Understanding the Bush Doctrine

ROBERT JERVIS

The invasion of Iraq, although important in itself, is even more noteworthy as a manifestation of the Bush doctrine. In a sharp break from the President's pre-September 11 views that saw American leadership, and especially its use of force, restricted to defending narrow and traditional vital interests, he has enunciated a far-reaching program that calls for something very much like an empire.[1]

The doctrine has four elements: a strong belief in the importance of a state's domestic regime in determining its foreign policy and the related judgment that this is an opportune time to transform international politics; the perception of great threats that can be defeated only by new and vigorous policies, most notably preventive war; a willingness to act unilaterally when necessary; and, as both a cause and a summary of these beliefs, an overriding sense that peace and stability require the United States to assert its primacy in world politics. It is, of course, possible that I am exaggerating and that what we are seeing is mostly an elaborate rationale for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein that will have little relevance beyond that. I think the doctrine is real, however. It is quite articulate, and American policy since the end of the military campaign has been consistent with it. Furthermore, there is a tendency for people to act in accord with the explanations they have given for their own behavior, which means that the doctrine could guide behavior even if it were originally a rationalization.[2]

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[1] For somewhat similar analyses, but with quite different evaluations, see James Chace, "Imperial America and the Common Interest," *World Policy* 19 (Spring 2002): 1–9; Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment Revisited," *National Interest* 70 (Winter 2002/03): 5–17; Stephen Peter Rosen, "An Empire, If You Can Keep It," ibid 71 (Spring 2003): 51–62; Robert Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 87–92.

[2] See Deborah Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), which draws on Bem's theory of self-perception. See Daryl Bem, "Self-Perception Theory" in Leonard Berkowitz, ed., *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 6 (New York: Academic Press, 1972), 1–62.

ROBERT JERVIS, Adlai E. Stevenson Professor of International Politics at Columbia University, served as president of the American Political Science Association in 2000–01. He is the author of numerous books and articles on international politics. His most recent book is *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life*.

I will describe, explain, and evaluate the doctrine. These three tasks are hard to separate. Evaluation and explanation are particularly and perhaps disturbingly close. To see the doctrine as a response to an unusual external environment may verge on endorsing it, especially for Realists who both oppose the doctrine and see states as rational. In the end, I believe it to be the product of idiosyncratic and structural factors, both a normal reaction to an abnormal situation and a policy that is likely to bring grief to the world and the United States. The United States may be only the latest in a long line of countries that is unable to place sensible limits on its fears and aspirations.[3]

DEMOCRACY AND LIBERALISM

This is not to say that the doctrine is entirely consistent, and one component may not fit well with the rest despite receiving pride of place in the "The National Security Strategy of the U.S.," which starts thusly: "The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise." The spread of these values opens the path to "make the world not just safer but better," a "path [that] is not America's alone. It is open to all."[4] This taps deep American beliefs and traditions enunciated by Woodrow Wilson and echoed by Bill Clinton, and it is linked to the belief, common among powerful states, that its values are universal and their spread will benefit the entire world. Just as Wilson sought to "teach [the countries of Latin America] "to elect good men," so Bush will bring free markets and free elections to countries without them. This agenda horrifies Realists (and perhaps realists).[5] Some mid-level officials think this is window dressing; by contrast, John Gaddis sees it as the heart of the doctrine,[6] a view that is endorsed by other officials.

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[3] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

[4] White House, "The National Security Strategy of the United States" (Washington, DC: September 2002), i, 1. Bush's West Point speech similarly declared: "Moral truth is the same in every culture, in every time, and in every place. . . . We are in a conflict between good and evil. . . . When it comes to the common rights and needs of men and women, there is no clash of civilizations." "Remarks by the President at 2002 Graduation Exercise of the Unites States Military Academy," White House Press Release, 1 June 2002, 3; Paul Allen, *Philip III and Pax Hispanica, 1598–1621: The Failure of Grand Strategy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

[5] Thus, Samuel Huntington, who agrees that a state's foreign policy is strongly influenced by its domestic regime, argues that conflict can be reduced only by not pushing Western values on other societies. See his *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

[6] John Lewis Gaddis, "Bush's Security Strategy," *Foreign Policy* 133 (November/December 2002): 50–57.

The administration's argument is that strong measures to spread democracy are needed and will be efficacious. Liberating Iraq will not only produce democracy there, but it will also encourage democracy in the rest of the Middle East. There is no incompatibility between Islam or any other culture and democracy; the example of political pluralism in one country will be emulated. The implicit belief is that democracy can take hold when the artificial obstacles to it are removed. Far from being the product of unusually propitious circumstances, a free and pluralist system is the "natural order" that will prevail unless something special intervenes.[7] Furthermore, more democracies will mean greater stability, peaceful relations with neighbors, and less terrorism, comforting claims that evidence indicates is questionable at best.[8] Would a democratic Iraq be stable? Would an Iraq that reflected the will of its people recognize Israel or renounce all claims to Kuwait? Would a democratic Palestinian state be more willing to live at peace with Israel than an authoritarian one, especially if it did not gain all of the territory lost in 1967? Previous experience also calls into question the links between democracy and free markets, each of which can readily undermine the other. But such doubts do not cloud official pronouncements or even the off-the-record comments of top officials. The United States now appears to have a faith-based foreign policy.

This or any other administration may not act on it. No American government has been willing to sacrifice stability and support of U.S. policy to honor democracy in countries like Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.[9] But the current view does parallel Ronald Reagan's policy of not accepting a detente with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) that was limited to arms control and insisting on a larger agenda that included human rights within the Soviet Union and, thus, implicitly called for a new domestic regime. The Bush administration is heir to this tradition when it declares that any agreement with North Korea would have to address a range a problems in addition to nuclear weapons, including "the abominable way [the North] treats its people."[10] The argument is that, as in Iraq, regime change is necessary because tyrannical governments will always be prone to disregard agreements and coerce their neighbors just as they mistreat their own citizens. Notwithstanding their being Realists in their views about how states influence one another, Bush and his colleagues are Liberals in their beliefs about the sources of foreign policy.

[7] For the concept of natural order, see Stephen Toulmin, *Foresight and Understanding: An Enquiry into the Aims of Science* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961).

[8] Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Democratization and War* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, forthcoming).

[9] It can be argued that Carter's policy toward the shah's regime in Iran is an exception. There is something to this, but the conflict between his policy and stability is more apparent in retrospect than it was at the time.

[10] Quoted in David Sanger, "U.S. to Withdraw From Arms Accord With North Korea," *New York Times*, 20 October 2002.

Consistent with liberalism, this perspective is highly optimistic in seeing the possibility of progress. A week after September 11, Bush is reported to have told one of his closest advisers: "We have an opportunity to restructure the world toward freedom, and we have to get it right." He expounded this theme in a formal speech marking the six-month anniversary of the attack: "When the terrorists are disrupted and scattered and discredited, . . . we will see then that the old and serious disputes can be settled within the bounds of reason, and goodwill, and mutual security. I see a peaceful world beyond the war on terror, and with courage and unity, we are building that world together."[11] In February 2002, the President responded to a reporter's question about the predictable French criticism of his policy by saying that "history has given us a unique opportunity to defend freedom. And we're going to seize the moment, and do it."[12] One month later, he declared, "We understand history has called us into action, and we are not going to miss that opportunity to make the world more peaceful and more free."[13]

The absence of any competing model for organizing societies noted at the start of the National Security document is part of the explanation for the optimism. Another is the expectation of a benign form of domino dynamics, as the replacement of the Iraqi regime is expected to embolden the forces of freedom and deter other potential disturbers of the peace. Before the war, Bush declared that when Saddam is overthrown "other regimes will be given a clear warning that support for terror will not be tolerated. Without this outside support for terrorism, Palestinians who are working for reform and long for democracy will be in a better position to choose new leaders—true leaders who strive for peace."[14] After the war, Bush reaffirmed his belief that "a free Iraq can be an example of reform and progress to all the Middle East."[15] Even some analysts like Thomas Friedman, who are skeptical of much of the administration's policy, believe that the demonstration effect of regime change in Iraq can be large and salutary.

