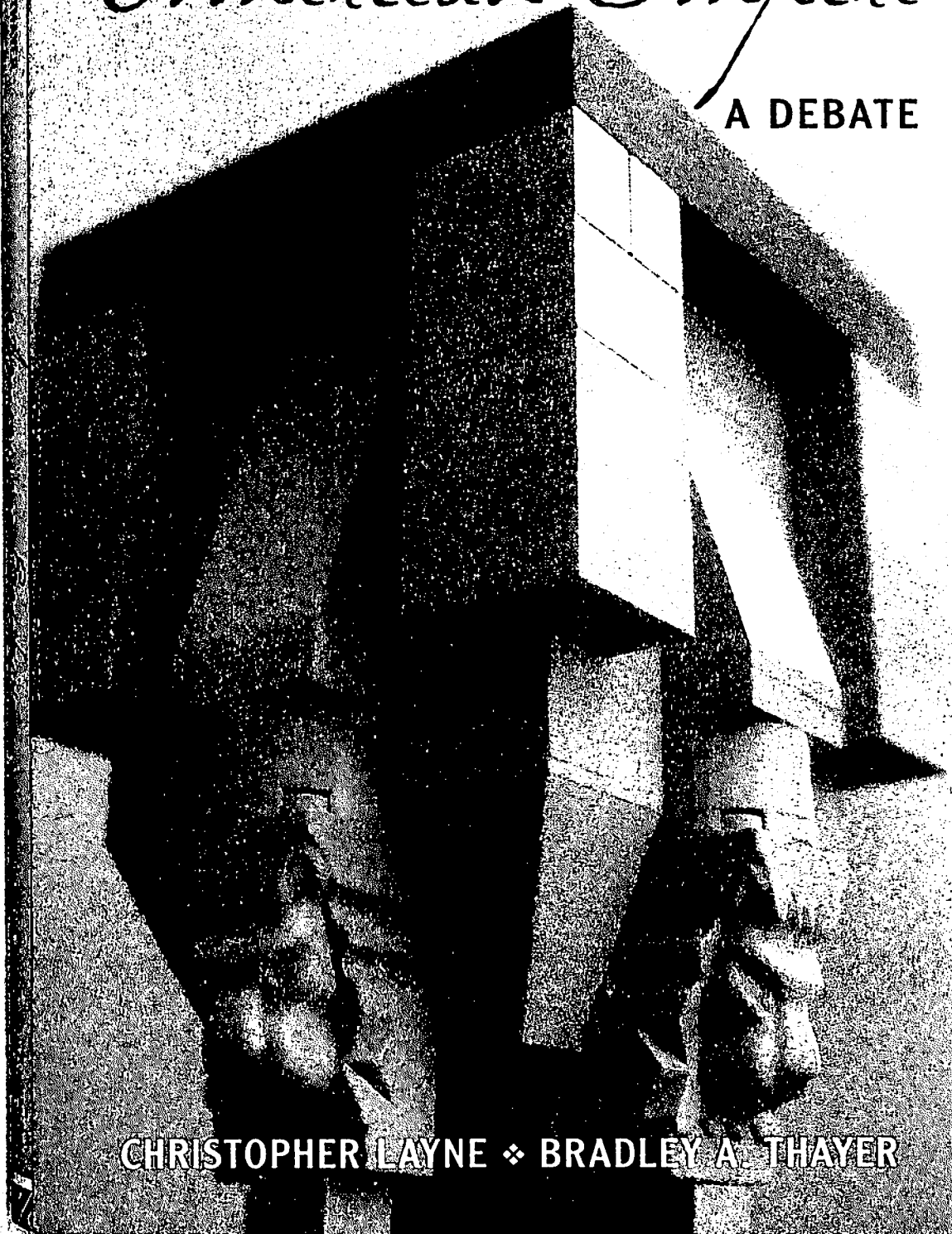


American Empire

A DEBATE



CHRISTOPHER LAYNE ♦ BRADLEY A. THAYER

and without compromising the stability of an evolving political order.” Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976) p. 1.

4. Paul Kennedy, ed., *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 5.

The Case for the American Empire

BRADLEY A. THAYER

Countries and people are a lot alike. They have interests, objects that they love and want to protect against dangers and threats. They make choices about what they want to accomplish, and they strive to develop the means—ability, friends, or money—to help them reach their goals despite pitfalls and adversity. Just like people, countries come in all types. Some are rich and some are poor. Some are powerful and some are not. Some have great potential that has not yet been realized. They have a conception of their desires and interests, and how to advance them. This is the essence of grand strategy.

This book is about the grand strategy of the United States—the role Washington chooses to play in international politics. Some states have the freedom to vary their degree of involvement in the world, and the United States is one such state. It chooses to be the world leader, to maximize its interaction with the world; but it could choose to reduce its involvement and become isolationist if it so desired. Grand strategy is about these types of choices.

Grand strategy explains three things: the interests of states, the threats to those interests within international politics, and the means to advance interests while protecting against threats. The United States has interests, such as protecting the American people against threats, such as terrorists or nuclear war, and it has the means to do so because it procures a military: an air force, army, navy, and marine corps. It also has many allies who help it advance and protect its interests.

While all states have grand strategies, they differ in their means to advance their interests in the face of threats. France has greater means than Bangladesh. The United States has the greatest means. In fact, the United States finds itself in a special position in international politics: by almost any measure—economic, ideological, military—it leads the world. It is the dominant state, the hegemon, in international politics. If you stop and think a moment, it is really remarkable that 6 percent of the world’s population and 6 percent of its land mass has the world’s most formidable military capabilities, creates about 25 to 30 percent of the gross world product, and both attracts and provides the most foreign direct investment of any country. If it were a person, it would have the wealth of Microsoft chairman Bill Gates or entrepreneur Donald Trump; its

military would have the punch of a heavyweight boxer like Muhammad Ali or Mike Tyson; its charisma and charm would equal those of a movie star such as Cary Grant or George Clooney; and it would have as many friends, hangers on, and potential suitors as Frank Sinatra did at one time or as Oprah or Britney Spears do now.

This book is a debate about the rightful place of the United States in the world. What are America's interests in the world? How should it use its power to advance those interests? Is America's preeminent place in international politics a force for good in the world? I argue that it is.

Thinking about America's grand strategy is important for two major reasons. First, it affects all Americans and, indeed, people the world over from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. In sum, you may not be interested in America's grand strategy, but America's grand strategy may be interested in you. If you are an American, it influences you by determining whether you fight in a war, how you fight it, and with whom. It affects America's economy, and that makes it easier for you to find employment or to keep you from employment. So it is important for Americans to think about the role their country plays in the world and whether they believe it to be the right one. People in other countries are also influenced by how America acts, the countries it sees as allies and enemies, as well as by what countries and resources it chooses to defend. The American people derive much benefit from America's predominant place in the world but it also entails significant costs. While I believe that the benefits outweigh the costs, at the end of the day it is for the American people as a whole to decide if that is so.

Second, understanding grand strategy—and specifically primacy—permits a more sophisticated consideration of why America acts in world politics, as it does, what it values, and what it will defend. When you grasp America's grand strategy, you are able to predict how the United States will behave in the future and answer many questions, including why the United States acts essentially the same way in international politics in Democratic and Republican administrations. While there are differences, both Democrats and Republicans want a strong American military, economic, and political presence in the world. Both are willing to use force to defend America's interests. The Clinton administration intervened in Bosnia and Kosovo, as the Bush administration did in Iraq. You can also see why the United States has military and intelligence bases in more countries now than when we faced the threat from the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and why the United States wants to keep those bases. Understanding the American grand strategy of primacy grants you the ability to perceive what America's vital interests are and the threats to those interests and to predict how the United States will act against threats to maintain its key interests.

Because it is such an important subject that touches on what America's interests ought to be, Americans disagree about grand strategy. There are three major schools of thought: isolationism, selective engagement, and primacy. Proponents of isolationism argue that the United States should withdraw from involvement in international politics and devote more resources to domestic social problems.¹ Selective engagement submits that the United States should only possess sufficient strength to defend the centers of economic might in the world, principally Europe and northeast Asia.² Advocates of primacy assent that the United States should be the major power in international politics and must keep its preponderant position in international politics by maintaining its military and economic strength.³

My argument fits into the primacy school of thought. I advance my argument in three sections. First, I examine the motivation and spirit of the American Empire from its inception. I submit that its origins date to the founding of the country. The desire to spread the influence of the United States filled the spirits of the Founding Fathers. Second, I address the question: *Can* America remain dominant in the world? I argue that it can for the foreseeable future. Third, I consider the critical issue: *Should* America strive to retain its prominent place in global politics? I submit it should indeed do so because it is the right action for the United States at this point in its history.

The Spirit of the American Empire: More the Expansion of Ideas and Influence than of Territory

Is America an empire? Yes, it is. An empire is a state that surpasses all others in capabilities and sense of mission.⁴ An empire usually exceeds others in capabilities such as the size of its territory and material resources. Its capabilities are much greater than the average or norm prevailing in the international system.

Second, an empire has worldwide interests. Its interests are coterminous with boundaries of the system itself, and the interests are defended directly by the imperial states or by client states. That is, there is literally almost nothing that does not concern the United States; from Paraguay to Nepal, or Sweden to New Zealand, the United States has interests there it seeks to protect. As the comedian Jeff Foxworthy would put: "You know you are an empire when...." You know you are an empire when other states cannot ignore you and must acquiesce to your interests, but you do not have to satisfy theirs. Other states, willingly or not, define their positions, roles, or actions in relation to the imperial power, rather than to their neighbors or other states. Diplomats in New Delhi first worry about "What will Washington think?" rather than "What will Islamabad, or Kabul, or Harare, think?"

Third, empires always have a mission they seek to accomplish—this is usually creating, and then maintaining, a world order. The details of the world order broadly match the interests of the imperial state. For Rome, it was

obedience to the Senate and people of Rome. For France, it was Catholicism, French political control, and French language and culture. For the United States, it has been a free economic order, democracy, and human rights.

While almost the entire world agrees that the United States is an empire, it is not according to American leaders. They almost never use the “E word.” It is as if they had never heard the word “empire.” They prefer to speak of American “leadership,” or “direction,” “the key role of the United States” in the Western “community” or “civilization.”

Of course, it is not surprising that American leaders suffer a memory lapse when it comes to the word empire. They choose not to use it because it does not help to achieve the grand strategic goals of the United States. To do so would make their lives more difficult because it would aid resistance to the American Empire. For an American president or senior official to state that America is an empire would only help to organize resistance to it. To say it is an empire might cause the American people to question whether or not they want one. To say it plainly would only help those who do not wish the American Empire well.

After all, there is a reason a used car salesman calls a used car a “pre-owned” one. Both buyer and seller know the car is used. But using the euphemism “pre-owned” helps both. For the seller, it helps to focus the buyer’s attention away from some of the unpleasant consequences of owning a “used” car, and the buyer benefits because he thinks he is getting something better than a “used” vehicle.

Accordingly, American leaders are right not to call attention to the American Empire, as this would only increase balancing forces against it, and thus would ultimately be damaging to its continuation. Also, not mentioning the word helps to ensure that U.S. political leaders are careful not to be gratuitously arrogant or boastful. The leaders of the United States seem to be following the advice of French statesmen in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War. The French defeat caused it to lose important territory—the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine—to Germany. The French claimed that it was the duty of French statesmen and citizens to “think of them always, but speak of them never.” So it is with the American Empire. American leaders and the American foreign policy community must labor mightily to ensure the expansion and maintenance of the American Empire, but they should never tout or gratuitously boast of it: “think of it always, but speak of it never.”

While American leaders may not use the “E word,” plenty of others do—from all around the world. In fact, in 1998, French foreign minister Hubert Védrine found that “superpower” was too weak a word to describe the power of the United States, so he created a word, “hyperpower,” to describe its formidable capabilities. The French are not the only ones to notice. The Chinese leadership’s warnings of the risks of one country becoming too powerful are as constant and rhythmic as a drumbeat. Not to be left behind, worldwide

media such as the BBC and *al Jazeera* television lament the unpleasantness of living in a world dominated by Uncle Sam’s Empire.

America Is a Unique Empire

The answer to the question is yes, America is an empire, but it is a unique empire. When we consider the subject, we realize that each empire is different in scope, in size, and in its place in history, but the United States is the most singular of all empires. It certainly is not an empire in the traditional sense of a country that occupies others. It is true that America has gained a lot of territory. The United States has expanded greatly since its founding in 1776, and it has occupied other countries, but most of its territory it acquired peaceably from the French (1803), Mexicans (1853), Russians (1867), or Hawaiians (1898), and its territorial expansion stopped at around 1900. In fact, after becoming a strong country, America’s desire and need to occupy territory was less than when it was weaker, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While it has occupied countries, such as Japan and parts of Germany, after World War II, its occupations were short—certainly if you compare the American Empire to all others, including the British and Roman, which occupied lands for hundreds of years.

Then, in what sense is America an empire? What unites any empire is control over weaker states or, before there were states, other political units like tribes. That was true of all the great empires in the past—Athens, Alexander the Great’s Macedonia, Byzantium, Carthage, China, Rome, France, Great Britain, Mongol, Ottoman, Portugal, Russia, Spain—and it is true of the United States now. Other empires sought direct control over other political units (states or city-states like Athens or Carthage), and, once gained, maintained and spread their control. Think of Rome controlling through occupation the known world or Spain occupying almost all of the New World after 1492.

As Table 1.1 indicates, the United States is like those empires because, fundamentally, every empire is concerned with control—it wants its goals realized and its interests preserved. But in most respects—and these are more important than the similarities—the United States is not like those empires. Table 1.1 explains the important differences with respect to the type of rule, the need for territorial and ideological expansion, the openness of its economic system, the degree to which the imperial state uses its own military forces to conduct wars or fight with allied states, and the amount of interaction between its military—for training and education—and other militaries. This last point is particularly important because few Americans realize that their military is a “mini-State Department.” It conducts its own diplomacy with the militaries of other countries and works to train and educate them, as well as to learn from them, to benefit the foreign and American militaries.

