the later Roman Empire also developed a new morality of empire. Roman jurists began to look upon war as a means of last resort, even if the emperors they worked for tended to be more belligerent. War for these thinkers could not be justified by the need to acquire territory, nor by objectives of cultural transformation or religious conversion. The only justification for war, they argued, could be an attempt to achieve peace and justice.
 - 33 Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.34–35. “There are two types of conflict: the one proceeds by debate, the other by force. Since the former is the proper concern of man, but the latter of beasts, one should only resort to the latter if one may not employ the former.”
 - 34 Edward C. Luck, “The United States, International Organizations and the Quest for Legitimacy,” 69 (see note 30).
 - 35 E. B. White, “Letter from the East,” *The New Yorker*, 15 December 1956: 43.

- 36 Sadly, not only did the Congo succumb to the dictatorship of Mobutu a year after UN forces withdrew (with the future of the Congo looking fairly stable) but Hammarskjöld was killed in a plane crash while traveling to a mediation meeting.
- 37 Jonathan Spence, “Comparing Empires,” seminar notes, Yale University, January 2005.
- 38 Seneca, *De Otio* 4.1.
- 39 Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 396–97.
- 40 Quoted in Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500–c. 1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 108.
- 41 Domingo Fernandez Navarette, 1676, cited in Pagden, 31 (*see* note 40).
- 42 It is notable, however, that Charles de Gaulle had long encouraged Nixon to make this move.
- 43 *See* for example, John Lewis Gaddis’ description of a NATO briefing team that gave a lecture at Yale in September 1998 on the eastward expansion of NATO. Gaddis quotes Bruce Russett questioning what would happen “if NATO expansion caused difficulties with the Russians, perhaps undermining President Yeltsin’s efforts to democratize the country, perhaps creating an awkward situation for the new or prospective members of the alliance as Russian power revived, perhaps even driving Russia into some new form of cooperation with the Chinese, thereby reversing one of the greatest victories for the West in the Cold War, which was the Sino-Soviet split.” Gaddis recounts the reaction of the NATO team being one of “shocked silence.” Gaddis, “What Is Grand Strategy?,” *American Grand Strategy After War*, The Triangle Institute for Security Studies and the Duke University Program in American Grand Strategy, February 26, 2009; available at <http://www.duke.edu/web/agsp/grandstrategypaper.pdf>.
- 44 Zbigniew Brzezinski, “An Agenda for NATO,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 5, (September/October 2009): 8.
- 45 *See* Strobe Talbott, *The Great Experiment: The Story of Ancient Empires, Modern States, and the Quest for a Global Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008), 280–281, for Talbott’s account of his attempt to convince Bill Clinton of this idea while he was running for office in 1992.
- 46 Henry Kissinger, “Foreign Policy Is About the National Interest,” *International Herald Tribune*, 25 October 1993, 5.
- 47 Letter, Eisenhower to Anthony Eden, 16 March 1953, Dwight D Eisenhower, Papers as President, International Series, box 20, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.
- 48 Gideon Rachman, “Europe’s Plot to Take Over the World,” *Financial Times*, 5 October 2009, 11.

III. Is a Grand Strategy of Restraint Politically Feasible Today?

Major Roadblocks to a Prudent Foreign Policy

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I thought the best example of a way to handle a situation was East Timor, when we provided logistical support to the Australians, support that only we can provide. I thought that was a good model. But we can't be all things to all people in the world, Jim. And I think that's where maybe the vice president and I begin to have some differences. I'm worried about overcommitting our military around the world. I want to be judicious in its use. You mentioned Haiti. I wouldn't have sent troops to Haiti. I didn't think it was a mission worthwhile. It was a nation-building mission. And it was not very successful. It cost us a couple billions of dollars and I'm not sure democracy is any better off in Haiti than it was before.¹

—Governor George W. Bush, to moderator Jim Lehrer, in a presidential debate with Vice President Al Gore, October 12, 2000

Governor George W. Bush was elected in 2000 to be president of the United States on a platform that declared he would pursue a more “humble” foreign policy than his predecessor, Bill Clinton. As a presidential candidate, Bush repeatedly averred that he wanted to shun nation building; he wanted to avoid the mission of promoting democracy with U.S. military forces. President Bush’s foreign policy approach radically changed after 9/11; perhaps Bush’s approach changed in response to 9/11, or, more likely, 9/11 gave Bush a “window of opportunity” to aggressively pursue a primacist strategy he largely preferred before the terrorist attacks.² In either case, it is revealing to notice that Bush’s declared foreign policy platform in 2000 emphasized that he would work with allies and be more judicious than his predecessor. Bush’s “humble” foreign policy platform was carefully crafted to appeal to the center of American public opinion in order to win a majority of votes in a tight presidential election.