The mechanisms by which these effects are expected to occur are not entirely clear. One involves establishing an American reputation for opposing tyranny. But the power of reputation is questioned by the Bush administration's skepticism toward deterrence, which works partly by this means. Another

[11] Quoted in Frank Bruni, "For President, a Mission and a Role in History," ibid. 22 September 2001; "President Thanks World Coalition for Anti-Terrorism Efforts," White House Press Release, 11 March 2002, 3–4; also see "Remarks by the President at 2002 Graduation Exercise," 4–5.

[12] "President Bush, Prime Minister Koizumi Hold Press Conference," White House Press Release, 18 February 2002, 6.

[13] "President, Vice President Discuss the Middle East," White House Press Release, 21 March 2002, 2.

[14] Speech to the American Enterprise Institute, 26 February 2003. For a general discussion of the administration's optimism about the effects of overthrowing Saddam on the Middle East, see Philip Gordon, "Bush's Middle East Vision," *Survival* 45 (Spring 2003): 155–165.

[15] Quoted in David Sanger and Thom Shanker, "Bush Says Regime in Iraq is No More; Syria is Penalized," *New York Times*, 16 April 2003.

mechanism is the power of example: people will see that tyrants are not invulnerable and that democracy can provide a better life. But seeing one dictator overthrown (not an unusual occurrence) may not have much influence on others. The dynamics within the Soviet bloc in 1989–1991 were a product of special conditions, and while contagion, tipping, and positive feedback do occur, so does negative feedback. We may hope for the former, but it is unreasonable to expect it.

THREAT AND PREVENTIVE WAR

The second pillar of the Bush doctrine is that we live in a time not only of opportunity, but also of great threat posed primarily by terrorists and rogue states. Optimism and pessimism are linked in the belief that if the United States does not make the world better, it will grow more dangerous. As Bush said in his West Point address of 1 June 2002: "Today our enemies see weapons of mass destruction as weapons of choice. For rogue states these weapons are tools of intimidation and military aggression against their neighbors. These weapons may also allow these states to attempt to blackmail the U.S. and our allies to prevent us from deterring or repelling the aggressive behavior of rogue states. Such states also see these weapons as their best means of overcoming the conventional superiority of the U.S."[16]

These threats cannot be contained by deterrence. Terrorists are fanatics, and there is nothing that they value that we can hold at risk; rogues like Iraq are risk-acceptant and accident prone. The heightened sense of vulnerability increases the dissatisfaction with deterrence, but it is noteworthy that this stance taps into the longstanding Republican critique of many American Cold War policies. One wing of the party always sought defense rather than deterrence (or, to be more precise, deterrence by denial instead of deterrence by punishment), and this was reflected in the search for escalation dominance, multiple nuclear options, and defense against ballistic missiles.[17]

Because even defense may not be possible against terrorists or rogues, the United States must be ready to wage preventive wars and to act "against . . . emerging threats before they are fully formed," as Bush puts it.[18] Prevention is not a new element in world politics, although Dale Copeland's important

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[16] Also see White House, *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington, DC: December 2002), 1.

[17] It is no accident that the leading theorist of this school of thought, Albert Wohlstetter, trained and sponsored many of the driving figures of the Bush administration, such as Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle.

[18] Letter accompanying "National Security Strategy of the United States," ii. Calling this aspect of the doctrine as our policy against Iraq "preemptive," as the Bush administration does, is to do violence to the English language. No one thought that Iraq was about to attack anyone; rather, the argument was that Iraq and perhaps others are terrible menaces that eventually will do the United States great harm and must be dealt with as soon as possible, before the harm has been inflicted and while prophylactic actions can be taken at reasonable cost. For a study of cases, see Robert Litwak, "The New Calculus of Pre-emption," *Survival* 44 (Winter 2002–03): 53–79.

treatment exaggerates its previous centrality.[19] Israel launched a preventive strike against the Iraqi nuclear program in 1981; during the Cold War, U.S. officials contemplated attacking the USSR and the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) before they could develop robust nuclear capabilities.[20] The Monroe doctrine and westward expansion in the nineteenth century stemmed in part from the American desire to prevent any European power from establishing a presence that could menace the United States.

The United States was a weak country at that time; now the preventive war doctrine is based on strength and on the associated desire to ensure the maintenance of American dominance. Critics argue that preventive wars are rarely necessary because deterrence can be effective and many threats are exaggerated or can be met with strong but less militarized policies. Libya, for example, once the leading rogue, now seems to be outside of the axis of evil. Otto von Bismarck called preventive wars "suicide for fear of death," and, although the disparity of power between the United States and its adversaries means this is no longer the case, the argument for such wars implies a high degree of confidence that the future will be bleak unless they are undertaken or at least a belief that this world will be worse than the likely one produced by the war.

This policy faces three large obstacles. First, by definition, the relevant information is hard to obtain because it involves predictions about threats that reside sometime in the future. Thus, while in retrospect it is easy to say that the Western allies should have stopped Hitler long before 1939, at the time it was far from clear that he would turn out to be such a menace. No one who reads Neville Chamberlain's speeches can believe that he was a fool. In some cases, a well-placed spy might be able to provide solid evidence that the other had to

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[19] Dale Copeland, *The Origins of Major War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); also see John Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001). For important conceptual distinctions and propositions, see Jack Levy, "Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War," *World Politics* 40 (October 1987): 82–107; for a study that is skeptical of the general prevalence of preventive wars but presents one example, Jack Levy and Joseph Gochal, "Democracy and Preventive War: Israel and the 1996 Sinai Campaign," *Security Studies* 11 (Winter 2001/2): 1–49. On the U.S. experience, see Art, *A Grand Strategy for America*, 181–197. Randall Schweller argues that democratic states fight preventively only under very restrictive circumstances: "Domestic Structure and Preventive War: Are Democracies More Pacific?" *World Politics* 44 (January 1992): 235–269; he notes the unusual nature of the Israeli cases. For the argument that states are generally well served resisting the temptation to fight preventively, see Richard Betts, "Striking First: A History of Thankfully Lost Opportunities," *Ethics and International Affairs* 17 (2003): 17–24. For a review of power transition theory, which in one interpretation is driven by preventive motivation, see Jacek Kugler and Douglas Lemke, *Parity and War: Evaluations and Extensions of The War Ledger* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

[20] Marc Trachtenberg, *History and Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), chap. 3; William Burr and Jeffrey Richelson, "Whether to 'Strangle the Baby in the Cradle': The United States and the Chinese Nuclear Program, 1960–64," *International Security* 25 (Winter 2000/01): 54–99. Gregory Mitrovich shows how much of American early Cold War policy was driven by the fear that it could not sustain a prolonged confrontation: *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947–1956* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

be stopped, but in many other cases—perhaps including Nazi Germany—even this would not be sufficient, because leaders do not themselves know how they will act in the future. The Bush doctrine implies that the problem is not so difficult, because the state's foreign policy is shaped, if not determined, by its domestic political system. Thus, knowing that North Korea, Iran, and Syria are brutal dictatorships tells us that they will seek to dominate their neighbors, sponsor terrorism, and threaten the United States. But while the generalization that states that oppress their own people will disturb the international system fits many cases, it is far from universal, which means that such short-cuts to the assessment process are fallible. Second and relatedly, even information on capabilities and past behavior may be difficult to come by, as the case of Iraq shows. Saddam's links to terrorists were murky and remain subject to debate, and while much remains unclear, it seems that the United States and Britain not only publicly exaggerated, but also privately overestimated, the extent of his weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program.