The preferred instrument of the United States is to control indirectly, through countries that share its ideology and want to align their country with

Table 1.1 A Comparison of Traditional Empires with the American Empire

| | Traditional Empires | American Empire |
|--|---|--|
| Main objective | Control | Control |
| Type of rule | Direct | Indirect |
| Expansion of territory | Very important | Less important |
| Expansion of ideology | Of little importance for the Imperial State | Very important |
| Openness of the Imperial Economy | Closed to outsiders | Open to all |
| The use of the Imperial Military and its degree of interaction with other militaries | Use of own forces to conduct wars Little interaction with other militaries | Own military forces often used with allies to conduct wars Much interaction with other militaries |

the United States. Now, keep in mind that the United States is no shrinking violet of a country. It will not shy from using its “hard power”—its military or economic might—when it must. Examples of hard power include imposing economic sanctions on countries or attacking them. The United States is certainly willing to use hard power. It has invaded Panama, liberated Kuwait, intervened in Bosnia, fought a war with Serbia over Kosovo, and invaded Iraq since the end of the Cold War. But it prefers to use “soft power,” because soft power is the most effective way of influencing countries over a long period of time. Think of soft power as getting others to do what you want through the attractiveness of the political ideas of the United States and its culture.⁵ If countries share the same goals and have the same expectations about international politics, then cooperation between them will be easier.

The American Empire differs from other empires because, most often, the United States is concerned with influencing the foreign policies of other states, principally leaving their domestic policies alone. For example, Washington sets the tone for most of the 26 countries of the NATO alliance, as well as Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. There are differences, to be sure, and at times these can be quite vociferous; for example, consider the strong French objections to the invasion of Iraq. But most of the time the foreign policies of these states dovetail with the United States’s political goals. Because of the strains in America’s relations with France and Germany caused by the Iraq war, Americans often forget that the French, Germans, and other NATO allies have soldiers in Afghanistan who fight alongside Afghani and American soldiers.

The United States seeks to maintain control not through occupation of territory but through other means, such as expanding its ideology of democracy and free market economics; it freely permits access to its economy by other

countries. And it will, if necessary, threaten the use of military force to protect and advance its interests, and if required, it will use force for those ends. Occasionally, it will act explicitly like other empires and occupy other countries. Recently, it has occupied Afghanistan and Iraq. In the past, it has occupied many countries, including the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Philippines.

But the United States is a unique empire. It is very different from all of those that have come before. The American Empire stands in marked contrast even to the British Empire, with whom it shares an ideology and economic system. It is not interested in the expansion of territorial control by conquering territory and imposing colonial rule. It is interested in promoting the political and economic well-being of its allies. Of course, the American Empire stands in even greater contrast to the world’s other empires, most of which were principally interested in exploiting their colonies as efficiently and rapidly as possible.

In September 1943, in a speech given at Harvard University, Winston Churchill made a remarkable comment about the future of imperial power: “The empires of the future,” he said, “are the empires of the mind.” That is the American Empire. It does not covet territory or resources. It covets ideas. The American Empire is an empire of ideas, and its ideas are those that led to its founding in 1776. These ideas are the “Spirit of 1776.”

The Spirit of 1776

If the United States is an empire, why is it one? After all, the United States could retreat into isolationism. Instead, it chooses to be an empire. In order to comprehend why, you have to understand the political motivation or political spirit of the American Revolution of 1776.

I argue that when you understand the spirit of the American Revolution, you understand why the United States is an empire. The expansion of the United States was what the Founding Fathers wanted for their country—the expansion of its territory and its ideas. But like most critically important topics, people can disagree over this. Americans should disagree about what America’s interests are, not in 1776, but today.

In essence, the heart of the debate in this book is whether this vision, the spirit that animates the American Empire, is the right one for the United States today. I strongly believe it is. Christopher Layne, equally strongly, believes it is not. People—and Americans in particular—should think through the central issue considered in this book and make their own judgments about the value and costs of the American Empire.

The political spirit of the American Empire predates 1776, before the United States was even a country. In fact, the spirit of the American Empire helped to create the American Revolution. The desire to spread the creed or ideology of America has animated the politics and political figures in the

United States from the earliest days. Consider the impassioned speeches of Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson or the writings of James Madison, Thomas Paine, and George Washington. "However unimportant America may be considered at present," Washington wrote to the Marquis de LaFayette in 1786, "and however Britain may affect to despise her trade, there will assuredly come a day, when this country will have some weight in the scale of Empires."⁶ Throughout his presidency, Jefferson declared that the United States was "an empire for liberty" and described it as "a chosen country" and a "rising nation" that was already "advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of the mortal eye."⁷ In 1809, he wrote to James Madison that it was the genius of the American government that would permit "such an empire for liberty as she has never surveyed since the creation; and I am persuaded no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self-government."⁸

If you really want to understand the American Revolution—the motivation of the Founding Fathers—you also have to turn to the writings of Thomas Paine. As he did so often, Paine summarized the political spirit of the American Revolution: "From a small spark, kindled in America, a flame has arisen, not to be extinguished. Without consuming...it winds its progress from nation to nation, and conquers by a silent operation," and when men know their rights they are free, and despotism is destroyed because "the strength and powers of despotism consist wholly in the fear of resisting it."⁹

For America's Founding Fathers, Paine's view was common. In addition, they believed that the United States had a responsibility to spread its values and institutions in a world dominated by antiliberal forces, principally monarchy and its guiding principle, the Divine Right of Kings—the belief that God had chosen certain people to rule over others in His name. For the Founding Fathers, the world was in great need of the enlightenment provided by republican government. They would not have questioned either the superiority of American ideals or the flow of the tide of history in the direction of their universal application. And very few would have questioned the legitimacy of spreading America's values around the globe. That was the mission of the United States of America.

The spread of the flame of the American ideology through Paine's "silent operation" has often been effective, but relying on it has never been sufficient to destroy those deemed despots by American leaders. The United States, like many other empires, has depended on hard power and soft power to realize the expansion of its influence.

This spirit of the American Revolution meant that the United States has wanted to expand its influence since before its birth in 1776—and actually even before its birth it tried to do so. The expansion of its influence came in two forms. First was its territorial expansion, and the United States satisfied its appetite by 1900. The second was its expansion through the influence of its ideology.

Although it is as old as the desire for territorial expansion, the prodigious appetite of the United States for ideological expansion has never been satisfied.

Few Americans recall how hungry for territory their country was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, even before it had declared its independence—while it was still in the womb—it coveted Canada and attempted to seize it. In 1775, Congressional President John Hancock ordered General Philip Schuyler to conquer Montreal.¹⁰ This failed, as did many subsequent attempts. The rapidity of the expansion of the United States from thirteen colonies in 1776 to the status of a hegemon some two hundred years later is startling.¹¹ It really is remarkable, and too few Americans reflect on it.

Think about this point for a minute. In about a person's lifespan the United States came to dominate the North American continent. The country more than doubled its size with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 not even thirty years after its founding. By 1819, it had added Florida to its territory. About seventy years after its creation, it had gained the independent Republic of Texas and all of the West. Or perhaps more accurately, reacquired Texas, since some historians think it was included in the Louisiana Purchase, but John Quincy Adams gave much of it away when he negotiated the United States border with Spain. When the United States was about ninety years old, it almost doubled its size with the purchase of Alaska from Russia. A large part of the explanation for this expansion lies with the recognition that the United States has long had the dream of empire, and now that has been fulfilled.¹²

Its expansion and rise to its present status in international politics was made possible by a desire to expand and share its values in the world. John Quincy Adams captured this force well when, in 1819, as secretary of state to President James Monroe, he wrote that it was the "proper dominion" of the United States to possess all of North America including what is now Mexico and Canada, from "the time when we became an independent people it was as much a law of nature that this should become our pretension as that the Mississippi should flow to the sea."¹³ Of course, the desire to expand was not solely the passion of Yankees but was shared below the Mason-Dixon Line. The Confederate States of America had aspirations to conquer the Caribbean and much of Latin America once the war was over, and I wonder if the Confederate States of America would have realized their ambition had positions been reversed at Appomattox in 1865.

The rise of the United States to hegemonic status would not surprise many of the Founding Fathers or other observers such as the preeminent economist Adam Smith and the great political commentator Alexis de Tocqueville. In 1776, Smith wrote "From shopkeepers, tradesmen, and attorneys [*sic*]," the American colonists have become "statesmen and legislators, and are employed in contriving a new form of government for an extensive empire, which, they flatter themselves, will become, and which, indeed, seems very likely to become, one of the greatest and most formidable that ever was in the world."¹⁴ In 1846,

Tocqueville wrote of the United States and Russia that they “have grown in obscurity, and while the world’s attention was occupied elsewhere, they have suddenly taken their place among the leading nations, making the world take note of their birth and of their greatness almost at the same instant.” And while Tocqueville admitted significant differences between the two countries, he saw presciently that “each seems called by some secret design of Providence one day to hold in its hands the destinies of half the world.”¹⁵

Tocqueville’s vision would be realized, but it took time for America’s capabilities to match its ambitions. And it took a Civil War. The United States endured great vulnerability and dangerous adversity in its early years, including the Civil War, which ensured that the United States could become a great power. It could do so because it would remain united and thus more powerful than two United States—north and south—who would struggle against each other and be used by European great powers to advance their own ends in North and South America. The second reason the Civil War was important for the rise of the United States was that it confirmed the power of a federal government that could harness and organize the great resources of the country efficiently—indefinitely better than fifty state governments attempting to do the same thing.

Of course, the political spirit of the Revolution did not completely account for the speed of American expansion. One general point deserves to be made. And that is that, frankly, in its history, the United States has been (and remains) an extremely lucky country. Its geography is lucky. It was far enough away from Europe to make the projection of military power to North America difficult, as British King George III found out to his chagrin. The Atlantic and Pacific Oceans are formidable moats that America’s enemies have found very difficult to cross.

In addition to its geographical good luck, two other elements were present. The United States was blessed with weak neighbors, such as Mexico, which were not able to prevent its expansion. Second, only European great powers possessed the ability to arrest American expansion, but they did not because of the threat of war in Europe or the distractions of maintaining their empires.

Sometimes European powers even supported American expansion. Britain backed Jefferson’s Louisiana Purchase in order to ensure that French power was removed from the North American continent. Expansion by the weak United States was acceptable to London, but France was a formidable military power. French territory in North America was a threat to British interests. It could have become a base to reconquer the great expanse of North America that it lost to Britain at the conclusion of the Seven Years’ War in 1763. However, most frequently, the United States expanded while countries such as France and Great Britain were occupied with European concerns.

Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the fear—rightly held by America’s early presidents—that European powers would block the expansion of the

United States to the west, or even use their territory in North America to move against the United States when events in Europe were stable enough to allow them to act. Britain was the biggest concern and, occasionally, the United States acted to preempt British territorial conquest. Today, few Americans realize that Monterey—the premier California port at the time—was seized by the U.S. Navy in 1842, four years before the start of Mexican–American War, due to reports that a strong British force had sailed from Chile and that war had started between the United States and Mexico, and that Britain would seize the port first and occupy California in the name of protecting Mexico. After a short occupation, Monterey was returned to Mexican authorities. Of course, the U.S. Navy would be back in four years—this time to stay.

In the meantime, the United States initiated what today we would call a covert action campaign to encourage the residents of California to rebel against Mexico and declare their independence. Here the United States was following the precedent it set in Texas a decade earlier. In fact, U.S. agents distributed copies of the Texas Constitution to encourage Californians to declare independence, at which time the United States could intervene. To advance this objective, explorer John Frémont and his fifty well-armed men not only scouted Mexican territory, as the history books record, but also attempted to encourage rebellion, combat British influence, and contact American agents in the territory. However, these actions did not have much success before Congress declared war on Mexico in 1846.

So, when we reflect on the history of America’s foreign relations and the motives of the Founding Fathers and those statesmen who followed in their path, we realize that it is a false dilemma to believe that the history of American foreign relations was wholly internationalist or absolutely isolationist. As the eminent historian Felix Gilbert wrote of the Founders’ foreign policy ideas: “American foreign policy was idealistic and internationalist no less than isolationist” and often existed side by side.¹⁶ Those who look for absolute consistency in the foreign policy ideas of the Founding Fathers are bound to be disappointed. Some were isolationists. Some were expansionists. Most, however, were realists par excellence, swinging from isolationism to internationalism with ease, with no concern for consistency, only, for the interests of the United States.

However, the great majority of the Founding Fathers, if not all, saw the United States as a special country, whose founding and ideals were like no other, and whose mission was to share its ideology with other peoples. To discover the spirit that animated them, simply look at the Great Seal of the United States on the back of the dollar bill. The mottos on the seal of the United States are *Annuit coeptis* (God has blessed this undertaking) and *Novus Ordo Seclorum* (A New Order for the Ages), and these truly capture the spirit of America’s founding and mission. The Founding Fathers did believe that they had created a special country, an empire of liberty, whose benefits should be shared by the

rest of the world and, in turn, whose existence threatened despotic regimes and was threatened by them.

Can America Dominate the World? Yes, Through Hard and Soft Power

The United States has the ability to dominate the world because it has prodigious military capability, economic might, and soft power. The United States dominates the world today, but will it be able to do so in the future? The answer is yes, for the foreseeable future—the next thirty to forty years.¹⁷ Indeed, it may exist for much longer. I would not be surprised to see American dominance last much longer and, indeed, anticipate that it will. But there is simply too much uncertainty about events far in the future to make reliable predictions.