Barack Obama, as a candidate, likewise advocated he would pursue a foreign policy much, much more prudent and restrained than his predecessor. Upon taking office, Obama reiterated and delineated his more restrained approach to foreign policy in his inaugural address:

Recall that earlier generations faced down fascism and communism not just with missiles and tanks, but with the [*sic*] sturdy alliances and enduring convictions.... They understood that our power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please. Instead, they knew that our power grows through its prudent use. Our security emanates from the justness of our cause; the force of our example; the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.... We are the keepers of this legacy, guided by these principles once more, we can meet those new threats that demand even greater effort, even greater cooperation and understanding between nations. We'll begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan.³

President Obama's historic inaugural address underscored his understanding that a majority of Americans who had elected him wanted him to pursue a more restrained foreign policy than his predecessor. The election platforms of both candidates, Bush and Obama, appealed to the long-standing general preferences of the American public—especially since the end of the Cold War—to pursue a multilateral foreign policy that is internationalist but not extravagant, a foreign policy that is judicious, humble, restrained, prudent and neither forcefully unilateralist nor isolationist.⁴

The American public desires a more prudent foreign policy, yet neither Democratic Party nor Republican Party leaders deliver. Why? Instead of restraint, leaders of both parties have steadily maintained and even increased the number of military commitments that have accumulated since the beginning of the Cold War. There have been a few brief or modest attempts at imposing marginal restraint and limiting defense obligations and spending, but none of these attempts has proved lasting or politically advantageous for the president who attempted the strategy.

President Barack Obama appeared to enter office at a most propitious moment for steering a new, much more restrained, course in U.S. foreign policy. He took office in the midst of a severe financial crisis, while at the same time inheriting two expensive, unpopular, and intractable wars. While President Obama has made some potentially significant strategic adjustments (most notably in U.S. nuclear policy), most Obama supporters have been deeply disappointed that he has not delivered any dramatic changes in the direction of restraint. Many pundits have even argued that Obama is primarily continuing the failed

militaristic policies of the Bush administration. Why can't President Obama steer a new course? What are the major obstructions to a much more restrained grand strategy?

This essay explains the major roadblocks to real foreign policy change. The first section outlines a brief description of what a grand strategy of restraint would be, and why it appears vitally important to seek such a strategy at this time to many scholars and analysts. The second section reviews the conventional wisdom on why dramatically changing course on foreign policy toward restraint is difficult if not impossible politically, and why this conventional wisdom is backward. Third, this article reviews a brief history of the four attempts at modest restraint since World War II and the political lessons learned from these attempts. Fourth, based on this history, this article outlines the key elements of "unsinister militarism," arguing that the insights from this analysis explain why U.S. foreign policy is not restrained and is very difficult to change despite radically changed international threats and obviously more pressing national priorities than military threats. Finally, three key strategies based on this analysis are suggested as the keys to unblocking the path toward prudence and restraint.

A Grand Strategy of Restraint

A grand strategy of restraint for the U.S. would be dramatically different from the position of preponderant power that the country has maintained and come to regard as "normal" since the beginning of the Cold War.⁵ It is by now a cliché that the U.S. expends more on its military defense than the rest of the world combined—a case of extreme preponderance. President Obama has so far continued this position of maintaining absolutely preponderant power with his first two defense budgets. Obama did include cuts of some weapons systems in some areas, but overall, he continued to increase the defense budget in his first year, going from \$654 billion in FY 2009 to \$680 billion in FY 2010—setting the record for the highest defense bill in history.⁶ Obama's FY 2011 continues in the same vein, even if it is minutely smaller, with some additional marginal reductions planned in the future—by 2015. More importantly, Obama boldly escalated U.S. military activism in Afghanistan, with only the remotest hope that he can somehow quickly "fix" the situation militarily and then leave.

A strategy of restraint would be completely different. True restraint would include profoundly reducing annual U.S. military expenditures by roughly two-thirds, resulting in the U.S. spending under \$250 billion annually on defense in less than ten years. This \$250 billion defense budget would still roughly be more than twice that of China, the second highest military spender at approximately \$122 billion annually, and more than three times Russia's, at \$70 billion

annually. A U.S. defense budget of \$250 billion would be much more in line with the expenditures of all U.S. allies in Europe combined (\$289 billion).⁷

The goal of a grand strategy of restraint would be to quit the U.S.'s habitual practice of maintaining global preponderance and pursuing primacy. A strategy of restraint would recognize that current U.S. spending levels are not sustainable; moreover, they are not desirable, since primary threats to U.S. interests are not military. Instead, very scarce U.S. resources should be redirected and used to address other pressing priorities, such as creating jobs at home, clean energy research and development, and energy independence. Pursuing clean, renewable energy and conservation would positively transform U.S. security interests at the same time as providing domestic jobs; the benefits are so obvious that the lack of political will to move toward real restraint internationally in order to free up significant resources for more pressing priorities is nothing short of stunning.

A grand strategy of restraint acknowledges that military force most often fails to succeed at controlling international politics and is very often counterproductive because it alienates many potential allies and provokes adversaries. A strategy of restraint is not synonymous with isolationism; it simply recognizes that there are other more productive and cost-effective tools for pursuing an internationalist strategy than military threats and coercion.