Third, unless all challengers are deterred by the exercise of the doctrine in Iraq, preventive war will have to be repeated as other threats reach a similar threshold. Doing so will require sustained domestic, if not international, support, which is made less likely by the first two complications. The very nature of a preventive war means that the evidence is ambiguous and the supporting arguments are subject to rebuttal. If Britain and France had gone to war with Germany before 1939, large segments of the public would have believed that the war was not necessary. If it had gone badly, the public would have wanted to sue for peace; if it had gone well, public opinion would have questioned its wisdom. While it is too early to say how American opinion will view Saddam's overthrow (and opinion is likely to change over time), a degree of skepticism that will inhibit the repetition of this policy seems probable.

National leaders are aware of these difficulties and generally hesitate to take strong actions in the face of such uncertainty. While one common motive for war has been the belief that the situation will deteriorate unless the state acts strongly now, and indeed this kind of fear drives the security dilemma, leaders usually put off decisions if they can. They know that many potential threats will never eventuate or will be made worse by precipitous military action, and they are predisposed to postpone, to await further developments and information, to kick the can down the road. In rejecting this approach in Iraq, if not in North Korea, Bush and his colleagues are behaving unusually, although this does not mean they are wrong.

Part of the reason for their stance is the feeling of vulnerability and the consequent belief that the risks and costs of inaction are unacceptably high. Note one of the few lines that brought applause in Bush's Cincinnati speech of 7 October 2002 and that shows the powerful psychological link between September 11 and the drive to depose Saddam: "We will not live in fear." Taken literally, this makes no sense. Unfortunately, fear is often well founded. What it indicates is an understandable desire for a safer world, despite that fact that

the United States did live in fear throughout the Cold War and survived quite well. But if the sentence has little logical meaning, the emotion it embodies is an understandable fear of fear, a drive to gain certainty, an impulse to assert control by acting.[21]

This reading of Bush's statement is consistent with my impression that many people who opposed invading Iraq before September 11, but altered their positions afterwards, had not taken terrorism terribly seriously before September 11, a category that includes George Bush.[22] Those who had studied the subject were, of course, surprised by the timing and method of the attacks, but not that they took place; they changed their beliefs only incrementally. But Bush frequently acknowledges, indeed stresses, that he was shocked by the assault, which greatly increased his feelings of danger and led him to feel that drastically different policies were necessary. As he put it in his Cincinnati speech: "On September 11th, 2001, America felt its vulnerability." It is no accident that this sentence comes between two paragraphs about the need to disarm Iraq. Three months later, in response to an accusation that he always wanted to invade Iraq, Bush replied: "prior to September 11, we were discussing smart sanctions. . . . After September 11, the doctrine of containment just doesn't hold any water. . . . My vision shifted dramatically after September 11, because I now realize the stakes, I realize the world has changed."[23] Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld similarly explained that the United States "did not act in Iraq because dramatic new evidence of Iraq's pursuit of weapons of mass murder. We acted because we saw the existing evidence in a new light, through the prism of our experience on September 11."[24] The claim that some possibilities are unlikely enough to be put aside lost plausibility in face of the obvious retort: "What could be less likely than terrorists flying airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon?" During the Cold War, Bernard Brodie expressed his exasperation with wild suggestions about military actions the USSR might

[21] A minor illustration of the power of fear was the closing of a New York subway station when a first-year art student taped to the girders and walls thirty-seven black boxes with the word "fear" on them, an unlikely thing for a bomber to do. See Michael Kimmelman, "In New York, Art Is Crime, And Crime Becomes Art," *New York Times*, 18 December 2002. For a study of how people's willingness to sacrifice civil liberties are affected by their fear of a future attack, see Darren Davis and Brian Silver, "Civil Liberties vs. Security: Public Opinion in this Context of the Terrorist Attacks on America" (unpublished manuscript); Leonie Huddy, Stanley Feldman, Charles Taber, and Gallya Lahav, "The Politics of Threat: Cognitive and Affective Reactions to 9/11" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, 29 August–1 September 2002); Leonie Huddy, Stanley Feldman, Theresa Capelos, and Colin Provost, "The Consequences of Terrorism: Disentangling the Effects of Personal and National Threat," *Political Psychology* 23 (September 2002): 485–510. For a general theory of the impact of feelings of vulnerability on policy, see Charles Kupchan, *The Vulnerability of Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

[22] According to Robert Woodward, George Tenet believed that "Bush had been the least prepared of all of [the administration leaders] for the terrorist attacks." See *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 318. Before then, his administration had concentrated on Russia and the PRC.

[23] *New York Times*, 1 February 2003.

[24] Quoted in James Risen, David Sanger, and Thom Shanker, "In Sketchy Data, Trying to Gauge Iraq Threat," ibid., 20 July 2003.

undertake: "All sorts of notions and propositions are churned out, and often presented for consideration with the prefatory words: 'It is conceivable that. . . .' Such words establish their own truth, for the fact that someone has conceived of whatever proposition follows is enough to establish that it is conceivable. Whether it is worth a second thought, however, is another matter."[25] Worst-case analysis is now hard to dismiss.

The fact that no one can guarantee that an adversary with WMD will not use them means that fear cannot be banished. Although administration officials exaggerated the danger that Saddam posed, they also revealed their true fears when they talked about the possibility that he could use WMD against the United States or its allies. At least some of them may have been insensitive to the magnitude of this possibility; what mattered was its very existence. Psychology plays an important role here because people value certainty and are willing to pay a high price to decrease the probability of a danger from slight to none.[26] Bush's choice of words declaring a formal end to the organized combat in Iraq was telling: "this much is certain: No terrorist network will gain weapons of mass destruction from the Iraqi regime."[27] Concomitantly, people often feel that uncertainty can be best eliminated by taking the initiative. As Bush put it in his letter accompanying the submission of his National Security Strategy, "In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action." The body of the document declared that "The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction."[28] In the past, a state could let a potential threat grow because it might not turn into a major menace. Now, if one follows this cautious path and the worst case does arise, the price will be prohibitive. Thus, Senator Orrin Hatch dismissed the argument that since the threat from Iraq was not imminent the United States could afford to rely on diplomacy and deterrence by saying, "Imminence becomes murkier in the era of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction."[29] It then makes sense to strike much sooner and more often, even though in some cases doing so will not have been necessary.

UNILATERALISM

The perceived need for preventive wars is linked to the fundamental unilateralism of the Bush doctrine, since it is hard to get a consensus for such strong

[25] Bernard Brodie, "The Development of Nuclear Strategy," *International Security* 2 (Spring 1978): 83.

[26] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, eds., *Choices, Values, and Frames* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[27] "Transcript of President Bush's Remarks on the End of Major Combat in Iraq," *New York Times*, 2 March 2003. (Emphasis added.) He used a similar formulation three months later: "President Meets with Small Business Owners in New Jersey," 16 June 2003, White House Press Release.

[28] "National Security Strategy of the United States," ii, 15; also see "In President's Words: Free People Will Keep the Peace of the World," *New York Times*, 27 February 2003; "Bush's Speech on Iraq: 'Saddam Hussein and His Sons Must Leave," ibid., 18 March 2003; Tony Blair's statement quoted in Emma Daly, "Both Britain and Spain Dismiss Offer On Iraq Missiles," ibid., 1 March 2003.