In this section of the chapter, I explain why the United States has the ability to dominate the world for the predictable future, if it has the will to do so. There are two critical questions that serve as the foundation for this debate: “Can America dominate international politics?” and “Should America dominate international politics?”

The U.S. military, economy, and soft power answer the first question—these elements give it the ability to do so. How long the American Empire lasts depends on three variables: first, its hard and soft power capabilities; second, the actions of other states; and third, its will to continue its empire. America’s ideology answers the second issue. These critical questions are inextricably linked. The United States has the ability to dominate the world, but that is only one of the key ingredients necessary for the “meal of empire.” The will to do so is equally important. If the United States does not have the will, then no amount of combat aircraft or ships or economic might will suffice to ensure its dominance in international politics. I will consider the second issue in the next section of this chapter.

At the outset of this discussion, I want to state an obvious but, nonetheless, salient point: Nothing lasts forever. The American Empire will end at some point in time, as every empire has in the past—from the empire the Egyptian Pharaohs created over 2,800 years before Christ to the one forged by Lenin’s Bolsheviks in 1917—and as future empires will as well. As Table 1.2 shows, the American Empire is young when compared to the other empires throughout history, having lasted just over a century if we take the beginning of the Spanish–American War as its starting date, as conventional history often does. Although it may be young, it is the profound responsibility of the custodians of the American Empire to use hard and soft power to ensure that it lasts as long as they want.

Hard Power—American Military Supremacy

The U.S. military is the best in the world and it has been so since end of World War II. No country has deployed its forces in so many countries and varied climates—from the Arctic to the Antarctic—from below the sea to outer space.

Table 1.2 The Longevity of Selected Empires throughout History

| Empire | Duration | Longevity (Years) |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Egypt | 2850–525 B.C. | 2,325 |
| Byzantine | A.D. 330–1453 | 1,123 |
| Rome | 509 B.C.–A.D. 476 | 985 |
| Venice | A.D. 1000–1799 | 799 |
| Assyria | 1363–612 B.C. | 751 |
| Portugal | A.D. 1420–1999 | 579 |
| Ottoman | A.D. 1350–1918 | 568 |
| Caliphate (Abassid) | A.D. 750–1258 | 508 |
| France | A.D. 1515–1962 | 447 |
| China | 206 B.C.–A.D. 220 | 426 |
| Britain | A.D. 1585–1997 | 412 |
| Spain | A.D. 1492–1898 | 406 |
| Netherlands | A.D. 1602–1949 | 347 |
| Seleucid | 311–63 B.C. | 248 |
| Persia | 559–330 B.C. | 229 |
| Russia | A.D. 1700–1917 | 217 |
| Sweden | A.D. 1561–1718 | 157 |
| America | A.D. 1898–Present | 108+ |
| Mongol | A.D. 1206–1294 | 88 |
| Athens | 478–404 B.C. | 74 |
| Soviet Union | A.D. 1917–1991 | 74 |
| Italy | A.D. 1882–1947 | 65 |
| Germany | A.D. 1871–1918 | 47 |

No country is better able to fight wars of any type, from guerrilla conflicts to major campaigns on the scale of World War II. No country or likely alliance has the ability to defeat the U.S. military on the battlefield. Thus, measured on either an absolute or relative (that is, comparing the U.S. military to the militaries of other countries) scale, American military power is overwhelming. Indeed, it is the greatest that it has ever been.

This is not by accident. The United States has worked assiduously, particularly since 1940, to produce the best military. The causes of American military predominance include extensive training and professional education, high morale, good military doctrine, frequency of use, learning from other militaries in the right circumstances, exceptional equipment and sound maintenance, and high levels of defense spending.

The United States spends roughly \$420 billion a year on defense.¹⁸ This amount does not include spending on nuclear energy-related activities, such as insuring the viability of the nuclear weapons stockpile (\$17.5 billion more in fiscal year 2006), or other defense related activities, such as military help for the FBI or Secret Service (add \$3.2 billion more). It also does not include defense spending “supplementals,” which cover the expenses incurred in Afghanistan and Iraq (about \$82 billion). Astonishingly, that is about half of total world defense spending.

No other country, or group of countries, comes close to matching the defense spending of the United States. Table 1.3 provides a context for this defense spending through a comparison of the defense spending of major countries in 2004, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). The United States is far ahead of the defense spending of all other countries, including its nearest competitor, China. This is by design. As former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich has argued, “You do not need today’s defense budget to defend the United States. You need today’s defense budget to lead the world. If you are prepared to give up leading the world, you can have a much smaller defense budget.”¹⁹ To maintain the robust American lead in military capabilities, it must continue to spend large, but absolutely affordable, sums.

And it is affordable. While the amount of U.S. defense spending certainly is a large sum, it is only about 4 percent of its gross domestic product, as Table 1.3 illustrates. An examination of the data in the table is remarkable for four reasons. First, U.S. defense spending is about half of the world’s total defense spending. Second, the United States spends more than almost all the other major military powers in the world combined. Of course, most of those major military powers are also allies of the United States. Third, U.S. defense spending is very low when measured as a percentage of its economy, about 3.7 percent of its total economy. Fourth, defense spending at that level is easily affordable for the United States into the future.

In fact, in absolute real terms, the United States spends about 10 percent more on defense than it did during the Cold War. If we examine the history of defense spending during the Cold War, only in fiscal years 1946, 1951–1953, 1967–1969, 1983–1990 did the United States spend more on defense when measured in fiscal year 2005 dollars.²⁰ And because the U.S. economy was smaller, the defense spending burden was greater in those years; it is much less now. Nor is the burden of military service too great for the American people to bear. As Table 1.3 demonstrates, there are only about 1.5 million people in uniform, out of a population of 300 million, or approximately 0.5 percent of the population. In comparison, during World War II, when the U.S. population numbered some 140 million, about 13 million people, or nearly 9 percent of the population, were in uniform.

Table 1.3 A Comparison of the Top 25 Countries’ Defense Expenditures, per Capita Expenditures, Percentage of GDP, and Armed Forces in 2004

| Rank/Country | US\$M (% of World Total) | Defense Expend- iture in US\$ per Capita | Defense Expend- iture as % GDP | Numbers in Armed Forces (Thousands) | Estimated Reservists (Thousands) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| 1/United States | 455,000 (46) | 1,552 | 3.8 | 1,473.9 | 1,290.9 |
| 2/China | 62,500 (6) | 47.8 | 3.7 | 2,255 | 800 |
| 3/Russia | 61,900 (6) | 431 | 4.4 | 1037 | 2,000 |
| 4/France | 51,600(5) | 850 | 2.6 | 254.8 | 21.6 |
| 5/Japan | 42,442 (4) | 333 | 0.9 | 239.9 | 44.4 |
| 6/United Kingdom | 49,600 (5) | 821 | 2.3 | 205.9 | 272.5 |
| 7/Germany | 37,700 (3.8) | 457 | 1.4 | 284.5 | 358.6 |
| 8/Italy | 30,500 (3) | 524.9 | 1.83 | 191.9 | 56.5 |
| 9/Saudi Arabia | 19,300 (2) | 775 | 8.1 | 199.5 | NA |
| 10/India | 19,600 (2) | 18 | 3.0 | 1,325.0 | 1,155 |
| 11/South Korea | 15,488 (1.6) | 318 | 2.3 | 687.7 | 4,500 |
| 12/Australia | 14,300 (1) | 711.78 | 2.4 | 52.8 | 20.8 |
| 13/Turkey | 10,100 (1) | 145 | 3.4 | 514.8 | 378.7 |
| 14/Israel | 9,680 (<1) | 1,542 | 8.2 | 168.3 | 408 |
| 15/Canada | 11,400 (1) | 350 | 1.1 | 62 | 36.9 |
| 16/Spain | 12,500 (<1) | 309.8 | 1.2 | 147.2 | 319 |
| 17/Brazil | 9,230 (<1) | 49.6 | 1.6 | 302.9 | 1,340 |
| 18/Netherlands | 9,600 (<1) | 585 | 1.6 | 53.1 | 54.4 |
| 19/Greece | 5,860 (<1) | 549.2 | 2.9 | 163.8 | 325 |
| 20/Taiwan | 7,211 (<1) | 314 | 2.37 | 290.0 | 1,657 |
| 21/Indonesia | 7,550 (<1) | 31.2 | 3 | 302 | 400 |
| 22/Myanmar (Burma) | 6,230 (<1) | 126.2 | 9 | 428 | NA |
| 23/Sweden | 5,439 (<1) | 605 | 1.59 | 27.6 | 262 |
| 24/Ukraine | 6,000 (<1) | 125.7 | 1.9 | 187.6 | 1,000 |
| 25/North Korea | 5,500 (<1) | 240 | 2.5 | 1,106 | 4,700 |
| World total | 997,158 (100) | | | | |

Notes: All data for 2004. NA = Not Available.

Source: Data from International Institute of Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2005–2006*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2005) passim. Data from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database* available at: <http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_database1.html>.

Another critical question is not simply how much the United States spends on defense but what benefits it receives from its spending: "Is the money spent worth it?" The benefits of American military power are considerable, and I will elaborate on five of them. First, and most importantly, the American people are protected from invasion and attack. The horrific attacks of 9/11 are—mercifully—an aberration. The men and women of the U.S. military and intelligence community do an outstanding job deterring aggression against the United States.

Second, American interests abroad are protected. U.S. military power allows Washington to defeat its enemies overseas. For example, the United States has made the decision to attack terrorists far from America's shores, and not to wait while they use bases in other countries to plan and train for attacks against the United States itself. Its military power also gives Washington the power to protect its interests abroad by deterring attacks against America's interests or coercing potential or actual opponents. In international politics, coercion means dissuading an opponent from actions America does not want it to do or to do something that it wants done. For example, the United States wanted Libya to give up the weapons of mass destruction capabilities it possessed or was developing. As Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said, "I think the reason Mu'ammar Qadhafi agreed to give up his weapons of mass destruction was because he saw what happened to Saddam Hussein."²¹

Third, our allies like Australia, Great Britain, Japan, Kuwait, Israel, and Thailand are protected by American military might and so we are able to deter attacks against them. They are aligned with the United States, and thus under its "security umbrella"—any attack on those states would be met by the military power of the United States. Other states know this and, usually, that is sufficient to deter aggression against the allies of the United States.

Fourth, as political scientist Barry Posen has argued, military power gives the United States control over the global "commons," the command of the sea, air, and space, that allows it effectively to project its power far from its borders while denying those areas to other countries if it so chooses.²² That is significant because the sea lanes, airspace, and space act as a major force multiplier for the United States, allowing Washington to exploit better its own economic and military resources and those of its allies while at the same time hindering its enemies. For example, control of the world's oceans provides the United States with the ability to move heavy forces to trouble spots such as the Persian Gulf or Korea and ensure that key resources, like oil, may travel to world markets. Command of space gives the United States control of the ultimate "high ground." The United States owns about half of the approximately three hundred active satellites in the Earth's orbit. Its intelligence satellites allow it to spy on the rest of the world; its navigation satellites guide its forces; and its communications satellites give Washington the ability to command forces worldwide.

Fifth, the military power of the United States gives it great influence in international politics. This influence comes in several forms, one of which is the U.S.' ability to create favorable conditions in international politics, such as by securing access to key regions of the world like the Persian Gulf. Often the United States does this by creating global partnerships for action. As a general rule, these partnerships are easy to create because most states want to cooperate with the United States, leading to broad partnerships with like-minded states to advance common interests.

A second key form of influence occurs through military training and the other military-to-military contacts conducted by the Pentagon. Although most Americans do not know this, the U.S. military and State Department train a large number of foreign military officers, about sixty thousand a year, through its worldwide educational programs, such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. They conduct joint exercises on a bilateral or multilateral basis worldwide, and run a program to aid militaries in operating and maintaining U.S. equipment. Officers and civilian officials from 158 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East participate and are taught many aspects of military operations—from military leadership to the latest combat lessons learned from Iraq, to dealing with the media and avoiding human rights abuses. This benefits the officers because they learn from the world's best military—it is like a premier baseball team, such as the New York Yankees, giving tips to minor-league teams. Those teams would want to learn from the stellar ball clubs so that they may improve their game and benefit from the experience of others. Additionally, foreign civilian leaders want to expose promising military officers to the training to inculcate the officers with a proper conception of the role of the military in democratic states and respect for civilian control.

Of course, such military-to-military cooperation also benefits the United States. First, it helps the United States convey its values to the students, many of whom will become senior military leaders in their countries. Students through firsthand experience better understand American life, ideals, and democratic politics. For example, students are taught to respect civilian control of the military and not to abuse enemy prisoners or civilians. Students are also introduced to the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights; they are informed how local, state, and federal governments operate in the United States; and they are educated on many other topics related to American politics and culture.

Additionally, it provides the United States with influence on a personal and professional level. Foreign military officers may make friends with their American military instructors and that may lead to a solid and warm working relationship between individuals as they rise in military rank and influence. Professionally, it makes cooperation between the American and foreign militaries easier because it fosters greater appreciation of U.S. interests and the interests of other U.S. allies. Students also improve their English language

skills, a very practical step toward making communication easier. Moreover, foreign militaries know how the U.S. military is organized, functions, trains, and how it conducts operations. They understand as well that the U.S. military is second to none and so is the right choice to emulate. In turn, this increases the likelihood that the U.S. military will serve as a template for foreign militaries as they reform and become more professional; secondly, a grasp of how the U.S. military operates increases the chances that intermilitary cooperation will be more effective and harmonious since all parties involved will be calling plays from the same playbook.

While there might be concern that foreign militaries are learning all of the secrets of the U.S. military, there is, in fact, little danger that foreign military education will hurt the United States. Its high level of military effectiveness is not only the product of the classroom; it stems from the synergy created by motivation, doctrine, training, force structure, equipment, and experience.