The core principles of a grand strategy of restraint include giving up overseas military bases and pulling back U.S. military forces to an "over the horizon" position. The United States would decide to be merely a great power militarily, but no longer be a superpower intent on defending and controlling world affairs with force. This would mean the U.S. would reduce and eventually almost wholly eliminate U.S. security guarantees and security assistance as they are now conceived; the U.S. would no longer act as a superpower capable of and willing to provide security for all of its allies. Instead, the U.S. would maintain alliances on a more equal basis, with allies providing for their own security. Further, the U.S. would openly adopt and acknowledge full reliance on nuclear deterrence by reducing its nuclear stockpile and "de-alerting" its remaining weapons. Ultimately, in order to keep the world's nuclear arsenals safe from terrorist threat while at the same time assuring nuclear stability among states, the U.S. should dismantle *all* its nuclear weapons and rely on virtual nuclear deterrence (such virtual deterrence would be established by declaring that nuclear retaliation is immutably assured if others initiate a nuclear attack, because the U.S. would always remain able to rebuild nuclear weapons if necessary); or nuclear deterrence could be maintained internationally (with a well-secured and highly survivable actual nuclear arsenal, if deemed necessary). Complementing this safe nuclear deterrence policy, the U.S. would vigorously pursue

diplomatic nonproliferation policies to the greatest extent possible, while absolutely forswearing preventive attack to stop proliferation and ceasing the pursuit of missile defenses.

Over time, the U.S. would aim to maintain alliances and institutions that create and solidify norms of cooperation without being the heavy-handed superpower that uses military tools in too many situations. Just as the U.S. has become accustomed to being the sole superpower unilaterally dictating policy, it should change course and become accustomed to working with others through building and supporting international institutions in order to facilitate cooperation. This internationalist strategy of restraint would be based on two central observations: (1) the current preponderant strategy is not sustainable and is depleting U.S. power while not providing optimal security; and (2), it is not wise to be militarily overbearing, as other countries and nonstate actors around the globe resent U.S. dominance, and many will always seek to counter it, and therefore such activism does not produce the desired results.

The Conventional Wisdom on Why the U.S. Needs to Be Militarily Activist

Supporters of Obama were either stunned or sanguine when Obama, after studying the problems in Afghanistan for months after taking office, decided he needed to “surge” the troops in order to be sure not to lose the war in Afghanistan. The stunned supporters had hoped, despite Obama’s clear telegraphing that he would be a “strong” leader, that Obama would manage to disengage more quickly from both Iraq and Afghanistan—it seemed clear that that was what he had really promised to his base. Obama’s more sanguine supporters largely reasoned that he needed to not lose in Afghanistan (even if he could not win) because if there were another 9/11-type terrorist attack while Obama was “disengaging,” then he would be politically doomed. In other words, it was essential to appear to be a strong leader even if the surge in Afghanistan was ineffectual and probably not at all substantially related to preventing another 9/11-type attack. This conventional wisdom holds that Obama chose to be “strong” on defense and to intervene more forcefully in Afghanistan for U.S. national security reasons—to satisfy a public desire for safety, or at least to satisfy a public need for the illusion that the president is doing all he can to assure safety.

According to another, similar tenet of conventional wisdom, Obama needs to pursue a militarily activist foreign policy, “despite the hunger of many [U.S.] citizens and of its foreign policy intellectuals for a quiet life,” because the U.S. is naturally drawn into engagements around the world over and over, the consequences of disengagement seem unacceptable, and the convictions of many

Americans lead them to be engaged in a tumultuous world.⁸ This reasoning again argues that the U.S. intervenes overseas because it has various strong interests around the world that drive it to intervene.

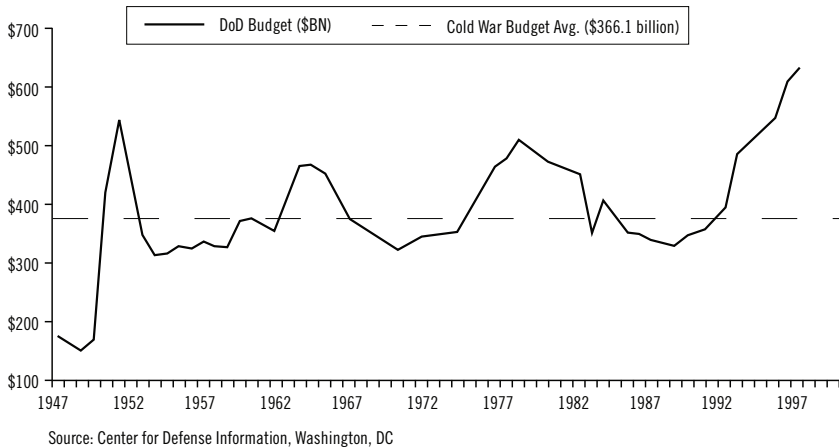
There is no doubt that some significant public preference for a feeling of security, and some American interests overseas, press Obama to some extent into an activist foreign policy. However, I argue that what really is going on is what I would call a “duct tape” problem. Before the invention of duct tape—or before a person has discovered duct tape—he or she will simply walk by a ripped window screen, or throw out a pair of favorite shoes that is coming apart. But with duct tape around, every problem that could conceivably be fixed with duct tape appears to cry out for it. In essence, this perspective turns the argument in favor of the desire or need for U.S. military activism on its head. While real problems may exist and potential sites of U.S. military intervention are certainly limitless, the public’s preference for intervention is in fact no stronger or more profound than the countervailing desires for prudence, restraint, and the wise allocation of scarce resources to vital domestic priorities. If only we could figure out how to disengage—or to not intervene in the first place! The strongest evidence that Americans today would likely prefer much more restraint in U.S. foreign policy is the arguments for greater restraint, which were the dominant winning arguments in the presidential campaign. Yet Obama now owns a lot of duct tape, so to speak, and thus it appears that he is somehow stuck in pursuing a militarily activist strategy even though it is unsustainable and will not produce increased U.S. security at acceptable cost. Obama chooses military preponderance and military solutions to foreign policy problems precisely because the tools he has readily at hand are military tools.⁹ Exploring this notion of why Obama is so stuck helps to uncover how he could possibly get unstuck.