[29] Quoted in Carl Hulse, "Senate Republicans Back Bush's Iraq Policy, as Democrats Call it Rash and Bullying," ibid., 8 March 2003.

actions and other states have every reason to let the dominant power carry the full burden.[30] Unilateralism also has deep roots in the non-northeastern parts of the Republican party, was well represented in the Reagan administration, draws on long-standing American political traditions, and was part of Bush's outlook before September 11. Of course, assistance from others was needed in Afghanistan and Iraq. But these should not be mistaken for joint ventures, as the United States did not bend its policy to meet others' preferences. In stressing that the United States is building coalitions in the plural rather than an alliance (the mission determines the coalition, in Rumsfeld's phrase), American leaders have made it clear that they will forego the participation of any particular country rather than compromise.

The seeming exception of policy toward North Korea, in which the United States refuses to negotiate bilaterally and insists that the problem is one for the international community, is actually consistent with this approach. Others were not consulted on the policy and in fact resisted it. The obvious purpose of the American stance was to get others to apply pressure on the adversary. While this is a legitimate aim and, perhaps, the best policy, it is one the United States has selected on its own. Multilateralism here is purely instrumental, a way to avoid giving what the United States regards as a concession to North Korea and a means of further weakening and isolating it, despite others believing this is unwise.

Even before September 11, Bush displayed little willingness to cater to world public opinion or to heed the cries of outrage from European countries as the United States interpreted its interests and the interests of the world in its own way. Thus, the Bush administration walked away from the Kyoto treaty, the International Criminal Court, and the protocol implementing the ban on biological weapons rather than try to work within these frameworks and modify them. The United States also ignored European criticisms of its Middle Eastern policy. On a smaller scale, it forced out the heads of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In response to this kind of behavior, European diplomats can only say: "Big partners should consult with smaller partners."[31] The operative word is "should." When in the wake of the overthrow of Saddam, Chirac declares: "We are no longer in an era where one or two countries control the fate of another country," he describes the world as he would like it to be, not as it is.[32]

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[30] One of those outside the government who helped formulate the Bush doctrine denies that it is unilateralist. See Philip Zelikow, "The Transformation of National Security," *National Interest* 71 (Spring 2003): 24–25.

[31] Quoted in Steven Erlanger, "Bush's Move On ABM Pact Gives Pause to Europeans," *New York Times*, 13 December 2001; also see Suzanne Daley, "Many in Europe Voice Worry that U.S. Will Not Consult Them," ibid., 31 January 2002; Erlanger, "Protests, and Friends Too, Await Bush in Europe," ibid., 22 May 2002; Elizabeth Becker, "U.S. Unilateralism Worries Trade Officials," ibid., 17 March 2003.

[32] Quoted in Karen DeYoung, "Chirac Moves To Repair United States Ties," *Washington Post*, 16 April 2003.

The administration has defended each of its actions, but not its general stance. The most principled, persuasive, and perhaps correct defense is built around the difficulty in procuring public goods. As long as leadership is shared, very little will happen because no one actor will be willing to shoulder the costs and the responsibilities. "At this moment in history, if there is a problem, we're expected to deal with it," is how Bush explains it. "We are trying to lead the world," is what one administration official said when the United States blocked language in a UN declaration on child health that might be read as condoning abortion.[33] This is not entirely hypocritical: many of the countries that endorsed the Kyoto protocol had grave reservations but were unwilling to stand up to strongly committed domestic groups.

Real consultation is likely to produce inaction, as was true in 1993, when Clinton called for "lift and strike" in Yugoslavia (that is, lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia and striking Serbian forces). But because he believed in sharing power and was unwilling to move on his own, he sent Secretary of State Warren Christopher to ascertain European views. This multilateral and democratic procedure did not work because the Europeans did not want to be put on the spot; in the face of apparent American indecision, they refused to endorse such a strong policy. If the United States had informed the Europeans rather than consulted them, they probably would have complained, but gone along; what critics call unilateralism often is effective leadership. Could Yasir Arafat have been moved from his central position if the United States had sought consensus rather than staking out its own position? Bush could also argue that just as Reagan's ignoring the sophisticated European counsels to moderate his rhetoric led to the delegitimation of the Soviet system, so his insistence on confronting tyrants has slowly brought others around to his general perspective, if not to his particular policies.

In this context, the strong opposition of allies to overthrowing Saddam was an advantage as well as a disadvantage to Bush. While it exacted domestic costs, complicated the effort to rebuild Iraq, and perhaps fed Saddam's illusion that he could avoid a war, it gave the United States the opportunity to demonstrate that it would override strenuous objections from allies if this was necessary to reach its goals. While this horrified multilateralists, it showed that Bush was serious about his doctrine. When Kofi Annan declared that an American attack without Security Council endorsement "would not be in conformity with the [UN] charter," he may not have realized that for some members of the Bush administration this would be part of the point of the action.[34]

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[33] Quoted in Bob Woodward interview with Bush in ibid., 19 November 2002; also see Woodward, *Bush at War*, 281; quoted in Somini Sengupta, "U.N. Forum Stalls on Sex Education and Abortion Rights," *New York Times*, 10 May 2002.

[34] Patrick Tylor and Felicity Barringer, "Annan Says U.S. Will Violate Charter if It Acts Without Approval," ibid., 11 March 2003.

AMERICAN HEGEMONY

The final element of the doctrine, which draws together the others, is the establishment of American hegemony, primacy, or empire.[35] In the Bush doctrine, there are no universal norms or rules governing all states.[36] On the contrary, order can be maintained only if the dominant power behaves quite differently from the others. Thus the administration is not worried that its preventive war doctrine or attacking Iraq without Security Council endorsement will set a precedent for others because the dictates do not bind the United States. Similarly, the United States sees no contradiction between expanding the ambit of nuclear weapons to threaten their employment even if others have not used WMD first on the one hand and a vigorous antiproliferation policy on the other. American security, world stability, and the spread of liberalism require the United States to act in ways others cannot and must not. This is not a double standard, but is what world order requires.

Hegemony is implied when the Nuclear Posture Review talks of dissuading future military competitors. At first glance, this seems to refer to Russia and China. But the point applies to the countries of Western Europe as well, either individually or as a unit. This was clear in the draft defense guidance written by Paul Wolfowitz for Dick Cheney at the end of the first Bush administration and also was implied by President George W. Bush when he declared to the graduating cadets at West Point: "America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge—thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace."[37] This would mean not only sustaining such a high level of military

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[35] Paul Schroeder sharply differentiates hegemony from empire, arguing that the former is much more benign and rests on a high degree of consent and respect for diverse interests: "Empire or Hegemony?" address given to the American Historical Association meeting, Chicago, 3 January 2003. I agree that distinctions are needed, but at this point both the terms and the developing American policy are unclear. I have a soft spot in my heart for primacy because it has the fewest connotations. Ten years ago I argued that the United States did not need to seek primacy (at least I was sensible enough to avoid saying whether the United States would be sensible): Jervis, "The Future of World Politics: Will it Resemble the Past?" *International Security* 16 (Winter 1991/92): 39–73; "International Primacy: Is the Game Worth the Candle?" ibid., 17 (Spring 1993): 52–67. For discussions about what an empire means today, whether it necessarily involves territorial control and how it can be maintained, see Rosen, "An Empire if You Can Keep It"; also see Kurth, "Migration and the Dynamics of Empire," *National Interest* 71 (Spring 2003): 5–16; and Anna Simons, "The Death of Conquest," ibid., 41–49.

[36] Only after World War I was lip-service paid to the concept that all states had equal rights. The current United States stance would be familiar to any nineteenth-century diplomat.