In January 2005, Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz summed up the value of the exchange programs when he toured Indonesia in the wake of the tsunami cataclysm of December 2004. He said that “we’ve mitigated some of the problems” in the cooperation between the United States and Indonesian militaries coordinating the disaster relief “by the fact that many Indonesian officers, including the current President of Indonesia,” who was democratically elected, “have been to the United States, have been trained in the United States, understand what it means to have civilian control over the military, and have relationships with our officers.”²³ The bottom line for such cooperation, he continued, is that “those kinds of relationships also make it possible to respond much more quickly and effectively in a crisis like this one.”²⁴ Such cooperation saved countless lives after the 2004 tsunami.

Although the United States is the dominant military power at this time, and will remain so into the foreseeable future, this does not mean that it does not suffer from problems within its own military, many of which are being addressed. The “defense transformation” efforts started by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld are attempts to make the U.S. military more combat effective and efficient. The U.S. military is the best, but no one would claim that it is perfect. However, a large part of the reason the U.S. military is the best is because it is constantly evaluating its problems so that it may solve them. Many people do not realize this. Despite a common image of the military in American popular culture as lowbrow and full of Cleetus-the-Slack-Jawed-Yokel characters from *The Simpsons* television show, the military is comprised of some of the smartest and best-educated people you will ever meet. Most mid- and high-ranking officers have master’s or even doctoral (Ph.D.) degrees. These are people who would be very successful in corporate careers but choose the military because of their patriotism and desire to serve their country.

Nevertheless, the military prowess of the United States does not mean that states or terrorist groups will not attack it. Perfect deterrence of all attacks is not possible—the United States may still be attacked at home or abroad and will always be vulnerable to some type of attack. The military and intelligence community are, and must always remain, vigilant because, although they succeed in protecting Americans the vast majority of the time, they are judged by failures like Pearl Harbor or 9/11. Moreover, although it is rare, history shows that weaker states do attack stronger ones, as Japan did in 1941, or as Egypt and Syria did when they attacked Israel in 1973. But if a country were foolish enough to attack the United States, it is very likely to be defeated soundly and absolutely defeated and this fact helps maintain the massive deterrent power of the United States.

Of course, being so powerful does not mean that the United States always gets what it wants. Like people, countries have free will, including the ability not to follow the American lead. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 is a case in point. Much has been made of the decision of major NATO allies like France and Germany not to participate in the Iraq war. Diplomatically, of course, it would have been better for the United States had they done so.

Nonetheless, in its fifty-year history, the NATO alliance has faced crises and survived them. Indeed, it survived many worse ones in far more difficult strategic conditions during the Cold War, when the profound threat from the Soviet Union existed. There were serious fights over German rearmament, a shared European nuclear force called the Multilateral Nuclear Force, French President Charles de Gaulle’s withdrawal from NATO’s military mission, and the deployment of modern, intermediate-range nuclear forces in the early 1980s.²⁵ It is certain that NATO will face crises in the future. In fact, crises for NATO are like subway trains—you may expect that they will come along at regular intervals—and if you miss one, don’t worry, there will be another one soon.

The military contribution of the French and Germans was not necessary to the Iraq invasion, and their absence underscored the power of the U.S. military. However, our NATO allies do support us in Afghanistan. Those who criticize the Bush administration for being “unilateral” seldom recognize that, while France and Germany chose not to participate in the Iraq war, all NATO countries, including France and Germany, have been greatly supportive of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. In fact, the French started flying combat missions in Afghanistan on October 21, 2001. French forces have been there ever since—including French special forces. At the time of this writing, the French have about 1,500 troops supporting combat operations in that country. That is about 10 percent of all forces. So, in reality, our allies are supporting the United States in major combat operations, just not in Iraq. Their soldiers face the risks of combat alongside American soldiers—fighting side by side just as they did in World War II.

When the totality of the evidence about the American military is examined, there has never been a country with such preponderant military might. In both absolute and relative terms, and barring some tremendous folly, America will continue to dominate the world's other militaries for the foreseeable future.

Hard Power—American Economic Might

American economic power is critical to the maintenance of the American Empire because economic power is the wellspring of military power. A good rule of thumb in international politics is that a country's gross domestic product equals the strength of military power, or GDP = Military Power. So, a healthy American economy helps to ensure adequate military strength to preserve America's position in the world. Fortunately for the United States, it has the world's largest economy and its relative economic strength, like its relative military power, is astonishing.

In order to demonstrate this argument, we have to examine the aggregate economic strength of the United States versus the economic power of other countries. Table 1.4 captures the relative economic might of the United States. It provides a comparison of the world's top twenty economies as estimated by the Central Intelligence Agency, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and the World Bank. For the United States, the data are consistent using any of the major tools economists employ to estimate economic might (the CIA's GDP-PPP, GDP for the IISS, and GNI for the World Bank). The data show that the United States is clearly the world's most powerful economy in both absolute and relative terms.

Indeed, if we consider economies, only the twenty-five-member-nation European Union (EU) possibly surpasses American economic might, and if it does, it is not by much. In 2004, the EU's economy was \$11.05 trillion, in contrast to the \$10.99 trillion U.S. economy in 2003, according to the CIA.²⁶ If we recognize that the CIA estimates the EU had 1 percent real growth in 2004, and the United States had 3.1 percent real growth in 2003, it is the case that the economies are really the same size. Additionally, as I will describe below, the U.S. economy is much more efficient and better primed for continued economic growth than is the EU's sclerotic and moribund economy.

The United States is the world's largest and most efficient economy. Its currency is the world's reserve currency, it fosters and protects international trade and helps to serve as the "lender of last resort" for the world economy. Additionally, the United States is enjoying historically low levels of inflation, unemployment, and interest rates. However, despite this unrivaled economic dominance, no economy is perfect. The U.S. economy certainly has problems, such as a large federal budget deficit and a considerable current account deficit (the difference between what Americans earn from and pay to foreigners).

Continuing deficits have made the United States the world's leading debtor. But neither deficits nor debt are a major problem for the United States.

The federal budget deficit may be serviced by selling bonds, raising taxes, or reducing the spending of the federal government. Unlike the budget deficit, the current account deficit is not something the United States wholly controls since it involves international trade. The United States must borrow money from abroad to service the debt if Americans choose not to save their disposable income. And Americans love to spend, rather than save, their money.

Much of the current account deficit is due to China and, to a lesser extent, Japan. That actually is good news for the current account deficit of the United States because the Chinese, Japanese, and other central banks in East Asia have an enormous stake in selling to the United States. These economies depend on exports, and the United States is an enormous market for their products and services. To ensure that their currency is weak against the American dollar, which is good for their export industries, they keep buying dollars and securities based on the dollar.

If they did not, the dollar would lose value against the Chinese currency (the renminbi), causing Chinese imports to cost more, resulting in fewer Americans buying them, in turn causing a loss of jobs and downturn in the Chinese economy at a critical time—millions of Chinese are moving from rural areas to the cities to seek manufacturing jobs. If there were a substantial downturn in the Chinese economy, unemployment could lead to political unrest. The communist leaders of China are acutely aware of this, since economic problems fueled the revolution in which they took power.

Prominent historian Niall Ferguson estimates that if the dollar fell by one-third against the renminbi, the Chinese could suffer a loss of about 10 percent of their GDP.²⁷ That would be catastrophic, and so it is unacceptable to the Chinese. Thus, China's economic interest requires it to fund the current account deficit of the United States. "The United States may be discovering what the British found in their imperial heyday," Ferguson writes; that is, "If you are a truly powerful empire, you can borrow a lot of money at surprisingly reasonable rates. Today's deficits are in fact dwarfed in relative terms by the amount the British borrowed to finance their Global War on (French) Terror between 1793 to 1815"—and the British Empire lasted another 150 years.²⁸

Despite problems, the American economy is both huge and robust, and it continues to grow at healthy rates. Depending on how one counts the numbers, the U.S. economy accounts for between 20 to 30 percent of world GDP. Moreover, the United States is the world's most productive country and still leads the world in innovation according to the World Economic Forum (WEF), an organization that measures the competitiveness of countries around the world.

Each year, it publishes a ranking of each country's economic competitiveness. This is comprised of the quality of the macroeconomic environment of a given country, the health of its public institutions, and its technological

Table 1.4 A Comparison of the Top 20 Countries' Economic Strength from the CIA, IISS, and World Bank

| Rank/Country (Rank by CIA 2004 GDP data) | CIA (2004) | | | | IISS (2004) | | | | World Bank (2003) | | | | Rank (by 2003 GNI data) |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | GDP (\$ billions) | per Capita (\$ thou.) | Population (millions) | GDP (\$ billions) | per Capita (\$ thou.) | Population (millions) | GNI (\$ billions) | per Capita (\$ thou.) | Population (millions) | GNI (\$ billions) | per Capita (\$ thou.) | Population (millions) | |
| 1/United States | 10,990 | 37,800 | 293 | 11,700 | 40,047 | 293 | 11,012 | 37,870 | 11,012 | 37,870 | 291 | 291 | 1 |
| 2/Japan | 28,200 | 3,582 | 127 | 4,660 | 36,598 | 127 | 4,360 | 34,180 | 4,360 | 34,180 | 128 | 128 | 2 |
| 3/Germany | 2,271 | 27,600 | 82 | 2,670 | 32,472 | 82 | 2,085 | 25,270 | 2,085 | 25,270 | 83 | 83 | 3 |
| 4/United Kingdom | 1,666 | 27,700 | 60 | 2,130 | 35,488 | 60 | 1,680 | 28,320 | 1,680 | 28,320 | 59 | 59 | 4 |
| 5/France | 1,661 | 27,600 | 60 | 2,000 | 33,201 | 60 | 1,521 | 24,730 | 1,521 | 24,730 | 60 | 60 | 5 |
| 6/Italy | 1,550 | 26,700 | 58 | 1,660 | 28,685 | 58 | 1,243 | 21,570 | 1,243 | 21,570 | 58 | 58 | 7 |
| 7/China | 6,449 | 5,000 | 1,298 | 1,680 | 1,293 | 1,306 | 1,416 | 1,100 | 1,416 | 1,100 | 1,288 | 1,288 | 6 |
| 8/Russia | 1,282 | 8,900 | 143 | 1,400 | 9,779 | 143 | 374 | 2,610 | 374 | 2,610 | 143 | 143 | 16 |
| 9/Canada | 958.7 | 29,800 | 32 | 980 | 30,146 | 32 | 773 | 24,470 | 773 | 24,470 | 32 | 32 | 8 |
| 10/Spain | 885.5 | 22,000 | 40 | 986 | 24,488 | 40 | 700 | 17,040 | 700 | 17,040 | 41 | 41 | 9 |
| 11/Mexico | 941.2 | 9,000 | 104 | 664 | 6,335 | 106 | 637 | 6,230 | 637 | 6,230 | 102 | 102 | 10 |
| 12/South Korea | 857.8 | 17,800 | 48 | 673 | 13,973 | 48 | 576 | 12,030 | 576 | 12,030 | 48 | 48 | 11 |
| 13/India | 3,033 | 2,900 | 1,065 | 648 | 609 | 1,080 | 570 | 570 | 570 | 570 | 1,064 | 1,064 | 12 |
| 14/Brazil | 1,375 | 7,600 | 184 | 581 | 3,160 | 186 | 479 | 2,720 | 479 | 2,720 | 177 | 177 | 13 |
| 15/Netherlands | 461.4 | 28,600 | 16 | 575 | 35,255 | 16 | 425 | 26,230 | 425 | 26,230 | 16 | 16 | 15 |
| 16/Australia | 571.4 | 29,000 | 19 | 598 | 30,059 | 20 | 436 | 21,950 | 436 | 21,950 | 20 | 20 | 14 |
| 17/Switzerland | 239.3 | 32,700 | 7 | 361 | 48,450 | 7 | 299 | 40,680 | 299 | 40,680 | 7 | 7 | 17 |
| 18/Belgium | 299.1 | 29,100 | 10 | 349 | 33,762 | 10 | 267 | 25,760 | 267 | 25,760 | 10 | 10 | 18 |
| 19/Sweden | 238.3 | 26,800 | 9 | 340 | 37,923 | 9 | 258 | 28,910 | 258 | 28,910 | 9 | 9 | 19 |
| 20/Austria | 245.3 | 30,000 | 8 | 290 | 35,487 | 8 | 216 | 26,810 | 216 | 26,810 | 8 | 8 | 20 |

Notes: For CIA data, GDP dollar estimates for all countries are derived from purchasing power parity (PPP) calculations rather than from conversions at official currency exchange rates. The PPP method involves the use of standardized international dollar price weights, which are applied to the quantities of final goods and services produced in a given economy. The data derived from the PPP method provide the best available starting point for comparisons of economic strength and well-being between countries. For World Bank data, GNI (formerly referred to as gross national product, or GNP) measures the total domestic and foreign value added claimed by residents. GNI comprises GDP plus net receipts of primary income (compensation of employees and property income) from nonresident sources. Source: From CIA, CIA World Factbook, online edition available at: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>. Data from IISS, *The Military Balance 2005-2006*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2005). Data from World Bank, *2005 World Development Indicators*, (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2005).

sophistication. Traditionally the United States is ranked first or second. In 2004, it was ranked second of 104 countries, behind only Finland (China is 46th). According to the World Economic Forum, the United States “is ranked second, with overall technological supremacy, and especially high scores for such indicators as companies’ spending on R&D [research and development], the creativity of the scientific community, personal computer and internet penetration rates.”²⁹ Also in 2004, the United States was first in the WEF’s rankings for business competitiveness (China is 47th) and technological innovation (China is 104th) a critical indication of long-term prosperity. Nor is the 2004 ranking an aberration; the United States historically ranks first in those categories of global competitiveness.