Historical Attempts at Implementing Restraint and Political Lessons Learned

Since the beginning of the Cold War there have been periodic dramatic public fears of external threats leading to sharp increases in U.S. defense spending, followed by modest attempts at restraining U.S. defense spending. The cumulative effect has been to continuously ratchet up the U.S. military budget to historically unprecedented levels by any metric. Both parties have taken the lead in exaggerating external threats at different times, especially when it was to their political advantage to do so. All executive branch leaders and congressional leaders have found it relatively easy to increase defense obligations and spending but nearly impossible to ever significantly decrease defense obligations and spending. Restraint has instead, at best, been achieved not by significant, rational,

real defense cuts but by halting increases in defense spending and then holding defense spending constant against inflation. These limited attempts at restraint demonstrate how nearly impossible it seems to be to steer a new course in a more restrained direction even when the president appears to prefer more restraint.

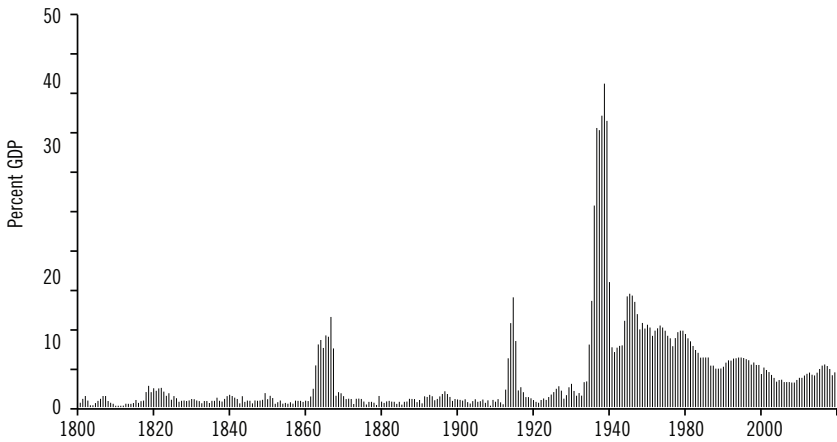
Chart 1. Department of Defense Spending over Time (Constant 2007 Dollars)



Historically, it is important to remember that the U.S. was not always so willing to sustain an extravagantly preponderant military defense. Conventional wisdom holds that the U.S. was resistant to standing military forces and military spending prior to Pearl Harbor because the U.S. was an isolationist country, uninterested in great-power rivalries, resistant to internationalism, and ideologically opposed to imperialism.¹⁰ This mythologized understanding of U.S. history has been thoroughly refuted and reconceived by numerous scholars in almost all respects. Since the founding of the country, American leaders and publics of every era have not shunned internationalism.¹¹ Even in 1936, at the brief height of popular American isolationism, FDR proclaimed on the campaign trail, “We are not isolationists except insofar as we seek to isolate ourselves completely from war.”¹² FDR was emphasizing that the U.S. was noninterventionist rather than anti-internationalist. The U.S. public, even in this most isolationist period, viewed itself as internationalist, and it preferred to stay engaged internationally in many respects, but it also believed that the main danger to American security lay in going “far beyond our borders, into distant seas...[and] frittering away our great strength in foreign theaters,” as Hanson Baldwin wrote in 1939.¹³

Instead of being isolationist as the mythology would have it, the American public and U.S. leaders across time have viewed themselves as internationalist and have been continuously engaged in internationalist debates and policies, frequently choosing to pursue imperialism as they sought rapid expansion. In light of the deep roots of America's internationalist, hegemonic, and even imperialist leanings, what is most important here is to notice why the conventional wisdom of an isolationist/anti-imperialistic America came to be accepted. A quick glance at the relative percentage of U.S. GDP dedicated to military spending since 1792 makes clear why some have argued that prior to World War II the U.S. must have been anti-internationalist and even isolationist (*see* chart 2, U.S. Military Spending as Percent of GDP since 1792, below). For nearly 150 years, relatively and in absolute values, the U.S. dedicated far less of its wealth to military spending than it did after World War II.

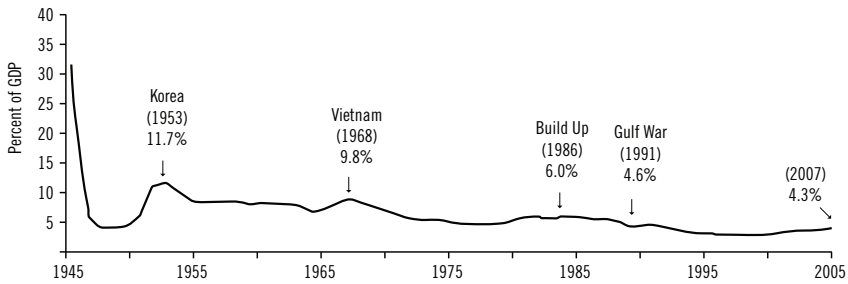
Chart 2. U.S. Military Spending as a Percent of GDP since 1792



Data from U.S. Budget Statistical Abstracts
 Compiled by Christopher Chantrell
<http://www.usgovernmentspending.com/charts.html>

In other words, the norm for military spending from 1792 until World War II was less than 2 percent of GDP. After World War II, a new norm was established, with spending suddenly rising drastically to about 10 percent of GDP for well over twenty years. As the U.S. GDP rapidly grew, high levels of spending continued, but fell back as a percentage of GDP, until a norm of roughly just over 4 percent of GDP was established.