[37] "Remarks by the President at 2002 Graduation Exercise," 4. The Wolfowitz draft is summarized in stories in the *New York Times*, 8 March and 24 May 1992. Also see Zalmay Khalilzad, *From Containment to Global Leadership? America and the World After the Cold War* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1995); and Robert Kagan and William Kristol, eds., *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defense Policy* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000). This stance gives others incentives to develop asymmetric responses, of which terrorism is only the most obvious example. For possible PRC options, see Thomas Christensen, "Posing Problems Without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy," *International Security* 25 (Spring 2001): 5–40.

spending that no other country or group of countries would be tempted to challenge it, but also using force on behalf of others so they will not need to develop potent military establishments of their own. In an implicit endorsement of hegemonic stability theory, the driving belief is that the world cannot afford to return to traditional multipolar balance of power politics, which would inevitably turn dangerous and destructive.[38]

Although many observers, myself included, were taken by surprise by this turn in American policy, we probably should not have been. It is consistent with standard patterns of international politics and with much previous American behavior in the Cold War. As early as the start of World War II, American leaders understood that the United States would emerge as the prime architect of the new international politics.[39] In the years before the Soviet Union was perceived as a deadly menace, American leaders understood that theirs would be the major role in maintaining peace and prosperity.

Even had the Soviet Union been more benign, instability, power vacuums, and the anticipation of future rivalries would have led the United States to use and increase the enormous power it had developed.[40] The task could not be done by the United States alone, however. The world was not strictly bipolar, especially because the United States sought to limit its defense spending, and the prime target of the conflict was the allegiance of West Europe. The United States knew that allied, and especially European, support was necessary to resist Soviet encroachments. Allies, fearing a return to American isolationism, reciprocally made great efforts to draw the United States in.[41] Although American power was central and consent often was forthcoming only because of veiled (or

[38] It is noteworthy that hegemonic stability theory comes with both a malign and a benign version. See Duncan Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," *International Organization* 25 (Autumn 1985): 579–614; for the applicability of these theories to the pre-Bush post-Cold War world, see Michael Mastanduno, "Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and United States Grand Strategy after the Cold War," *International Security* 21 (Spring 1997): 49–88; see the exchange between Mark Sheetz and Mastanduno in ibid., 22 (Winter 1997/98): 168–174; Ethan Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies After the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); G. John Ikenberry, ed., *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

[39] See, for example, David Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt's America and the Origins of the Second World War* (Chicago: Dee, 2001); Warren Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[40] Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947–1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); for the domestically imposed limits on this process, see Aaron Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Michael Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945–1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[41] Geir Lunstestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945–1952," *Journal of Peace Research* 23 (September 1986): 263–277; James McAllister, *No Exit: America and the German Problem, 1943–1954* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

not so veiled) rewards and threats, on fundamental issues the United States had to take allied interests and views to heart. Thus, Charles Maier exaggerates only slightly when he refers to "consensual American hegemony" within the West.[42]

As Europe stabilized and the American deterrent force became concentrated in intercontinental bombers and missiles, the need for allies, although still considerable, diminished. The United States could rebuff Britain and France at Suez in a way that it could not have done five years earlier. Twenty-five years later, Reagan could pay even less heed to allied wishes than Eisenhower had. Of course, the United States could not do everything it wanted. Not only was it restrained by Soviet power, but to go it alone would have alienated domestic opinion, risked policy setbacks, and endangered an international economic system already under great pressure. But the degree to which the United States sought consensus and respected allied desires varied from issue to issue and president to president. Above a significant but limited minimum level, cooperation with allies had become a matter of choice, not necessity.

The required minimum level of cooperation decreased with the end of the Cold War and the emergence of unipolarity. The United States now has a greater share of world power than any state since the beginning of the state system, and it is not likely to lose this position in the foreseeable future.[43] Before the first Bush's presidency, the United States used a mixture of carrots and sticks and pursued sometimes narrower but often broader conceptions of its interest. Clinton, and Bush before him, cultivated allies and worked hard to maintain large coalitions. Most scholars approve of this mode of behavior, seeing it as the best if not the only way for the United States to secure desired behavior from others, minimize the costs to itself, and most smoothly manage a complex and contentious world.[44] But the choice of this approach was indeed

[42] Charles Maier, *In Search of Stability: Explorations in Historical Political Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 148. Also see John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

[43] William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24 (Summer 1999): 5–41; see also Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War," ibid. 25 (Summer 2000): 5–41. For a dissenting view, see Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Eagle Has Crash Landed," *Foreign Policy* 131 (July/August 2002): 60–68. The well-crafted argument by Robert Kudrle that the United States does not always gets its way even on some important issues is correct, but I think does not contradict the basic structural point: "Hegemony Strikes Out: The U.S. Global Role in Anti-Trust, Tax Evasion, and Illegal Immigration," *International Studies Perspectives* 4 (February 2003): 52–71.

[44] See, for example, G. John Ikenberry, "After September 11: America's Grand Strategy and International Order in the Age of Terror," *Survival* 43 (Winter 2001–2002): 19–34; Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); John Gerard Ruggie, *Winning the Peace: America and the New World Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); John Steinbrunner, *Principles of Global Security* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2000). More popular treatments are Clyde Prestowitz, *Rogue Nation: American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions* (New York: Basic Books, 2003); and Michael Hirsh, *At War With Ourselves: Why America Is Squandering Its Chance to Build a Better World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

a choice, revocable upon the appearance of changed circumstances and a different leader. The structure of world power meant that there was always a possibility that the United States would act on its own.

Until recently, however, it did not seem clear that the United States would in fact behave in a highly unilateral fashion and assert its primacy. The new American stance was precipitated, if not caused by, the interaction between the terrorist attacks and the election of George W. Bush, who brought to the office a more unilateral outlook than his predecessor and his domestic opponents. Bush's response to September 11 may parallel his earlier religious conversion and owe something to his religious beliefs, especially in his propensity to see the struggle as one between good and evil. There is reason to believe that just as his coming to Christ gave meaning to his previously aimless and dissolute personal life, so the war on terrorism has become, not only the defining characteristic of his foreign policy, but also his sacred mission. An associate of the President reports: "I believe the president was sincere, after 9/11, thinking 'This is what I was put on this earth for.' "[45] We can only speculate on what President Al Gore would have done. My estimate is that he would have invaded Afghanistan, but not proceeded against Iraq; nor would he have moved away from treaties and other arrangements over a wide range of issues. To some extent, the current assertion of strong American hegemony may be an accident.

But it was an accident waiting to happen. To start with, there are structural reasons to have expected a large terrorist attack. Bin Laden had attacked American interests abroad and from early on sought to strike the homeland. His enmity stemmed primarily from the establishment of U.S. bases in Saudi Arabia, which was a product of America's worldwide responsibilities. Ironically, the overthrow of Saddam is likely to permit the United States to reduce its presence in Saudi Arabia, although I doubt if bin Laden expected this result to follow from his attack or that he will now be satisfied. Furthermore, al Qaeda was not the only group targeting the United States; as Richard Betts has argued, terrorism is the obvious weapon of weak actors against the leading state.[46]

Even without terrorism, both internal and structural factors predisposed the United States to assert its dominance. I think structural factors are more important, but it is almost a truism of the history of American foreign relations that the United States rarely if ever engages in deeply cooperative ventures with equals.[47] Unlike the European states who were surrounded by peers, once

[45] Quoted in James Harding, "Conflicting Views From Two Bush Camps," *Financial Times*, 20 March 2003; for a perceptive analysis, see Bruni, "For President, a Mission and a Role in History." Also see Woodward, *Bush at War*, 102, 205, 281.

[46] Richard Betts, "The Soft Underbelly of American Primacy: Tactical Advantages of Terror," *Political Science Quarterly* 117 (Spring 2002): 19–36.