The U.S. economy continues to grow and, most importantly, much of its productivity is based on the information technology (IT) revolution. Significantly, this is not the case in Europe or Japan, where substantial growth has yet to occur (as in Europe) or has peaked (as in Japan). According to economist Deepak Lal, the “big difference in the productivity increases between the U.S. and Europe has been in the sectors that are substantial users of IT equipment and software,” and these industries are the key to continued economic growth in the information age.³⁰ The United States’s lead in IT may be overcome at some point, perhaps by China, but not in the foreseeable future, as the United States remains the world’s IT leader. In turn, this helps to ensure the military dominance of the United States, as so much military technology depends on information technology.

Given the historical economic growth rates of these countries, it is unlikely that any of them (or the EU) will be able to reach the levels of economic growth required to match current U.S. defense spending and, thus, supplant the United States. China comes closest with 6.6 percent annual economic growth estimated by the World Bank through 2020, or the 7 percent annual economic growth estimated by the World Economic Forum through 2020.³¹ It is not even clear if China can sustain its growth rates and, other than China, no other country is even in the ballpark. Table 1.5 shows the sustained economic growth rates necessary to match the present military spending by the United States.

Thus, the economy is well placed to be the engine of the American Empire. Even the leading proponent of the “imperial overstretch” argument, Yale University historian Paul Kennedy, has acknowledged this. Imperial overstretch occurs when an empire’s military power and alliance commitments are too burdensome for its economy. In the 1980s, there was much concern among academics that the United States was in danger of this as its economy strained to fund its military operations and alliance commitments abroad. However, Kennedy now acknowledges that he was wrong when he made that argument in his famous book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, because of the robustness of American economic and military power. Indeed, if there is any

Table 1.5 Economic Growth Rates (%) Required to Match Present U.S. Military Spending (as % of GDP)

| | 2020 | 2050 | 2100 | Actual GDP Growth Rate 1973 to 1998 |
|--------|------|------|------|-------------------------------------|
| China | 8.5 | 5.2 | 4.1 | 6.84 |
| France | 14.3 | 7.4 | 5.2 | 2.10 |
| U.K. | 14.6 | 7.5 | 5.2 | 2.00 |
| India | 11.8 | 6.4 | 4.7 | 5.07 |
| Russia | 12.7 | 6.8 | 4.9 | -1.15 |
| EU | 6.5 | 4.4 | 3.7 | NA |

Note: Assumptions: US\$ real PPP GDP will grow at a constant 3 percent per year (averaged from 1988 to 1998). \$ Military expenditures/GDP will stay the same as in 2000.

Source: From Lal, D., *In Praise of Empires: Globalization and Order*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 72. With permission.

imperial overstretch, it is more likely to be by China, France, Britain, India, Russia, or the EU—not the United States.

Reflecting on the history of world politics, Kennedy submits that the United States not only has overwhelming dominance but possesses such power so as to be a historically unique condition: “Nothing has ever existed like this disparity of power; nothing. I have returned to all of the comparative defense spending and military personnel statistics over the past 500 years that I compiled in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, and no other nation comes close,” not even an empire as great as the British, because “even the Royal Navy was equal only to the next two navies. Right now all the other navies in the world combined could not dent American maritime supremacy.”³² Moreover, Kennedy recognizes that the steady economic growth of the American economy, and the curbing of inflation, means that “America’s enormous defense expenditures could be pursued at a far lower relative cost to the country than the military spending of Ronald Reagan’s years,” and that fact is “an incomparable source of the U.S. strength.”³³

When Kennedy, who was perhaps the strongest skeptic of the economic foundation of America’s power, comes to acknowledge, first, that no previous empire has been as powerful as America is now; and, second, that its strength will last because of the fundamental soundness of its economy, then, as Jeff Foxworthy would say, “You might be an empire....” And it is one that will last a considerable amount of time. As with its military might, the economic foundation of the American empire is sound for the projected future.

Soft Power—The Power of Ideas

The soft power of the United States is considerable. We are able to persuade many countries to work with us, whether in military actions like Iraq, or in the economic realm, such as in the World Trade Organization. Why do other countries often want to work with the United States? This is so for two major reasons.

The first reason is self-interest. Countries may help the United States because they want to seek favor from Washington. For example, by participating in the occupation of Iraq, a country like El Salvador earns good will in Washington. At some point in time, El Salvador will remind U.S. officials of that when it needs a favor from Washington. This is what political experts call “logrolling,” or, put another way, “If you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.”

The second reason is soft power. Other countries want to work with the United States because they share its goals and want what the United States wants. This is not logrolling. They help because they really want to, not with the expectation that they will receive some specific reward. At some point, the soft power of the United States has changed their opinion, so that individuals or countries that once opposed the United States now understand its actions, and, most often, support them. The soft power of the United States goes far in explaining why the United States has so many allies and so much support in other countries.

How do you get somebody to want what you want—how does soft power work? Soft power works through formal (governmental) and informal (non-governmental) means, and I will discuss each in turn. The United States spreads its soft power through governmental agencies like the National Endowment for Democracy, which has helped budding democracies, such as the Ukraine, by aiding the citizens of new democracies to learn how to participate in open, fair, and free elections. The United States spreads its ideals and furthers its goals through the Fulbright scholar programs sponsored by the Department of State. One Fulbright program—the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistance Program—brings graduate students from abroad to U.S. campuses to teach native languages that are in high demand in the war on terror, but where there are few American speakers and teachers. These languages include Arabic, Urdu, and Uzbek.

The alumni of the Fulbright programs certainly are distinguished: they have won 34 Nobel prizes and 65 Pulitzer prizes; 21 have received MacArthur Foundation “genius” awards, and 14 have been awarded presidential Medals of Freedom, the highest honor the United States can bestow on a civilian. More than that, Fulbright alumni have risen to the height of power in many countries and helped to advance American interests and principles. These include Armindo Maia, who helped lead East Timor’s struggle for freedom and democracy, and a Fulbright scholar at Stanford, Alejandro Toledo, who was once a shoeshine boy and is now president of Peru.

Other formal vehicles of soft power include *Radio Sawa*, radio programming that attempts to influence people in the Middle East. With a budget of only \$22 million, it heavily emphasizes popular music, with news reports mixed into the programming. It has largely displaced *Voice of America* as the major U.S. government-sponsored radio outlet for the Middle East and has been particularly effective in attracting Arabs in the 15- to 30-year-old demographic range. In fact, April 2004 surveys conducted by the polling company A.C. Nielsen found the network to be the most successful one in the Middle East. Like *Radio Sawa*, the *Al Hurra* television station is backed by the U.S. government, with the same objective and audience.

These media outlets are important, but are only one vehicle for soft power. The State Department spends about \$340 million a year to support democracy in the Middle East through the Middle East Partnership Initiative, the National Endowment for Democracy, and educational and cultural exchanges.

In January 2003, to further the soft power capabilities of the United States, the White House created the Office of Global Communications to coordinate strategic communication with global audiences and provide advice concerning how to reach foreign audiences. Shortly before, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice established a Strategic Communication Policy Coordinating Committee that would work with all federal agencies to harmonize the President’s message to the rest of the world. No doubt, there is a problem for the United States—and the Pentagon’s Defense Science Board concluded that the U.S. strategic communication effort suffers from four problems: (1) a lack of presidential direction; (2) insufficient interagency coordination on what America’s message to the world ought to be; (3) the government and the private sector (such as Hollywood) are not yet full partners in strategic communication; and, (4) inadequate resources to support America’s message.³⁴

Although Internet penetration of the Middle East is low, it is growing rapidly. The United States must expand its interactive, content-rich, web-based broadcasting. Arab and Muslim Internet users are more likely to be the opinion makers whom the United States will want to influence. Web sites sponsored by the United States or allied governments are an important mechanism to influence opinion.

Annual spending on State Department information programs and U.S. international broadcasting such as the *Voice of America* and *Radio Marti* broadcasting to Cuba is approximately \$1.2 billion, or about one-quarter of one percent of the military budget, and about equal to what McDonald’s spends on advertising. The disconnect between a military budget four hundred times greater than a strategic communication budget is unacceptable when the global war on terrorism is largely about ideas and perceptions of the United States. That should change. Soft power takes time, but it is about

establishing relationships with key players worldwide, journalists, educators, film and theater actors and directors, and business leaders.

Informal soft power mechanisms are even more important than government programs. Nongovernmental groups and organizations are an enormous help to the U.S. government, and many private organizations work to build democracy as well. One of the most important of these is the Carter Center, founded by former President and First Lady Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter. The Carter Center fosters democracy abroad by monitoring elections, promoting the rule of law, and developing the ability of civic organizations to participate in government policy making.

Education is also a great informal source of soft power. The United States' higher educational system is perhaps the most important vehicle for transmitting American values. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell captured its significance well when he stated "I can think of no more valuable asset to our country than the friendship of future world leaders who have been educated here."³⁵ Admitting foreign students to study at American colleges and universities has a long history in the United States. During the Cold War it was particularly important, with over fifty thousand Soviet academics, writers, journalists, and artists visiting from 1958 to 1988. There is no doubt that Soviet espionage agents were sent to the United States to spy, but it also the case that the program served to undermine the Soviet Union. A former participant was KGB agent Oleg Kalugin, who became one of the highest ranking defectors to the West. Kalugin said that U.S.-Soviet exchange programs were a Trojan horse for the Soviet Union that played a tremendous role in the erosion of the Soviet system, as they "infected" more and more people with Western ideas over the years.³⁶

Education is also big business. Educating foreign students is a \$13 billion industry for the United States with critical implications for American industry. This is because many graduate students in engineering and the natural sciences come to the United States to study but gain employment and stay in the country, often becoming citizens.

As a consequence of its premier educational institutions and leadership in graduate education, there is an incredible concentration of intellectual ability in the United States. There are some six hundred thousand foreign students studying in the United States annually. Most of the best universities and private and public think tanks are in the United States, and most of the greatest scientists and top scholars conduct their research in the United States.

Although native English speakers may not think of it, the English language itself is a great ally of the American Empire. The English language is the world's lingua franca. It is spoken as a native language by about 400 million people, an almost equal number know it fluently as a second language, and many more know some words and phrases precisely because it is indispensable for business, diplomacy, the Internet, higher education, navigation, and

travel. It is reported that more than 300 million Chinese—the equivalent of the population of the United States—are studying English.

The spread of English facilitates communication and mutual influence, allowing people the world over to participate in the same colloquium, thanks to which Russian and Brazilian academics can exchange ideas and pass them along to Japanese intellectuals. A businessman in Istanbul is able to sell to someone in Beijing. There are tens of millions of people who conduct business in English and yet have never had a transaction with a native English speaker. It is even the official language of the European Central Bank. For two years, the Pew Research Center for People and the Press polled sixty-six thousand people from forty-four countries concerning whether children "need to learn English to succeed in the world today." More than 95 percent of those surveyed in Indonesia, Germany, and South Africa agreed, as did more than 90 percent of those surveyed in China, Japan, France, and the Ukraine.³⁷

But by far the most influential soft power vehicle for the United States is its film and television industries. Most of the world watches American films and television. It is an enormous market. The film industry alone makes about \$100 billion a year, and about half of its revenue is earned from overseas markets; that amount was just 30 percent of revenues in 1980. Indeed, what it estimates it loses to the piracy of movies, \$3 billion, is the total revenue of some industries and is the equivalent of the gross domestic product of some countries. Indeed, it is about three times the GDP of Burkina Faso. The success of America's entertainment industry is due in no small measure to the storytelling skills of its actors, directors, and producers.³⁸

It can be hard to realize how films and television influence people. After all, people usually watch a film or television for entertainment, not to be influenced. But, in fact, these are some of the most effective media for advancing ideas, because people lose themselves when they watch entertainment. Their guard drops and they are then more easily influenced than if they were being lectured to by a professor, their parents, or a politician. They want to be in the movie theater or watch the television because it is fun. A film, or other "cultural goods," such as theater, books, or television, conveys ideas, symbols, and ways of life, entertaining and shaping the ideas of the audience at the same time. They establish collective identity and common experience (we have all seen the films *Titanic* and *The Godfather*) and influence what people say, what they think, how they act, how they dress, and how they talk to others.

A second reason is that film and television have a particularly great influence on young people. In many countries around the world, young people watch a lot of films and television; starting at an early age and for much of their lives, they will be influenced by American ideas. Moreover, young people are easier to influence than older people because they have less experience and want to learn how to fit in—what they should say, how they should act, and what they should think. Grandma already knows how to act, but the

grandchildren do not; her opinions are forged by a lifetime of hard experience—that is not true for her grandchildren, who have little experience and thus are easier to shape.

Film and television tell people what they should say in a particular situation, how they should think, and how they should live their lives. The ideas may be advanced through the dialogue, by how the characters act, or, even more subtly, such as in the background. If you are from New York City and you travel abroad, people will think you live like the characters on *Friends*; if from California, everyone will think you live like the characters on *Beverly Hills 90210*; and if you are from Texas, the show *Dallas* got there before you did to influence people's image of Texas, or California, or New York City. Television has shaped their conception of you. They saw it, after all, and if we see it, then we often think it is true. This is the key reason why Hollywood and television stars complain about typecasting or getting fans to recognize that they are not the characters they play—if Christopher Walken or James Woods always play creepy characters, then they must be creepy; if Nicole Kidman is inevitably the “good girl” in her roles, then she must be good. People often see screen or television actors and think of them as friends or enemies, good or bad, although they have never met them and never will.

We have this problem because we trust our senses—they have been good to us over the course of human evolution. But the 4 to 5 million years of human evolution did not equip us for Steven Spielberg's films or American television. They have a formidable power precisely because we trust our senses. A typical person in Pakistan may think that everyone in California lives on the beach, drives fancy cars, and dates everyone who comes through the door. And they want to live that way too. Of course, the reality is that some Californians do live that way, but the vast majority do not. Certainly, not all elements may be attractive to people in Pakistan or Indonesia or Kenya, but enough of it is to be effective because it appeals to humans universally. The image is more important than reality and it shapes opinion—what people think about the United States, our freedoms, and the lives of people in this country.