Chart 3. Defense Budget as a Percentage of GDP



*Estimated

Data from U.S. Department of Defense, at:

http://www.heritage.org/research/Budget/images/bg2012_chart1.jpg

Since 1940, there have been several periods of relative contraction after rapid expansion in spending, but each time defense spending never reverted back to its former level. Thus, there has been an overall effect of ratcheting up real defense spending across time as the U.S. grew wealthier. This relative growth continued even during the period known as *détente* in the 1970s when many believed the Cold War was over. Even more surprising is that defense spending continued at levels above average Cold War spending levels even after the Cold War ended (*see* chart 1, Department of Defense Spending over Time).

The new norm of spending above 4 percent of GDP on defense since World War II has become such an accepted norm that leading politicians and influential pundits have recently argued for legislating 4 percent of GDP to be unconditionally allocated to defense spending without making the difficult judgments about the size and nature of the threats faced and whether or not it is prudent or judicious to use such a significant amount of finite resources for these purposes. In November 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates said that 4 percent of GDP should be a “benchmark as a rough floor of how much we should spend on defense.”¹⁴ During this period of over sixty-five years, no leading politician has ever successfully challenged the prudence of this post-World War II spending norm.

The massive shift in U.S. foreign policy priorities after World War II, reflected in the budget shift from 2 to 4 percent of GDP dedicated to military expenditures, was not commensurate with a change in stance from isolationism to internationalism but a change in status from internationalist, regional hegemony to global superpower. Recognizing the real nature of this shift opens up

room for discussion of how broad the actual possibilities are for different forms of internationalism. For example, the U.S. could revert back to spending less than 2 percent of GDP on the military and still continue the more than two-hundred-year American tradition of being a wholly internationalist power. Currently the U.S. maintains absolutely preponderant military power; devoting less than 2 percent of GDP to military expenditures would leave the U.S. significantly ahead of all other powers in absolute spending, while allowing the country to free up resources for other essential domestic priorities.

It is widely recognized that the most difficult task for politicians is to try to impose restraint relative to the strategy of their immediate predecessors. While politicians often contend they will be more prudent and restrained than the opponent they have just defeated, belt tightening is always painful and unpopular. It is much easier to expend resources freely, just as it is more fun to live on credit cards than it is to live within a sustainable, tighter budget. It is much easier politically and organizationally to increase spending than to decrease spending or even just to hold the line. In fact, the history of the presidents who have attempted to impose restraint demonstrates how politically disadvantageous such a move is. Some leaders have shifted toward restraint incrementally, but the political rewards have been small and the political punishment has often-times been great.

Public opinion may generally prefer prudence and restraint, but when past presidents such as Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon (abetted by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger), and Carter attempted to limit defense spending and turn the country toward a more prudent policy, competing politicians teamed up with interest groups who would benefit from confrontational foreign policies and higher military expenditures to form strong, highly motivated coalitions that successfully overturned the more prudent president's preferred foreign policy.

In the spring of 1950, President Truman was lobbying and stumping extensively to keep defense spending at approximately \$13 billion. Republican opponents were attacking the administration for being "soft" on communism, especially for allowing communists to infiltrate the State Department. In an effort to immunize the administration from unfounded political attacks, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Director of Policy Planning Paul Nitze, and military leaders joined together behind Truman's back to craft NSC-68, a highly aggressive strategy that would greatly expand military spending and unquestionably prove the administration was not "soft" on communism. This monumental strategy document was written not as a thoughtful strategy memorandum weighing possible options, but as a rallying cry. It wholly abandoned any pretense of prudence or restraint, and concentrated on making its points "clearer than truth."

This expansionist strategy was easy to sell. The central lesson here was the public had seemed to want to prudently limit defense spending, but was easily swayed by leaders to do the opposite. When Truman's own advisers first presented the strategy document to him, Truman resisted it because of its fiscal imprudence; Truman at first felt politically cornered and undermined by his own advisers. Overall this policy, which quadrupled defense spending in under two years, served Truman well and was much easier to sell than his policy of restraint. The NSC-68 policy was at its root a product of domestic coalition building and it allowed domestic political interests to trump prudent foreign policy.¹⁵

President Eisenhower also tried to marginally limit defense spending in his second term. Former Secretary of the Air Force Stuart Symington, Senator John F. Kennedy, some members of the air force, and other special interests joined together to rally the public behind fears of a mythical "missile gap." A possibly dangerous missile gap was first perceived after *Sputnik* in 1957, but by 1960 a dangerous gap was no longer plausible. Yet by then, the public fear of a gap was so powerful and widespread that Kennedy continued to use this fear for his political advantage, even though the gap had been closed and U.S. intelligence no longer supported estimates of a possible dangerous gap. Missile-gap imagery served Kennedy as a ready metaphor in 1960 to support his argument that Eisenhower was not doing enough on defense. Arguing against restraint and for increased defense budgets overall proved a winning strategy, and the missile gap was a useful tool that helped propel Kennedy into the White House.¹⁶