[47] See, for example, Jesse Helms's defense of unilateralism as the only way consistent with American interests and traditions: "American Sovereignty and the UN," *National Interest* 62 (Winter 2000/01): 31–34. For a discussion of historical, sociological, and geographical sources of the moralistic outlook in American foreign policy, see Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), chap. 15; and Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955), chap. 11. For a discussion of current U.S. policy in terms of its self-image as an exceptional state, see Stanley Hoffmann, "The High and the Mighty," *American Prospect* 13 (January 2003): 28–31.

the United States had established its dominance first over its neighbors and then over the rest of the New World, it had great choice about the terms on which it would work with others. Thus, when the United States intervened in World War I, it insisted that the coalition be called the "Allied and Associated Powers"—that is, it was an associate with freedom of action, not an ally. The structure of the American government, its weak party system, its domestic diversity, and its political traditions, all make sustained cooperation difficult. It would be an exaggeration to say that unilateralism is the American way of foreign policy, but there certainly is a strong pull in this direction.

More importantly, the United States may be acting like a normal state that has gained a position of dominance.[48] There are four facets to this argument. First and most general is the core of the Realist outlook that power is checked most effectively and often only by counterbalancing power. It follows that states that are not subject to external restraints tend to feel few restraints at all. As Edmund Burke put it, in a position endorsed by Hans Morgenthau: "I dread our *own* power and our *own* ambition; I dread our being too much dreaded. It is ridiculous to say that we are not men, and that, as men, we shall never wish to aggrandize ourselves."[49] With this as one of his driving ideas, Kenneth Waltz saw the likelihood of current behavior from the start of the post-Cold War era:

> The powerful state may, and the United States does, think of itself as acting for the sake of peace, justice, and well-being in the world. But these terms will be defined to the liking of the powerful, which may conflict with the preferences and the interests of others. In international politics, overwhelming power repels and leads others to try to balance against it. With benign intent, the United States has behaved, and until its power is brought into a semblance of balance, will continue to behave in ways that annoy and frighten others.[50]

Parts of the Bush doctrine are unique to the circumstances, but it is the exception rather than the rule for states to stay on the path of moderation when others do not force them to do so.[51]

[48] Thus, it is not entirely surprising that many of the beliefs mustered in support of United States policy toward Iraq parallel those held by European expansionists in earlier eras: Jack Snyder, "Imperial Temptations," *National Interest* 71 (Spring 2003): 29–40.

[49] Quoted in Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 5th ed. (New York: Knopf, 1978), 169–170. (Emphasis in the original.)

[50] Kenneth Waltz, "America as a Model for the World? A Foreign Policy Perspective," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24 (December 1991): 69; also see Waltz's discussion of the Gulf War: "A Necessary War?" in Harry Kriesler, ed., *Confrontation in the Gulf* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, 1992), 59–65. Charles Krauthammer also expected this kind of behavior, but believed that it will serve the world as well as the American interests. Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs, America and the World, 1990–91* 70 (no. 1, 23–33); also see Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment Revisited." For a critical analysis, see Chace, "Imperial America and the Common Interest." As Waltz noted much earlier, even William Fulbright, while decrying the arrogance of American power, said that the United States could and should "lead the world in an effort to change the nature of its politics": quoted in *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 201.

[51] Alexander Wendt and, more persuasively, Paul Schroeder, would disagree or at least modify this generalization, arguing that prevailing ideas can and have led to more moderate and consensual behav-

Second, states' definitions of their interests tend to expand as their power does.[52] It then becomes worth pursuing a whole host of objectives that were out of reach when the state's security was in doubt and all efforts had to be directed to primary objectives. Under the new circumstances, states seek what Arnold Wolfers called "milieu goals."[53] The hope of spreading democracy and liberalism throughout the world has always been an American goal, but the lack of a peer competitor now makes it more realistic—although perhaps not very realistic—to actively strive for it. Seen in this light, the administration's perception that this is a time of great opportunity in the Middle East is the product, not so much of the special circumstances in the region, but of the enormous resources at America's disposal.

More specifically, the quick American victory in Afghanistan probably contributed to the expansion of American goals. Likewise, the easy military victory in Iraq, providing the occupation can be brought to a successful conclusion, will encourage the pursuit of a wider agenda, if not threatening force against other tyrants ("moving down the list," in the current phrase). Bush's initial speech after September 11 declared war on terrorists "with a global reach." This was ambitious, but at least the restriction to these kinds of terrorists meant that many others were not of concern. The modifier was dropped in the wake of Afghanistan, however. Not only did rhetoric shift to seeing terrorism in general as a menace to civilization and "the new totalitarian threat,"[54] but the United States sent first military trainers and then a combat unit to the Philippines to attack guerrillas who posed only a minimal threat to Americans and who have no significant links to al Qaeda. Furthermore, at least up until a point, the exercise of power can increase power as well as interests. I do not think that the desire to control a large supply of oil was significant motivation for the Iraqi war, but it will give the United States an additional instrument of influence.

A third structural explanation for American behavior is that increased relative power brings with it new fears. The reasons are both objective and subjec-

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ior: Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); and "Does the History of International Politics Go Anywhere?" in David Wetzel and Theodore Hamerow, eds., *International Politics and German History* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 15–36. This is a central question of international politics and history that I cannot fully discuss here, but believe that at least the mild statement that unbalanced power is dangerous can easily be sustained.

[52] See, for example, Fareed Zakaria, "Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay," *International Security* 17 (Summer 1992): 177–198; Robert Tucker, "The Radical Critique Assessed" in Tucker, *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 69–77, 106–111. For a discussion of alternative possibilities suggested by American history, see Edward Rhodes, "The Imperial Logic of Bush's Liberal Agenda," *Survival* 45 (Spring 2003): 131–154.

[53] Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, chap. 5.

[54] "President Thanks World Coalition for Anti-Terrorism Efforts"; David Sanger, "In Reichstag, Bush Condemns Terror as New Despotism," *New York Times*, 24 May 2002. Also see "Remarks by President at 2002 Graduation Exercise." The question of how broad the target should be was debated within the administration from the start, with Bush initially insisting on a focus on al Qaeda: Woodward, *Bush at War*.

tive. As Wolfers notes in his classic essay on "National Security as Ambiguous Symbol," the latter can diverge from the former.[55] In one manifestation of this, as major threats disappear, people psychologically elevate ones that were previously seen as quite manageable.[56] People now seem to be as worried as they were during the height of the Cold War despite the fact that a terrorist or rogue attack, even with WMD, could cause only a small fraction of a possible World War III's devastation. But there is more to it than psychology. A dominant state acquires an enormous stake in the world order, and interests spread throughout the globe. Most countries are primarily concerned with what happens in their immediate neighborhoods; the world is the hegemon's neighborhood, and it is not only hubris that leads it to be concerned with anything that happens anywhere. The result is a fusion of narrow and broad self-interest. At a point when most analysts were worried about the decline of American power, not its excesses, Waltz noted that for the United States, "like some earlier great powers. . . . the interest of the country in security came to be identified with the maintenance of a certain world order. For countries at the top, this is predictable behavior. . . . Once a state's interests reach a certain extent, they become self-reinforcing."[57]

The historian John S. Galbraith explored the related dynamic of the "turbulent frontier" that produced the unintended expansion of colonialism. As a European power gained an enclave in Africa or Asia, usually along the coast or river, it also gained an unpacified boundary that had to be policed. This led to further expansion of influence and often of settlement, and this in turn produced a new area that had to be protected and a new zone of threat.[58] There were few natural limits to this process. There are not likely to be many now. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have led to the establishment of U.S. bases and security commitments in central Asia, an area previously beyond reach. It is not hard to imagine how the United States could be drawn further into politics in the region and to find itself using force to oppose terrorist or guerrilla movements that arise there, perhaps in part in reaction to the American presence. The same dynamic could play out in Colombia.

The fourth facet can be seen as a broader conception of the previous point. As Realists stress, even states that find the status quo acceptable have to worry

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[55] Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, chap. 10.

[56] John Mueller, "The Catastrophe Quota: Trouble after the Cold War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38 (September 1994): 355–375; also see Frederick Hartmann, *The Conservation of Enemies: A Study in Enmity* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982).

[57] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 200.