Of course, people watch entertainment not to be influenced by political ideas; the ideas piggyback on the entertainment. You watch because you are entertained, and you keep watching because you are captured by the story. Therefore, you are more likely to be influenced by messages subtly presented rather than by a blunt, explicit work such as the great Soviet director Serge Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*. And American filmmakers are very good at keeping people watching. As Philip Adams, the former head of the Australian Film Commission has said: “A country that makes a film like *Star Wars* deserves to rule the world.”³⁹

Key to the success of the American Empire is that people want many of its products, and that desire provides the United States with considerable soft power. Although he was certainly no fan of American power and culture,

Arthur Koestler, the author of *Darkness at Noon*, saw that the key to U.S. power was that people wanted what America provided. In 1951, he recognized that the growth of American influence in Europe was mainly due to the Europeans themselves: “The United States does not rule Europe as the British ruled India; they waged no Opium War to force their revolting ‘Coke’ down our throats. Europe bought the whole package because Europe wanted it.”⁴⁰

Koestler saw a fundamental truth. America delivers what many people want because it appeals to human universals—whether it is rock ‘n’ roll, consumption captured by the trope “shop till you drop,” or important liberties, like free speech. People welcome American ideas and culture as being not “from above,” imposed by government, but rather as being “from below”—people want and seek American cultural products even in the face of resistance from their government, as is the case today in Iran. Soft power spreads American ideas and popular culture from below, and the potency of America's ideas and popular culture should never be underestimated.⁴¹

America's soft power, its ideas, culture, and language, are as important as the military and economic foundations of America's Empire. Like those, there is no sign that America's soft power is waning—just the reverse: its ideas, culture, and language are more popular than ever before. In fact, given the popularity and strength of Hollywood and American television in the world, it may be expected to grow in attractiveness to the world's population.

Are American Capabilities Able to Address the Threats the United States Now Confronts: China, the European Union, and Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism?

The United States does not exist in a vacuum. What other states and terrorists do is centrally important for how long the United States is able to maintain its dominant position. In this section of the chapter, I will consider three issues: the threat from China, the potential threat of the European Union, and the danger presented by Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. China and the European Union are important to consider because they have the potential economic power to supplant the United States as the global hegemon.

Will they be able to supplant the United States? Probably not, but it is hard to tell over the course of the twenty-first century—after all, Yogi Berra once said that predictions are hard, especially about the future. Despite the difficulties of prediction, two types of dangers affect the projected paths of any country. First, and by definition, unforeseen events cannot be predicted but, of course, could occur—think of a revolution that forever changed a country's path, like those in China in 1949, Iran in 1979, or Russia in 1917. The second, foreseen problems, may be identified because the seeds of danger have been planted already. I will focus on these. Both China and the European Union face major problems hindering their economic growth and thus their ability to challenge the United States for preeminence in international politics. I will

address the problems confronting each in turn. Then I will address the problem of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism.

The Threat from China: Significant, but Reduced by the Dragon's Demographics China is a major country undergoing a dramatic modernization process. It is where the United States was a hundred years ago or where most major European countries were one hundred and fifty years ago. Periods of modernization result in great economic growth as economies move from agrarian to an industrial or postindustrial information economy. Its economic growth rates are very impressive—an 8 percent real increase in GDP in 2000, 7.3 percent in 2001, 8 percent in 2002, and 9.1 percent in 2003.⁴² So the trend of economic growth is clear and certainly will continue for the next few years, before falling off as economic efficiencies and returns on trade decline. Eventually, China will have economic growth rates of 1 percent, 2 percent, or 3 percent per year, which is typical for developed countries. Nevertheless, as a result of its rapid growth, China will be in a position to threaten the dominant role of the United States in world politics. According to the National Intelligence Council, China is projected to have about a \$4.3 trillion GDP in 2016.⁴³ That is equivalent to the 2003 GDP of Japan. About 2042, China is expected to have the GDP (about \$10.9 trillion) that the United States possessed in 2003.

Although its continued economic growth is impressive, China faces major problems that will hinder its ability to replace the United States as the world's hegemon. The first of these is a rapidly aging population beginning in 2020. Nearly 400 million Chinese will be over sixty-five years old by 2020. This could be a source of unrest and economic stagnation. Younger generations will be pressed to care for the older population. There will be a great discrepancy between the numbers of young people and the elderly, and China lacks the pension and health care infrastructure characteristic of Western societies. Many Chinese will have to work far into old age and will not be able to care for themselves should they fall sick or be too old to earn a wage. As we see with Japan, economic productivity will peak.

This situation is the direct result of the "one child" policy adopted in 1979 to halt explosive population growth. When China took its first countrywide census in 1953, its population was 600 million. By 1970, it was approximately 800 million. As a result of the "one child" policy, the Chinese birthrate has fallen from 5.8 children per woman in 1970 to fewer than 2 per woman in 2000. The "one child" policy is believed to have resulted in 300 million fewer Chinese.

A second big problem stemming from the "one child" policy is the imbalance between the sexes. For social and economic reasons, if only one child is permitted, most Chinese parents will choose a son. This has led to widespread abortion, female infanticide, and female adoption out of China. Simply put, there are too few females in China. The normal worldwide divergence between the number of boys to girls is about 103 males to 107 females. In China, about

119 boys are born for every 100 girls. In rural areas, where the preference for sons is the strongest, the imbalance is even greater, about 133 to 100.⁴⁴ There are an estimated 40 million more men than women in China's population.

The declining birth rates that flow from this will hinder economic growth in the long run. China eventually will face other major economic and social problems as well, including those related to the economic fragility of its financial system and state-owned enterprises, economic malaise brought on by widespread corruption, ubiquitous environmental pollution, HIV/AIDS and other epidemic diseases like SARS, and the high energy costs, which stifle economic growth. In addition, unlike the United States, China is not a model for other countries. Chinese political values are inferior to those of the United States because China is repressive. The Chinese do not respect human rights, including religious and political freedom.

There is also the wildcard of potential conflict over Taiwan. A war with Taiwan would retard China's economic progress and scare neighboring states. The fact that China has so many territorial and other disputes with its major neighbors, Japan, India, Russia, and Vietnam, means that many countries see it as a threat and will want to ally with the United States against Chinese power. The rise of China is ripe for potential conflict with its neighbors, and this constitutes a big danger in international politics.

The Threat from the European Union: Lessened by Demographics and Decline The European Union is the second alternative to the dominance of the United States. The European Union has 25 members and is likely to add Bulgaria and Romania by 2007; Croatia by 2009; and Macedonia, and, perhaps, Turkey shortly thereafter. EU states have almost 500 million people and an economy slightly larger than the economy of the United States. Additionally, most EU members use a single currency, the euro, which is replacing the dollar as an international reserve currency. The United States, in turn, is forced to pay higher interest rates to central banks and other investors around the world to induce them to buy U.S. Treasury bonds. This is by design, as Romano Prodi revealed when he was the European Commission's president: "The euro is just an antipasto....It is the first course, but there will be others. The historical significance of the euro is to construct a bipolar economy in the world. The unipolar world is over. There are two poles now: the dollar, and the euro."⁴⁵ No doubt, Prodi and other EU officials would like to see American economic dominance supplanted by European hegemony. Indeed, it is safe to assume that their ambitions are not limited to economic dominance.

In addition to its economic might, the EU has a modest defense force, the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF), of about sixty thousand soldiers, sailors, and airmen. The ERRF is wholly independent of NATO and is beginning to act as a coherent force. In 2003, it undertook a peacekeeping mission to Macedonia, Operation Amber Fox, replacing a NATO operation there. This

was the first allied military mission in Europe since the end of World War II that did not include U.S. forces. In 2004, the EU launched another mission, Operation Althea (also known as EuFor), in Bosnia. The EUFOR mission of seven thousand troops is designed to take over most of NATO's responsibilities (for what NATO called SFOR, or Stabilization Force), which includes maintaining stability and enforcing the 1995 Dayton Agreement.

Yet unlike China, the EU simply does not pose a great danger to the American Empire for two major reasons—political and socioeconomic. The political similarities between the EU and the United States are enormous. In essence, the political values of EU are largely those of the United States. This is not a surprise, in many respects; the United States is the daughter of Europe, and that may be excellent news for future warm relations between them. In addition, if the “clash of civilizations” argument made famous by Samuel Huntington is correct (that is, that future major conflicts will be between civilizations), then as other civilizations become more powerful—such as the Chinese or Islamic—Europe and the United States will be united again by the threat from those civilizations.⁴⁶ They were united during the Cold War by the threat from the Soviet Union, and history teaches that an external threat can produce comity where once there was rivalry.

In addition to the political reasons, there are three major socioeconomic reasons why the EU will not be able to challenge the United States. These are (1) the costs of expansion; (2) the different approach to work and the related costs of generous social welfare programs in the EU; and (3) the aging EU workforce and the risks of Muslim immigration to the EU's identity.

The first factor retarding economic growth is the costs involved in the further expansion of the European Union. Expansion is hindered by the fact that Brussels has only a fraction of the structural funds (aid to regions or countries where GDP per capita is below 75 percent EU average, such as Portugal, Greece, Spain, and the former East Germany) needed to bring new members up to the standard of living found in the rest of the EU. Additionally, new members will receive no cohesion funds, which are given to build a country's infrastructure. The simple fact is that there is too little money for too many new members (already about 35 percent of the EU budget goes to the structural and cohesion funds).

This situation stands in stark contrast to the 1970s and early 1980s when Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and Greece joined. At that time, the number of rich members and the small number of new members meant that the funds were well focused. That is not true today. As a result, the EU will be tiered: wealthier old members will continue to receive generous structural and cohesion funds, while new members occupy a second, poorer tier.

The Common Agricultural Policy also hinders economic growth in the European Union. Almost half (about 45 percent) of the EU's budget is spent on agriculture—mostly payments to farmers. The EU provides about \$120 billion

in agricultural subsidies. In contrast, the U.S. government provides about \$40 billion annually in agricultural subsidies. Each cow in the United States gets about \$120 a year in federal subsidies. Each European cow gets \$600 per year from the EU.⁴⁷ These subsidies are an enormous drain on the EU economy but are perpetuated because EU members do not want to lose them.

The second economic reason is that EU is based on a different socioeconomic model than the United States. The American economy is as close as it gets to raw capitalism. You have to work to feed, house, and clothe yourself in America. The social safety net does have large gaps in comparison to Europe, and there is great disparity in wealth—a smaller number of people have control over more of the wealth of the country than in Europe. America is a great place to be rich. It is in Europe as well, but less so due to high taxes and greater income equality. The ratio between what the top tier of American CEOs earn and what the average manufacturing employee earns is 475:1. In Europe, the ratio is 24:1 in Britain, 15:1 in France, and 13:1 in Sweden. On the other hand, the American economy is fluid, so the guy who invents the better mousetrap is able to market it and make a million. There is relatively little government intervention in the economy, and capitalism is warmly embraced. America is the epitome of free market capitalism.

The European economy does not work that way. In contrast to America, there is much more government intervention in the economy—laws that govern business practices and protect workers and the environment—and there is great ambivalence toward capitalism. Europeans prefer a closer distribution of wealth so that there is not an enormous gap between the richest and the poorest. In the United States, about 20 percent of adults are living in poverty, while the numbers are about 7.5 percent for France, 7.6 percent for Germany, 6.5 percent for Italy, and 14.6 percent for Britain. Europeans strongly prefer a social safety net. A system of cradle-to-grave welfare programs exists to help Europeans receive an education and to shelter people from the storms of life, even if they are tempests that affect health, housing, or employment. European unemployment rates are consistently higher than those in the United States because the costs of being unemployed are much lower due to the social safety net than in the United States, where modest unemployment benefits soon are exhausted.

Americans also work much harder than Europeans. In 2003, Americans worked an average of 1,976 hours. German and French workers averaged about 400 fewer hours per year. One American in three works more than 50 hours a week. It is the rare European who matches those hours. Vacations are generous for Europeans, about 5 weeks, as are holidays. Employees have 23 paid holidays in Britain, 25 in France, and Sweden has 30. In the United States, depending in which state you reside, you get 4 to 10 holidays.⁴⁸ In sum, Americans work much harder than Europeans.

But social welfare is expensive. It requires high taxes to support generous government spending. This, in turn, hinders economic growth. So, too, does maintaining tight income equality. If you tell someone that he will be able to earn only a certain amount, and no more than that, he does not have an incentive to work hard (although he does have an incentive to move to America, where he can become rich). Slow economic growth and high unemployment is known as “Eurosclerosis,” and the disease shows no signs of being cured anytime soon. The lack of economic growth results in a lack of funds for research and development in comparison to the United States. And so, the problem feeds upon itself.

The third reason for the EU’s inability to challenge the United States is that the EU states suffer from an aging and changing workforce, and both elements have the potential to hobble its already slow economic growth. The major European economies of Britain, France, Germany, and Italy will need several million new workers over the next fifteen years to fill positions vacated by retiring ones. Presently, those workers do not exist because fewer European women are having children, and this “baby bust” ultimately will make it impossible to sustain the generous welfare benefits provided by European governments.

In fact, declining European birthrates are affecting Europe as profoundly as any event in the past, even the Black Death of the 1300s or the World Wars. Simply put, Europeans are not replacing themselves. Europe’s total fertility rate is about 1.4, far below the 2.1 births per female necessary to sustain a population (what demographers call the replacement level). In fact, no Western European country has a replacement-level birthrate. In 2004, Germany’s birthrate was 1.3, Italy’s 1.2, Spain’s 1.1, and France’s 1.7 (and France’s high birthrate was largely due to its Muslim population).⁴⁹ The difference between replacement-level birthrates and those of Germany, or Italy, or Spain is the difference between a stable population size and one that decreases by one-third with each generation. Nothing like this has occurred in Europe absent wars or plagues. It is truly without parallel in history.