In the early 1970s, in the wake of the devastating costs of Vietnam, Nixon and Kissinger also tried to adopt a more prudent foreign policy in the form of détente, including arms limitations. President Carter inherited this more restrained policy at a time of economic recession and high inflation, and he attempted to build upon it prudently. However, a powerful political coalition cohered around the highly exaggerated top-secret threat assessment put forward by the Team B report, which was leaked to the press just after President Carter took office. (The Team B report was the result of an experimental "competitive threat assessment exercise" authorized by CIA Director George H. W. Bush in which an outside "blue ribbon panel" of alleged experts gained access to raw CIA intelligence and got to create their own threat assessment; the report was highly flawed in its methods of analysis, completely contradicted the much more accurate CIA estimates of Soviet capabilities and intentions at the time, and ultimately undermined the CIA and led to highly inflated estimates of Soviet capabilities for over a decade and to the U.S. not recognizing the coming end of the Cold War.) The political movement that gathered behind the Team B report was largely funded by defense contractors and others who had lost out

under policies of restraint. This movement mobilized under the auspices of the Committee on the Present Danger, a political coalition that had come together to oppose President Carter's every move. Carter ultimately reversed course and attempted to placate this powerful coalition with large increases in defense spending and a sharp turn toward hard-line policies, but to no avail. The coalition that opposed the prudence and restraint of *détente* only gained in strength.¹⁷ President Reagan swept into office in 1980 promising to increase defense spending largely to address the wholly mythical threat of a looming "window of vulnerability." Reagan instituted the highest U.S. peacetime military spending until that time, and was remembered for being a highly successful president, as opposed to Carter, whose prudent belt-tightening policies made him unpopular and who was ultimately remembered as an ineffectual and unsuccessful president.

These cases illustrate how the public, while preferring prudence generally, is easily convinced to fear foreign threats.¹⁸ These cases also demonstrate that grand strategies of even marginal restraint seem to provoke major political backlashes from groups affected by such restraint. The institutional heft of the Department of Defense and its allies, combined with the charismatic power of politicians campaigning for office, ensure that the pursuit of even marginal restraint can be politically disastrous.¹⁹

Fully aware of the lessons of Carter's disastrous experience, President Bill Clinton opted to impose only very modest restraint even though the Cold War was over and both the public and the military expected a possible "peace dividend" of up to 50 percent of the military budget to be redirected to other pressing needs. Clinton worked to avoid Carter's one-term fate and total humiliation. Clinton did not attempt to significantly cut the defense budget; instead he held it level for about six years, with no increases to compensate for inflation. This had the effect of reducing the defense budget over time without provoking a strong political coalition in opposition. President Obama so far appears to be borrowing some pages from Clinton's playbook, with apparent plans to hold the defense budget flat in future years.²⁰

Restraint Thwarted by "Unsinister Militarism"

In February 2010, President Obama sent to Congress a proposed defense budget of \$708 billion for FY 2011. This budget included \$549 billion in discretionary budget authority to fund base defense programs, and \$159 billion to support overseas contingency operations primarily in Afghanistan and Iraq. This defense request was larger than all other U.S. discretionary spending combined. The sheer magnitude of the U.S. defense budget, especially given that there exists no significant domestic opposition to these enormous military spending priorities, has led many to conclude the U.S. polity is infected with militarism, and that it

is this militarism that stands in the way of a more rational grand strategy of restraint. However, this perceived militarism is not the virulent, aggressively expansionist militarism of, for example, pre-World War II imperial Japan, but simply—as the dictionary has it—a common “belief or desire of a government or people that a country should maintain a strong military capability and be prepared to use it aggressively to defend or promote national interests.”²¹ Such militarism is not the result of a sinister plot of either civilian or military leaders. Instead it is the artifact of four largely unintentional conditions: organizational interests, collective-action problems, pork barrel politics, and prevailing norms of militarized patriotism.

Organizational interests. All organizations (businesses, government bureaucracies, not-for-profit organizations) strive to protect and promote their organizational interests (protect the jobs and prestige of its members and promote the mission of the organization). One main way organizations promote their interests is to work to increase the size and wealth of the organization. Large organizations have more capacity to promote their interests than small ones, hence as an organization grows it expands its ability to promote its interests roughly in proportion to its size. Therefore, as the U.S. military organization grew it became more and more capable of promoting its own interests. Success often breeds more success simply because the larger the organization grows, the more capable it becomes of promoting its own interests. By virtue of its increasing size and capability, the U.S. military is more and more likely to prevail in protecting its interests by preserving its large budget, and more likely to be able to thwart efforts to impose restraint.

Collective action problems. The public interest may wish to impose restraint on excessive military obligations and budgets, but it is well known that large groups face relatively high costs when attempting to organize for collective action, while small groups face relatively low costs. Thus the general public—which is, in a sense, the largest group of all—will be the most difficult to organize. Furthermore, individuals within large groups will gain less per capita from successful collective action, while individuals in small groups will gain more per capita through successful collective action. Hence, in the absence of collective incentives, successful group action diminishes as group size grows. Moreover, not only will collective action by large groups be difficult to achieve, but also large groups (including the public as a whole) can be dominated by minority groups that share concentrated interests, especially in situations in which the minority can control information, and the large group does not have access to reliable and full information.²²

Pork barrel politics. It is well known that U.S. congressional budgetary practices are plagued by “pork barrel politics,” a term that refers to the appropriation

of government spending for localized projects secured solely or primarily to bring money home to a representative's or senator's district. This problem is so ubiquitous in U.S. defense budgeting that the president finds it nearly impossible to cut any military programs; proposed cuts end up being restored by Congress. Congress almost universally authorizes significantly more money for defense than the president requests. This, in effect, means that a substantial proportion of defense spending subsidizes local "jobs programs" rather than being devoted to programs based on a rational, prudent assessment of defense requirements. Pork barrel politics directly blocks the imposition of restraint.