[58] John S. Galbraith, "The 'Turbulent Frontier' as a Factor in British Expansion," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2 (January 1960): 34–48; *Reluctant Empire: British Policy on the South African Frontier, 1834–1854* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963). Also see Ronald Robinson and John Gallager with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London: Macmillan, 1961). A related imperial dynamic that is likely to recur is that turning a previously recalcitrant state into a client usually weakens it internally and requires further intervention.

about the future.[59] The more an actor sees the current situation as satisfactory, the more it will expect the future to be worse. Psychology plays a role here too: prospect theory argues that actors are prone to accept great risks when they believe they will suffer losses unless they act boldly. The adoption of a preventive war doctrine may be a mistake, especially if taken too far, but is not foreign to normal state behavior. It appeals to states that have a valued position to maintain. However secure states are, only rarely can they be secure enough, and if they are currently very powerful, they will have strong reasons to act now to prevent a deterioration that could allow others to harm them in the future.[60]

All this means that under the Bush doctrine the United States is not a status quo power. Its motives may not be selfish, but the combination of power, fear, and perceived opportunity leads it to seek to reshape world politics and the societies of many of its members. This tracks with and extends traditional ideas in American foreign relations held by both liberals and conservatives who saw the United States as a revolutionary country. As the first modern democracy, the United States was founded on principles of equality, progress, and a government subordinate to civil society that, while initially being uniquely American, had universal applicability. Because a state's foreign policy is inseparable from its domestic regime, a safe and peaceful world required the spread of these arrangements.[61] Under current conditions of terrorism and WMD, tyrannical governments pose too much of a potential if not actual danger to be tolerated. The world cannot stand still. Without strong American intervention, the international environment will become more menacing to America and its values, but strong action can increase its security and produce a better world. In a process akin to the deep security dilemma,[62] in order to protect itself, the United States is impelled to act in a way that will increase, or at least bring to the surface, conflicts with others. Even if the prevailing situation is satisfactory, it cannot be maintained by purely defensive measures. Making the world safe for American democracy is believed to require that dictatorial regimes be banished, or at least kept from weapons of mass destruction. Although not mentioned in the pronouncements, the Bush doctrine is made possible by the existence of a secu-

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[59] See esp., Copeland, *Origins of Major War*; Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics.*

[60] Waltz (*Theory of International Politics*) sees this behavior as often self-defeating; Mearsheimer (*Tragedy of Great Power Politics*) implies that it is not; Copeland's position is somewhere in between.

[61] George W. Bush would endorse Wilson's claim that America's goal must be "the destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere in the world that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world" just as he would join Clinton in calling for "the spread of his revolt [i.e., the American revolution], this liberation, to the great stage of the world itself!" "An Address at Mount Vernon," 4 July 1918, in Arthur Link et al., eds., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 48, *May 13–July 17, 1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 516–517.

[62] Robert Jervis, "Was the Cold War a Security Dilemma?" *Journal of Cold War History* 3 (Winter 2001): 36–60; also see Paul Roe, "Former Yugoslavia: The Security Dilemma That Never Was?" *European Journal of International Relations* 6 (September 2000): 373–393. The current combination of fear and hope that produces offensive actions for defensive motives resembles the combination that produced the pursuit of preponderance in the aftermath of World War II.

rity community among the world's most powerful and developed states—the United States, Western Europe, and Japan.[63] The lack of fears of war among these countries allows the United States to focus on other dangers and to pursue other goals. Furthermore, the development of the security community gives the United States a position that it now wants to preserve.

HEGEMONY, IRAQ, AND EUROPE

This perspective on the Bush doctrine helps explain international disagreements about Iraq. Most accounts of the French opposition stress its preoccupation with glory and its traditional jealousy and disdain for the United States. Europe's resistance to the war is attributed to the peaceful world view produced by its success in overcoming historical rivalries and creating a law-governed society, summarized by the phrase "Americans are from Mars, the Europeans are from Venus."[64] Also frequently mentioned is the European aversion to the crude and bullying American style: "Bush is just a cowboy." There is something to these positions, but are Europeans really so averse to force and wedded to law? When faced with domestic terrorism, Germany and other European countries did not hesitate to employ unrestrained state power that John Ashcroft would envy, and their current treatment of minorities, especially Muslims, does not strike these populations as liberal. The French continue to intervene in Africa unilaterally, disregarded legal rulings to drop their ban on British beef, and join other European states in playing as fast and loose with trade regulations as does the United States. Most European states favored the war in Kosovo and supported the United States in Afghanistan; had they been attacked on September 11, they might not have maintained their aversion to the use of force.

Even more glaringly, the claims for a deep cultural divide overlook the fundamental difference between how Europe and the United States are placed in the international system. The fact that the latter is hegemonic has three implications. First, only the United States has the power to do anything about problems like Iraq; the others have incentives to ride free. Second, the large European states have every reason to be concerned about American hegemony and sufficient resources to seek to constrain it. This is not traditional power balancing, which is driven by security fears; the French are not afraid of an American attack, and the German worry is that the United States will withdraw too many of its troops. But they do fear that a world dominated by the United States would be one in which their values and interests would be served only at American sufferance. It is hardly surprising that an April 2002 poll showed that overwhelming majorities within many European countries felt that American policy toward Iraq and the Middle East in general was based "mainly on its own inter-

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[63] Robert Jervis, "Theories of War in an Era of Leading Power Peace," *American Political Science Review* 96 (March 2003): 1–14.

[64] The best known statement of this position is Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Knopf, 2003).

ests."[65] The National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, has forgotten her knowledge of basic international politics when she expresses her shock at discovering that "there were times that it appeared that American power was seen [by France and Germany] to be more dangerous than, perhaps, Saddam Hussein."[66] The United States may be correct that American dominance serves Europe and the world, but we should not be startled when others beg to differ. The United States probably is as benign a hegemon as the world has ever seen. Its large domestic market, relatively tolerant values, domestic diversity, and geographic isolation all are helpful. But a hegemon it remains, and by that very fact it must make others uneasy.

Third, the Europeans' stress on the need to go through the Security Council shows less their abstract attachment to law and world governance than their appreciation of power. France especially, but also Russia and China (two countries that are not from Venus), will gain enormously if they can establish the principle that large-scale force can be used only with the approval of the Council, of which they are permanent members. Security Council membership is one of the major resources at these countries' disposal. The statement of a Russian leader that "if someone tries to wage war on their own account . . . without an international mandate, it means all the world is confusion and a wild jungle"[67] would carry more moral weight if Russia did not have a veto in the mandate-granting body. If the Council were not central, French influence would be much diminished.

The United Kingdom does not readily fit this picture, of course. Structure always leaves room for choice, and Tony Blair told Parliament on 24 September 2002 that "it is an article of faith with me that the American relationship and our ability to partner [with] America in these difficult issues is of fundamental importance, not just to this country but to the wider world." Blair's personal views may be part of the explanation, but this has been the British stance ever since World War II, which resisted becoming too much a part of Europe and sought to maintain a major role in the world through supporting rather than opposing the United States. But only one ally can seek to have a "special relationship" with the hegemon, and Britain's having taken this role makes it harder for others to emulate it.

Structure also explains why many of the smaller European countries chose to support the United States in Iraq despite hostile public opinion. The dominance they fear most is not American, but Franco-German. The United States is more powerful, but France and Germany are closer and more likely to menace them.[68] Seeking a distant protector is a standard practice in international politics. That France and Germany resented the resulting opposition is no more

[65] Adam Clymer, "European Poll Faults U.S. for its Policy in the Mid East," *New York Times*, 19 April 2002.

[66] Quoted in David Sanger, "Witness to Auschwitz Evil, Bush Draws a Lesson," ibid., 1 June 2003.