Consequently, present welfare benefits are unsustainable given the population growth estimates for European states. In Europe, there are now thirty-five people of retirement age for every one hundred of working age and—based on current trends—there will be seventy-five pensioners for every one hundred workers—by 2050.⁵⁰ As Table 1.6 shows, the United Nations estimates that by 2015, Europe’s population will decline by more than 11.3 million, and if Europe’s current fertility rate persists until 2020, this will result in 88 million fewer Europeans by the end of the century.⁵¹ Ethnic Europeans are dying out.

There are two major solutions to this problem, but they are unlikely to be realized. The first is to generate greater economic growth. Of course, this is easier said than done. Germany, the largest economy, has restrictive labor laws that are difficult to change. Another boost to economic growth would be to

Table 1.6 United Nations Population Estimates

| Country | Population (in Millions, Medium Variant) | | | |
|----------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|
| | 2000 | 2015 | 2025 | 2050 |
| China | 1,275 | 1,402 | 1,445 | 1,395 |
| EU (25) ^a | 452 | 457 | 456 | 431 |
| France | 59 | 63 | 64 | 64 |
| Germany | 82 | 82 | 82 | 79 |
| India | 1,017 | 1,246 | 1,369 | 1,531 |
| Japan | 127 | 127 | 123 | 110 |
| Russia | 146 | 133 | 124 | 101 |
| United Kingdom | 59 | 61 | 63 | 66 |
| U.S. | 285 | 330 | 358 | 409 |
| World | 6,070 | 7,197 | 7,851 | 8,918 |

Note: China excludes Hong Kong and Macao.

^a EU (25): Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

Source: Data from United Nations Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision*, (New York: The United Nations, 2002).

reform their social welfare, education, and tax systems to encourage people to work longer hours and retire later. But, at this time, there is no indication that Europe will take these steps. Desire for change is not coming from the bottom up—the people are not demanding change in governmental politics because such a change would require sacrifice by present workers, pensioners, and other benefit recipients. Similarly, it is not coming from the top down—governments or Brussels imposing change—because this would require that leaders break their promises of protection to their populations.

Second, Europe could permit more legal immigration to provide workers, who then may be taxed to maintain welfare payments to Europe’s aging population. However, most of the immigrants are likely to be Muslims coming from North Africa and the Middle East. Europe has had difficulty assimilating the Muslims it has already allowed into Europe, principally as workers beginning the 1960s, with a second wave coming in the 1980s as economic and political conditions deteriorated in North Africa. There are some 1 million Muslims in the Netherlands, 6 million in France, and about 13 million in the EU as a whole.

The different political and cultural practices of Muslim immigrants, whether they are old or new, are a quandary for Europe. The murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in November 2004 by a Muslim fundamentalist,

who nonetheless had lived in the Netherlands for most of his life, was a great shock to Europe. In the Netherlands alone there have been constant threats by fundamentalists against other politicians like Geert Wilders, Amsterdam mayor Job Cohen, and Ayaan Hirsi Ali—a Somali-born member of parliament who collaborated with van Gogh on a film about Islam's treatment of women. Indeed, a December 2004 report by the Dutch domestic intelligence service concluded that many thousands of Muslim youths in the Netherlands are already radicalized, and thus the pool of recruits for terrorist actions is so large that many future attacks may be expected.⁵² In October and November 2005, the widespread riots that plagued France in what has been called *l'Intafada* by some or the beginning of the Eurabian civil war by others was conducted mostly by sons and grandsons of Muslim immigrants. The French were wholly unprepared for the scale and potency of the unrest and this caused them to fear a Muslim fifth column in Europe.

These threats and acts of violence point to the difficulty of matching the goals of European governments with the political realities of a young, Muslim population. Indeed, there are many Islamist movements operating and growing in Europe, including *al Qaeda* and *Al-Takfir wa al-Hijra* (excommunication and exile), a brutal terrorist organization active throughout Europe that is every bit as dangerous as *al Qaeda*.⁵³

Consequently, there is a tension between sustaining European political and cultural values and economic growth based on a Muslim workforce that is becoming more conscious of the political goals of Islamic fundamentalism. As their numbers grow, so will the political power of Muslims in Europe. In a December 2004 report, the National Intelligence Council found that about fifteen out of one hundred Europeans are Muslims, and by 2020 it estimates that as many as thirty-five out of one hundred may be Muslim, or as few as twenty-three out of one hundred.⁵⁴ In either case, whether Muslims are one-third or one-quarter of the population or somewhere in between, it would mean a fundamental change in European society. If these trends do not change, Europe will have a Muslim majority population by the end of the twenty-first century.

Even if the EU solves its economic and immigration problems, it remains hindered by its cumbersome decision-making process that retards united and collective action. There are strong tensions between centralized decision making in Brussels and the respective capitals of the member states—Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, or Rome. The interests of individual countries often do not overlap with Brussels's interests, and this is a major source of friction. Too much centralized decision making leads to a "democracy gap" in the EU—the key decision-making bodies in the EU are not directly elected by European citizens. In 2005, the overwhelming votes against the proposed EU Constitution in France and the Netherlands are indications of a major disconnect between Brussels and the European people. Increasingly, Europeans do not want to be told what to do by Brussels; Poland did not escape the grip of Moscow's leaders

to have it replaced by those in Brussels. But too little central control leads to disorganization, repetition of efforts, and policy confusion.

Thus, for the EU to sustain positive growth rates—the numbers that would allow it to have an economy that could challenge the United States—it must steer between the Scylla of major economic, policy, and decision-making reforms and the Charybdis of Muslim immigration. Thus far, there is no evidence that the EU can conduct such a feat of navigation.

The Threat from Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism: Dangerous but Manageable The terrorist attacks of 9/11 demonstrated the danger the terrorist group *al Qaeda* poses to the United States. In the wake of that attack, the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which sheltered *al Qaeda*, and to put great pressure on *al Qaeda*'s members and finances throughout the world. Great progress has been made in the war against *al Qaeda*. The United States has been successful at undermining that terrorist network, the Department of Homeland Security has been created to aid the defense of American territory, and, most importantly, no attacks have occurred on American soil since 9/11. But the war on terrorism is at root a war of ideas. As Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld explained in 2003, "all elements of national power: military, financial, diplomatic, law enforcement, intelligence and public diplomacy," are necessary to win the war on terror. But, he added, "to win the war on terror, we must also win the war of ideas." Military, diplomatic, and other elements are necessary "to stop terrorists before they can terrorize," but "even better, we must lean forward and stop them from becoming terrorists in the first place."⁵⁵ Winning the war of ideas is critical to keeping people from becoming terrorists.

Americans need to remember that their country has fought and won wars of ideas before. World War II was a war of ideas between liberalism and fascism. The Cold War took the war of ideas to new heights. Few Americans comprehend how attractive communism was in a Europe destroyed by World War II. Communism seemed to offer a better life and, in many countries, such as France and Italy, the communists had a solid record of fighting the Germans. Nonetheless, the United States engaged communism in a war of ideas and won.

It can also win the physical battle with the few extremists in the Islamic world who are motivated by a contorted fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. The majority of Muslims are not fundamentalists, and in fact reject fundamentalism as simply wrong. Leading Sunni scholars have stigmatized fundamentalism as aberrant—a perversion of the religion. Even to most Muslims who are fundamentalists, *al Qaeda* is seen as a deviant group that is wrong to use terrorism as a weapon against innocent civilians, including their coreligionists (many of *al Qaeda*'s victims have been Muslim), governments in the Islamic world, and the West.

To combat *al Qaeda*, the United States must take the following actions. First, it has to stress that the war on terrorism is not conducted by the West against Muslims, but is a struggle between *al Qaeda*, which wants to take the Muslim world into the twelfth century, and those who want to bring it into the twenty-first. Americans must realize that we have many allies in the Muslim world. Like the Cold War, the war against terrorism is not a war we fight alone. The United States has many allies not only in Europe and north-east Asia, like Japan but, more importantly for this struggle, it has numerous allies in the Muslim world. In fact, when one examines the U.S. allies in the region, what is remarkable is the amount of support that Washington has among the governments in the Middle East. The major allies of the United States at the end of the Cold War remain—Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey are strong allies. Moreover, from Morocco to the Gulf, most of the smaller states in the Arab world are allied with the United States. Jordan is a reliable ally, as is Morocco. This provides the United States with a powerful foundation from which to exert influence within and outside of the Middle East. Even Libya has made a dramatic about-face. In 2003, it renounced its weapons of mass destruction program and now is changing from being one of the most anti-American countries to one that is beginning to support the United States and the West as it seeks to integrate into the global economy. Indeed, of all the states in the Middle East, only Iran and Syria remain outside the orb of U.S. influence. From Morocco to Indonesia, the vast majority of the countries of the Arab and, more broadly, Muslim world are allied with the United States.

Second, the United States must have the will to conduct this war. It will be a long conflict with setbacks, including other terrorist attacks against American targets at home and abroad. The American people need to be steeled for a long campaign—one that George W. Bush will pass on to his successor, and the one after that. There were nine U.S. presidents during the Cold War, and we should expect a like number in this campaign.

To its credit, the administration is taking many of the right steps and has labored assiduously to place pressure on *al Qaeda* as rapidly as possible to weaken it. It has evicted *al Qaeda* from its training camps in Afghanistan and labored to cut off *al Qaeda*'s considerable financial resources. It is attempting to extinguish all of the known cells at once, from Germany to Kenya to Malaysia, by placing pressure on the governments.

There will be no quick and easy victory against *al Qaeda* and its related and spin-off terrorist groups, but there will be victory. It will not be like the end of World War II, where there was a surrender ceremony on the decks of the USS *Missouri*; this does not happen when terrorist groups are defeated—they usually just wither away. This might happen as terrorist organizations splinter into impotence and gradually die as the social and political conditions in the Muslim world change, making *al Qaeda* and similar groups political

dinosaurs in the age of mammals. Or perhaps—much like the Provisional IRA—former terrorists could melt into established political life of some countries in the Islamic world.

The American victory in the war against *al Qaeda* begins by recognizing that terrorist organizations not only can be defeated but, indeed, often are. Almost all of the left-wing terrorist organizations of the Cold War were defeated—from the Weather Underground in the United States to the Japanese Red Army, the Red Army faction in Germany, and the Red Brigades in Italy. The Peruvians defeated the Shining Path. The British fought the IRA to a standstill. The French defeated Corsican nationalists and the communist terrorist group Direct Action. The Algerians have successfully suppressed the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), an especially vicious terrorist organization that killed well over one hundred thousand people between 1990 and 2000 in Algeria and France.⁵⁶ In 1994, a GIA terrorist thankfully was thwarted from flying an Air France aircraft into the Eiffel Tower—an attack that served as a template for the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Spain has greatly weakened the Basque separatist terrorist group ETA. The Turks have emasculated the PKK (now called New PKK). The Israelis defeated the PLO, as did the Jordanians. And while the Israelis have not destroyed the three major terrorist groups, Fatah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, they have been extremely effective at penetrating these groups to prevent attacks. Attacks have declined 60 percent between 2003 and 2004—there were only six suicide bombings in Israel and eight in the occupied territories—and the Israelis believe they foiled 114 planned suicide bombings in 2004.⁵⁷ Reflecting on the decline of these groups over the last few years, the Israel internal security organization, Shin Bet, estimates that it prevents 90 percent of attacks before they occur. The Egyptians have broken the back of the Islamic Group and of Egyptian Islamic Jihad. So while it is true that *al Qaeda* should not be underestimated—it is motivated, competent, and resilient—it does have vulnerabilities and can be defeated, just as many terrorist groups before it were.

Should America Dominate the World? Yes, It Is a Force for Good in the World and Far Better than Any Realistic Alternative

A great amount of good comes from American dominance, although that good is little acknowledged, even by Americans. In this section, I will demonstrate the good that comes from the American Empire. Specifically, it provides stability, allows democracy to spread, furthers economic prosperity, and makes possible humanitarian assistance to countries beset by natural and other disasters. The United States has an opportunity to do an enormous amount of good for itself and the entire world. Realizing this good requires that Americans be bold, that they lead. In return, Americans enjoy the benefits that flow to a leader.

But as professors teach in Economics 101, there is no free lunch. No one gets anything for free; everything has a cost. The American Empire is no exception. I want to make it clear that the benefits that the world and the United States enjoy come with a cost. Leadership requires that the United States incur costs and run risks not borne by other countries. These costs can be stark and brutal, and they have to be faced directly by proponents of the American Empire. It means that some Americans will die in the service of their country. These are the costs. They are considerable. Every American should be conscious of them. It is equally the case that Americans should be aware of the benefits they enjoy. I believe that the substantial benefits are worth the costs.

Stability

Peace, like good health, is not often noticed, but certainly is missed when absent. Throughout history, peace and stability have been a major benefit of empires. In fact, *pax Romana* in Latin means the Roman peace, or the stability brought about by the Roman Empire. Rome's power was so overwhelming that no one could challenge it successfully for hundreds of years. The result was stability within the Roman Empire. Where Rome conquered, peace, law, order, education, a common language, and much else followed. That was true of the British Empire (*pax Britannica*) too.