The norm of militarized patriotism. Most likely as a result of the powerful organizational interests of the institutionally preponderant Department of Defense, U.S. citizens and politicians have come to share the view that being patriotic means "supporting the troops," which translates into deference for expert military opinions, patriotic acquiescence to military budget requests that are "necessary" for security, and unquestioning support for most military endeavors, at least initially. To dissent from this type of reflexive unconditional support for the military is to be unpatriotic. Politicians who express contrary opinions, such as making strong arguments for cuts in defense, are quickly labeled as unpatriotic, if not treasonous, and punished politically. This norm, the reflex of upholding a "strong" defense posture, especially on the part of politicians of national stature, is one of the largest roadblocks to implementing a grand strategy of restraint.

These four factors—the preponderant organizational interests of the U.S. military, combined with the inherent weakness of collective action on behalf of the public interest, amplified by the robust tradition of pork barrel politics that maintains high levels of defense spending, and reinforced by a conventional American form of patriotism that emphatically "supports the troops," right or wrong—all come together to create a culture of unambiguous militarism in the U.S. It is an *un*sinister militarism—indeed, a largely unintentional militarism—that is primarily a byproduct of maintaining a large military organization, but it is nonetheless a deep and wide cultural current that directly thwarts attempts at implementing a grand strategy of restraint.

Four Essential Strategies for Overcoming the Roadblocks to Restraint

The American public generally supports an internationalist foreign policy, showing very little interest across time in isolationism. Yet the public, while not isolationist, is far less internationalist than elite opinion, with 54 to 72 percent of the public supporting the idea that the U.S. should take "an active part in world affairs" in repeated surveys between 1974 and 2002, while elite opinion registered a minimum of 96 percent support in response to the same question.²³

The public also generally prefers a more prudent and restrained foreign policy than do elite opinion leaders on almost all issues across time.²⁴ Both the public and the elite also prefer a multilateral over a unilateral foreign policy, and this broad and robust opinion likewise generally favors a policy of restraint.²⁵

Beyond these general attitudes toward foreign policy, which reveal the public to be internationalist but inclined toward greater restraint than elite leaders favor, recent polls also show that the U.S. public overwhelmingly feels the Iraq War was a mistake (57 percent in July 2009).²⁶ Further, by one careful measure, it appears that the public feels the defense budget should be reduced by more than 30 percent.²⁷ Moreover, Americans believe that the federal government wastes, on average, fifty cents of every dollar it gathers in taxes.²⁸ Further, in poll after poll, Americans cite the economy as the most important issue facing the nation (47 percent in November 2009), with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan only a distant third (12 percent).²⁹ With all of this historic and current support for a more restrained foreign policy, it would seem that President Obama could easily assume he has a mandate to turn away aggressively from the policy of his predecessor.

Yet the obstacles to a grand strategy of restraint described above prevail over the general public preference for more restraint. Powerful organizational interests clearly come together in overwhelming coalitions to overturn presidential initiatives for restraint. Collective action problems plague the public interest in restraint. Pork barrel politics regularly reverses already politically difficult spending cuts proposed by the executive branch. And the general norm of militarized patriotism silences politicians who might dare to object to “strong” military-oriented foreign policies.

All of these considerations lead us back to the duct-tape problem. If you own *too much* duct tape, you will feel inclined to fix everything with it—it’s just too handy. Four key observations follow from this analysis. First, the way for the president to implement a grand strategy of restraint is through changing the defense budget. He should not spend time overanalyzing priorities, determining which interests are vital, and which programs should be downgraded. He must recognize that so long as the U.S. has a large military organization on hand, he will be inclined to use it; the duct tape will jump into his hand and all interests will appear vital. To move in the direction of restraint, cutting the defense budget must become *an end in itself*. Close all overseas bases; shrink the organization.

Second, we must recognize that the barriers to accomplishing collective action on military issues do not simply constitute a typical collective-action problem. Instead, the public interest is almost completely impotent when civilians try to organize to address military questions because of the culture of secrecy. Civilian security experts know that secrecy is never so tight that civilians could

not know enough to assess threats and weigh in knowledgeably on budget priorities, but most citizens do not understand this. They have no way of demystifying military budget planning enough to feel comfortable arguing that thirty-five jobs for public school teachers in Oregon are far more important to the national interest than paying \$3 million to send three eighteen-year-old soldiers to Afghanistan for two years. The public cannot weigh the opportunity costs and the economic consequences of overseas wars without much more access to detailed analysis of military budgets.

Third, pork barrel politics is not likely to change, but jobs must be created in such areas as clean energy, public healthcare, and environmental auditing that will rival and successfully compete with the demands for military jobs. Again, official secrecy often shields military jobs from public audits for efficiency and necessity. Reducing secrecy and increasing public auditing will greatly enhance the ability of the U.S. to move toward restraint.