[67] Quoted in John Tagliabue, "France and Russia Ready to Use Veto Against Iraq War," ibid., 6 March 2003.

[68] This is a version of Stephen Walt's argument that states balance against threat, not power: *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

surprising than the American dismissal of "old Europe," with the resulting parallel that while France and Germany bitterly decried the American effort to hustle them into line, they disparaged and bullied the East European states that sided with the United States—quite un-Venusian behavior.

CONCLUSION

Where we will go from here depends in part on unpredictable events such as economic shocks, the course of reconstruction in Iraq, the targets and success of future terrorist attacks, and the characteristics of the leaders that arise through diverse domestic processes. The war against Saddam, however, already marks out the path on which the United States is embarked and illuminates the links between preventive war and hegemony, which was much of the reason for the opposition at home and abroad. Bush's goals are extraordinarily ambitious, involving remaking not only international politics but recalcitrant societies as well, which is seen as an end in itself and a means to American security. For better or (and?) for worse, the United States has set itself tasks that prudent states would shun. As a result, it will be infringing on what adversaries, if not allies, see as their vital interests. Coercion and especially deterrence may be insufficient for these tasks because these instruments share with traditional diplomacy the desire to minimize conflict by limiting one's own claims to interests that others can afford to respect. States that seek more need to be highly assertive if not aggressive, which provides additional reasons to question the goals themselves. The beliefs of Bush and his colleagues that Saddam's regime would have been an unacceptable menace to American interests if it had been allowed to obtain nuclear weapons not only tell us about their fears for the limits of United States influence that might have been imposed, but also speak volumes about the expansive definition of United States interests that they hold.[69]

The war is hard to understand if the only objective was to disarm Saddam or even to remove him from power. Even had the inflated estimates of his WMD capability been accurate, the danger was simply too remote to justify the effort. But if changing the Iraqi regime was expected to bring democracy and stability to the Middle East, discourage tyrants and energize reformers throughout the world, and demonstrate the American willingness to provide a high degree of what it considers world order whether others like it or not, then as part of a larger project, the war makes sense. Those who find both the hopes and the fears excessive if not delusional agree with the great British statesman Lord Salisbury when he tried to bring some perspective to the Eastern Crisis of 1877–1878: "It has generally been acknowledged to be madness to go to war for an idea, but if anything is more unsatisfactory, it is to go to war against a nightmare."[70]

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[69] I have discussed how Bush's policy toward Iraq does and does not fit with deterrence thinking in "The Confrontation Between Iraq and the United States: Implications for the Theory and Practice of Deterrence," *European Journal of International Relations* 9 (June 2003): 315–337.

[70] Quoted in R. W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question* (New York: Norton, 1972), 222.

We can only speculate about the crucial question of whether the Bush doctrine will work. Contrary to the common impression, democracies, especially the United States, do not find it easy to sustain a clear line of policy when the external environment is not compelling. Domestic priorities ordinarily loom large, and few Americans think of their country as having an imperial mission. Wilsonianism may provide a substitute for the older European ideologies of a *mission civilisatrice* and the white man's burden, but since it rests on the assumption that its role will not only be noble but also popular, I am skeptical that it will endure if it meets much indigenous opposition from those who are supposed to benefit from it. Significant casualties will surely be corrosive, and when the going gets tough I think the United States will draw back.

Furthermore, while the United States is the strongest country in the world, its power is still subject to two familiar limitations: it is harder to build than to destroy, and success depends on others' decisions because their cooperation is necessary for the state to reach its goals. Of course, American military capability is not to be ignored, and I doubt whether countries like Iran, Syria, and North Korea will ignore it. They may well reason as Bush expects them to and limit their WMD programs and support for terrorism, if not reform domestically. But the prospects for long-run compliance are less bright. Although a frontal assault on American interests is perhaps unlikely, highly motivated adversaries will not give up the quest to advance their interests as they see them. The war in Iraq has increased the risks of their pursuing nuclear weapons, but it has also increased their incentives to do so. Amid the debate about what these weapons can accomplish, everyone agrees that they can deter invasion, which makes them very attractive to states who fear they might be in the American gun sights. Both Waltz's argument that proliferation will produce stability and the contrary and more common claim that it would make the world more dangerous imply that the spread of nuclear weapons will reduce American influence because others will have less need of its security guarantees and will be able to fend off its threats to their vital interests.[71] The American attempt to minimize the ability of others to resist U.S. pressures is the mark of a country bent, not on maintaining the status quo, but on fashioning a new and better order.

Obviously, U.S. military capabilities matter less in relations with allies and probably with Russia. From them the United States wants wholehearted cooperation on issues such as sharing highly sensitive information on terrorism, rebuilding failed states, preventing proliferation, and, perhaps most importantly, managing the international economy. There is little danger or hope that Europe will form a united counterweight to the United States and try to thwart it by

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[71] Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better* (London: IISS, Adelphi Paper No. 171, 1981); Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: Norton, 2003). For a range of views, see Marc Trachtenberg, "Waltzing to Armageddon?" *National Interest* 69 (Fall 2002): 144–155; Eric Herring, ed., *Preventing the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, special issue of *Journal of Strategic Studies* 23 (March 2000); T. V. Paul, Richard Harknett, and James Wirtz, eds., *The Absolute Weapon Revisited: Nuclear Arms and the Emerging International Order* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

active opposition, let alone the use of force. But political resistance is quite possible and, even more than with adversaries, the fate of the American design for world order lies in the hands of its allies.[72] Although the United States governs many of the incentives that Europe and potential supporters face, what it needs from them cannot be coerced. It is possible that they will see themselves better off with the United States as an assertive hegemon, allowing them to gain the benefits of world order while being spared the costs, and they may conclude that any challenge would fail or bring with it dangerous rivalry. Without the war in Iraq, I doubt that the spring of 2003 would have seen the degree of cooperation that the United States obtained from Europe in combatting the Iranian nuclear program and from Japan and the PRC in containing North Korea.

But I suspect that much will depend on the allies' answers to several questions: Can the American domestic political system sustain the Bush doctrine over the long run? Will the United States be open to allied influence and values? Will it put pressure on Israel as well as on the Arabs to reach a settlement? More generally, will it seek to advance the broad interests of the diverse countries and people in the world, or will it exploit its power for its own narrower political, economic, and social interests? Bush's world gives little place for other states—even democracies—except as members of a supporting cast. Conflating broader with narrower interests and believing that one has a monopoly on wisdom are obvious ways that a hegemon can come to be seen as tyrannical.[73] Woodrow Wilson said that both nationalism and internationalism called for the United States to join the League of Nations: "The greatest nationalist is the man who wants his nation to be the greatest nation, and the greatest nation is the nation which penetrates to the heart of its duty and mission among the nations of the world. With every flash of insight into the great politics of mankind, the nation that has that vision is elevated to a place of influence and power which it cannot get by arms."[74] Wilson surely meant what he said, but his great certainty that he knew what was best for the world was troubling. In the presidential campaign, Bush said that the United States needed a "more humble foreign policy."[75] But its objectives and conceptions make the Bush doctrine quite the opposite. Avoiding this imperial temptation will be the greatest challenge that the United States faces.

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[72] For a discussion of possible forms of nonviolent opposition, see Robert Pape, "Soft Balancing Against the United States" (unpublished paper, University of Chicago, 2003).

[73] See David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the World Order, 1870 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978) for a summary of relevant laboratory experiments; see Robert Goodin, "How Amoral *Is* Hegemon," *Perspectives on Politics* 1 (March 2003): 123–126.

[74] "A Luncheon Address to the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce," 5 September 1919 in Arthur Link et al., eds., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 63, *September 4–November 5, 1919* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 33.

[75] Quoted in David Sanger, "A New View of Where America Fits in the World," *New York Times*, 18 February 2001.