Finally, confronting the norm of militarized patriotism is absolutely essential for freeing up political debate about national security. Both political parties back foreign policies of preponderance over restraint largely because of the power of the military lobby, the silence and impotence of critical public opinion, and the economic rewards that accrue to such practices as pork barrel politics. Militarized patriotism reinforces these problematic dynamics by silencing critics. In a democracy, open debate is essential to rational policy making. Any norms that silence debate are antidemocratic because they hamper the functioning of democracy.

These suggestions are only a beginning. Moving toward a grand strategy of restraint in U.S. foreign policy is a politically risky gambit because it requires taking on the most powerful organization in the history of the world.

Notes

- 1 Transcript of major excerpts of the debate at *Online NewsHour*, "Presidential Debate," October 12, 2000, available at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/july-dec00/for-policy_10-12.html.
- 2 On the contention that Bush had radical goals before 9/11, see Bill Keller, "The Radical Presidency of George W. Bush: Reagan's Son," *The New York Times Magazine*, January 26, 2003; available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/26/magazine/the-radical-presidency-of-george-w-bush-reagan-s-son.html?scp=1428&sq=woodward&st=nyt&pagewanted=7>.
- 3 "Transcript: Barack Obama's Inaugural Address," *The New York Times*, January 20, 2009, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/20/us/politics/20text-obama.html?_r=1.

- 4 For evidence that the American public has been generally internationalist and multi-lateral since polling began before World War II, see Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 174–77, 201–02; and Ole R. Holsti, *Making American Foreign Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 237–67.
- 5 For more on this strategy, with some differences in details and emphasis, see Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky, “Come Home, America: The Strategy of Restraint in the Face of Temptation,” *International Security* 21, no. 4 (Spring 1997): 5–48; Barry R. Posen, “The Case for Restraint,” *The American Interest* 3, no. 2 (November/December 2007): 13–17; and Barry R. Posen, “Restraining Order,” *The American Interest* 3, no. 3 (January/February 2008): 94–97.
- 6 Christopher Drew, “Victory for Obama over Military Lobby,” *The New York Times*, October 29, 2009, A1.
- 7 The source this data is *U.S. Military Spending vs. the World*, Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, February 22, 2008, available at <http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending#InContextUSMilitarySpendingVersusRestoftheWorld>.
- 8 Walter Russell Mead makes these arguments in response to Posen’s “The Case for Restraint” (see note 5) in *The American Interest* 3, no. 2 (November/December 2007): 19.
- 9 Military action is in fact being abandoned in Afghanistan even though the original Obama plan emphasized the importance of a military offensive. U.S.-led military intervention has not been effective and is bitterly opposed by the local population and Afghan officials. See Rod Nordland, “Afghanistan Strategy Shifts to Focus on Civilian Effort,” *The New York Times*, June 9, 2010, A1.
- 10 For a description of the conventional wisdom, see Benjamin O. Fordham, “Economic Interests and Public Support for American Global Activism,” *International Organization* 62, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 164.
- 11 David C. Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire: The American Debate over International Relations, 1789–1941* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009).
- 12 *Ibid.*, 353.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 357.
- 14 Quoted in Travis Sharp, “Tying US Defense Spending to GDP: Bad Logic, Bad Policy,” *Parameters* 38, no. 3 (Autumn 2008): 6.
- 15 See Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); and Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization and Sino-American Conflict, 1947–1958* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996).
- 16 See Christopher Preble, *John F. Kennedy and the Missile Gap* (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004). Preble spells out the domestic economic interests that joined the Kennedy coalition.

- 17 See Anne Hessing Cahn, *Killing Detente: The Right Attacks the CIA* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 1998). Cahn usefully delineates the domestic political groups that came together at the time to kill détente.
- 18 For other theories and more debate about the sources of public fear and threat inflation, see A. Trevor Thrall and Jane K. Cramer, eds., *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation Since 9/11* (New York: Routledge, 2009).
- 19 Cindy Williams, *Planning and Resource Allocation for Statecraft and Security*, Tobin Paper 2008.
- 20 “Declining Defense: Obama’s Budget Does Cut One Federal Department,” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 2, 2009, A14.
- 21 *New Oxford American Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- 22 I derive these insights are from Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1971[1965]).
- 23 Fordham, “Economic Interests and Public Support for Global Activism,” 164 (see note 10).
- 24 Holsti, *Making American Foreign Policy*, 251 (see note 4).
- 25 This is found much of the time, with the public much more interested in strengthening the UN than U.S. leaders (57 versus 28 percent in 2002), but leaders do express marginally more interest in strengthening international law and institutions (49 over 43 percent). Data from the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations Surveys, in Holsti, 295 (see note 4).
- 26 Gallup Poll, July 10–12, 2009.
- 27 This high number comes from an in-depth poll that asks people to consider tradeoffs: PIPA, “The Federal Budget: The Public’s Priorities,” March 7, 2005. Many other polls support this somewhat by showing that the public does not rank national security issues nearly as high as other priorities. However, when asked about defense spending in February 2009, 24 percent said the U.S. was spending too little, 41 percent said the level was about right, and only 31 percent said it was “too much.” Gallup Poll, February 9–12, 2009.
- 28 Gallup Poll, September 15, 2009.
- 29 CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll, October 30–November 1, 2009.

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