So it is with the United States today. Peace and stability are major benefits of the American Empire. The fact that America is so powerful actually reduces the likelihood of major war. Scholars of international politics have found that the presence of a dominant state in international politics actually reduces the likelihood of war because weaker states, including even great powers, know that it is unlikely that they could challenge the dominant state and win. They may resort to other mechanisms or tactics to challenge the dominant country, but are unlikely to do so directly. This means that there will be no wars between great powers. At least, not until a challenger (certainly China) thinks it can overthrow the dominant state (the United States). But there will be intense security competition—both China and the United States will watch each other closely, with their intelligence communities increasingly focused on each other, their diplomats striving to ensure that countries around the world do not align with the other, and their militaries seeing the other as their principal threat. This is not unusual in international politics but, in fact, is its “normal” condition. Americans may not pay much attention to it until a crisis occurs. But right now states are competing with one another. This is because international politics does not sleep; it never takes a rest.

Spreading Our Form of Government

The American Empire gives the United States the ability to spread its form of government, democracy, and other elements of its ideology of liberalism. Using American power to spread democracy can be a source of much good

for the countries concerned as well as for the United States. This is because democracies are more likely to align themselves with the United States and be sympathetic to its worldview. In addition, there is a chance—small as it may be—that once states are governed democratically, the likelihood of conflict will be reduced further. Natan Sharansky makes the argument that once Arabs are governed democratically, they will not wish to continue the conflict against Israel.⁵⁸ This idea has had a big effect on President George W. Bush. He has said that Sharansky's worldview “is part of my presidential DNA.”⁵⁹

Whether democracy in the Middle East would have this impact is debatable. Perhaps democratic Arab states would be more opposed to Israel, but nonetheless, their people would be better off. The United States has brought democracy to Afghanistan, where 8.5 million Afghans, 40 percent of them women, voted in October 2004, even though remnant Taliban forces threatened them. Elections were held in Iraq in January 2005, the first free elections in that country's history. The military power of the United States put Iraq on the path to democracy. Democracy has spread to Latin America, Europe, Asia, the Caucasus, and now even the Middle East is becoming increasingly democratic. They may not yet look like Western-style democracies, but democratic progress has been made in Morocco, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, the Palestinian Authority, and Egypt. The march of democracy has been impressive.

Although democracies have their flaws, simply put, democracy is the best form of government. Winston Churchill recognized this over half a century ago: “Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.” The United States should do what it can to foster the spread of democracy throughout the world.

Economic Prosperity

Economic prosperity is also a product of the American Empire. It has created a Liberal International Economic Order (LIEO)—a network of worldwide free trade and commerce, respect for intellectual property rights, mobility of capital and labor markets—to promote economic growth. The stability and prosperity that stems from this economic order is a global public good from which all states benefit, particularly states in the Third World. The American Empire has created this network not out of altruism but because it benefits the economic well-being of the United States. In 1998, the Secretary of Defense William Cohen put this well when he acknowledged that “economists and soldiers share the same interest in stability”; soldiers create the conditions in which the American economy may thrive, and “we are able to shape the environment [of international politics] in ways that are advantageous to us and that are stabilizing to the areas where we are forward deployed, thereby helping to promote investment and prosperity...business follows the flag.”⁶⁰

Perhaps the greatest testament to the benefits of the American Empire comes from Deepak Lal, a former Indian foreign service diplomat, researcher at the World Bank, prolific author, and now a professor who started his career confident in the socialist ideology of post-independence India that strongly condemned empire. He has abandoned the position of his youth and is now one of the strongest proponents of the American Empire. Lal has traveled the world and, in the course of his journeys, has witnessed great poverty and misery due to a lack of economic development. He realized that free markets were necessary for the development of poor countries, and this led him to recognize that his faith in socialism was wrong. Just as a conservative famously is said to be a liberal who has been mugged by reality, the hard “evidence and experience” that stemmed from “working and traveling in most parts of the Third World during my professional career” caused this profound change.⁶¹

Lal submits that the only way to bring relief to the desperately poor countries of the Third World is through the American Empire. Empires provide order, and this order “has been essential for the working of the benign processes of globalization, which promote prosperity.”⁶² Globalization is the process of creating a common economic space, which leads to a growing integration of the world economy through the increasingly free movement of goods, capital, and labor. It is the responsibility of the United States, Lal argues, to use the LIEO to promote the well-being of all economies, but particularly those in the Third World, so that they too may enjoy economic prosperity.

Humanitarian Missions

If someone were to ask “How many humanitarian missions has the United States undertaken since the end of the Cold War?”, most Americans probably have to think for a moment and then answer “three or four.” In fact, the number is much larger. The U.S. military has participated in over fifty operations since the end of the Cold War, and while wars like the invasion of Panama or Iraq received considerable attention from the world’s media, most of the fifty actions were humanitarian in nature and received almost no media attention in the United States.

The U.S. military is the earth’s “911 force”—it serves as the world’s police; it is the global paramedic, and the planet’s fire department. Whenever there is a natural disaster, earthquake, flood, typhoon, or tsunami, the United States assists the countries in need. In 1991, when flooding caused by cyclone Marian killed almost 140,000 people and left 5 million homeless in Bangladesh, the United States launched Operation Sea Angel to save stranded and starving people by supplying food, potable water, and medical assistance. U.S. forces are credited with saving over 200,000 lives in that operation.

In 1999, torrential rains and flash flooding in Venezuela killed 30,000 people and left 140,000 homeless. The United States responded with Operation Fundamental Response, which brought water purification and hygiene

equipment saving thousands. Also in 1999, Operation Strong Support aided Central Americans affected by Hurricane Mitch. That hurricane was the fourth-strongest ever recorded in the Atlantic and the worst natural disaster to strike Central America in the twentieth century. The magnitude of the devastation was tremendous, with about 10,000 people killed, 13,000 missing, and 2 million left homeless. It is estimated that 60 percent of the infrastructure in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala was destroyed. Again, the U.S. military came to the aid of the people affected. It is believed to have rescued about 700 people who otherwise would have died, while saving more from disease due to the timely arrival of medical supplies, food, water, blankets, and mobile shelters. In the next phase of Strong Support, military engineers rebuilt much of the infrastructure of those countries, including bridges, hospitals, roads, and schools.

On the day after Christmas in 2004, a tremendous earthquake and tsunami occurred in the Indian Ocean near Sumatra and killed 300,000 people. The United States was the first to respond with aid. More importantly, Washington not only contributed a large amount of aid, \$350 million, plus another \$350 million provided by American citizens and corporations, but also—only days after the tsunami struck—used its military to help those in need. About 20,000 U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines responded by providing water, food, medical aid, disease treatment and prevention, as well as forensic assistance to help identify the bodies of those killed. Only the U.S. military could have accomplished this Herculean effort, and it is important to keep in mind that its costs were separate from the \$350 million provided by the U.S. government and other money given by American citizens and corporations to relief organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent.

The generosity of the United States has done more to help the country fight the war on terror than almost any other measure. Before the tsunami, 80 percent of Indonesian opinion was opposed to the United States; after it, 80 percent had a favorable opinion of the United States. In October 2005, an enormous earthquake struck Kashmir, killing about 74,000 people and leaving 3 million homeless. The U.S. military responded immediately, diverting helicopters fighting the war on terror in nearby Afghanistan to bring relief as soon as possible. To help those in need, the United States provided about \$156 million in aid to Pakistan; and, as one might expect from those witnessing the generosity of the United States, it left a lasting impression about the United States. Whether in Indonesia or Kashmir, the money was well spent because it helped people in the wake of disasters, but it also had a real impact on the war on terror.

There is no other state or international organization that can provide these benefits. The United Nations certainly cannot because it lacks the military and economic power of the United States. It is riven with conflicts and major cleavages that divide the international body time and again on small matters

as well as great ones. Thus, it lacks the ability to speak with one voice on important issues and to act as a unified force once a decision has been reached. Moreover, it does not possess the communications capabilities or global logistical reach of the U.S. military. In fact, UN peacekeeping operations depend on the United States to supply UN forces. Simply put, there is no alternative to the leadership of the United States.

When the United States does not intervene, as it has not in the Darfur region of Sudan and eastern Chad, people die. In this conflict, Arab Muslims belonging to government forces, or a militia called the Jingawit, are struggling against Christian and animist black Africans who are fighting for independence. According to the State Department, 98,000 to 181,000 people died between March 2003 and March 2005 as a result of this struggle. The vast majority of these deaths were caused by violence, disease, and malnutrition associated with the conflict.

Conclusion

The American Empire is fully in keeping with the Founding Fathers' dreams for America. America has never been a shrinking violet, hiding from the world. Rather, it has been a bold country, making a place for itself in international politics since its inception. The empire Americans have worked hard to create can last well into the future, but only if the American people want it to persevere. As I have argued in this chapter, the American Empire should be valued by the American people largely because of the enormous good it does for America and the honorable and goodhearted actions it undertakes for the world. It is equally true that this good is not often appreciated by the rest of the world, or sometimes even in the United States.

Despite its benefits, Americans have to recognize that they will be criticized, and that this is simply a consequence of its power. A half a century ago, the great British historian Arnold Toynbee hit this point precisely when he wrote of American power: "The giant's sheer size is always getting the giant into trouble with people of normal stature."⁶³ Toynbee writes of a Latin American diplomat who captured the point well: "When the United States sneezes, Latin America gets influenza."⁶⁴ Its actions will always have an exaggerated impact on smaller countries. And that fact alone will generate resentment and jealousy from those who are weaker.

No matter what, people will launch invective against the United States. Muslims will attack it as too atheistic and hedonistic; Europeans will assault it from the opposite direction, labeling the United States as too religious and crude. Mark Steyn, the witty columnist for the *Daily Telegraph*, wrote with great insight:

Fanatical Muslims despise America because it's all lapdancing and gay porn; the secular Europeans despise America because it's all born-again

Christians hung up on abortion....America is also too isolationist, except when it is too imperialist. And even its imperialism is too vulgar and arriviste to appeal to real imperialists....To the mullahs, America is the Great Satan, a wily seducer; to the Gaullists, America is the Great Cretin, a culture so self-evidently moronic that only stump-tooth inbred Appalachian lardbutts could possibly fall for it....Too Christian, too Godless, too isolationist, too imperialist, too seductive, too cretinous.⁶⁵

The key question for the future is not how Muslims, Europeans, or others will perceive the American Empire. Rather, it is "How should Americans want our empire to be remembered?" As one that fostered democracy in places where freedom was unknown—from Afghanistan and Iraq to Chile and Argentina to Germany and Japan. As one that developed respect for free market values and institutionalized these values in organizations like the World Trade Organization. Did it make mistakes? Of course, it did. Did Americans have to sacrifice their lives? Unfortunately, many did. But when the sun sets on the American Empire, we will acknowledge that the world was the better for having it.

Notes

1. Authors who are proponents of isolationism include Ted Galen Carpenter, *A Search for Enemies: America's Alliances after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1992); Ivan Eland, *The Empire Has No Clothes: U.S. Foreign Policy Exposed* (Oakland, Calif.: The Independent Institute, 2004); Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press, and Harvey M. Sapolsky, "Come Home, America: The Strategy of Restraint in the Face of Temptation," *International Security* 21 (4): 5–48.
2. See, for example, Robert J. Art, "Geopolitics Updated: The Strategy of Selective Engagement," *International Security* 23 (3): 79–113; Stephen Van Evera, "Why Europe Matters, Why the Third World Doesn't: American Grand Strategy after the Cold War," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 13 (2): 1–51. Christopher Layne argues for a grand strategy of "offshore balancing," which is related conceptually to selective engagement, although the policies derived from it may be substantially different from selective engagement. Christopher Layne, "From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: America's Future Grand Strategy," *International Security* 22 (1): 86–124.
3. Key articles making this argument include: Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); Samuel P. Huntington, "Why International Primacy Matters," *International Security* 17 (4): 68–83; William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24 (1): 5–41. Also see Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70 (1): 23–33. For the argument that primacy or "preponderance" motivated the grand strategy of the United States at the beginning of the Cold War see Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992).
4. My definition of empire is heavily influenced by George Liska's exceptional study of the American empire. His book is as relevant now as when it was written over a generation ago. See Liska, *Imperial America: The International Politics of Primacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), pp. 9–10.
5. Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), p. x.
6. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1938), Vol. 28, p. 520.

7. For a comprehensive discussion of Jefferson's view of the United States in the world see Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). On September 19, 1803, Jefferson characterized the United States as an "empire for liberty" in a missive to Andrew Jackson. See Adrienne Koch, *Jefferson and Madison: The Great Collaboration* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), p. 244. Jefferson's 1805 remarks about the United States as "a chosen country" and "rising nation" are quoted in Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), p. 21.
8. Jefferson to James Madison, April 27, 1809, from *The Thomas Jefferson Papers Series I: General Correspondence 1651-1827*, Library of Congress, image 1110.
9. Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1999), Part II, p. 145.
10. Reginald C. Stuart, *United States Expansionism and British North America, 1775-1871* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 13. Stuart quotes correspondence from George Mason to Richard Henry Lee on July 21, 1778. What is particularly interesting about it is that it is typically American. America's security requires complete dominance: "The Union is yet incomplete, and will be so, until the inhabitants of all the territory from Cape Breton to the Mississippi are included in it: while Great Britain possesses Canada and West Florida, she will be continually setting the Indians upon us, and while she holds the harbors of Augustine and Halifax, especially the latter, we shall not be able to protect our trade or coasts from her depredations." Stuart, *United States Expansionism and British North America, 1775-1871*, p. 8.
11. In an exceptional book, Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton, eminent scholars of American history, submit that while many citizens believe the expansion of their country's power was done for defensive reasons; e.g., defending American liberty, the historical reality is that the expansion occurred due to the desire to expand American power. See Anderson and Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America 1500-2000* (New York: Viking, 2005).
12. See Warren Zimmermann, *The First Great Triumph: How Five Americans Made Their Country a World Power* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002).
13. Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams* (New York: AMS Press, 1970), Vol. 4, p. 438.
14. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (New York: Modern Library, 1937), pp. 587-588.
15. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. George Lawrence (New York: Harper Perennial, 1988), Vol. 1, pp. 412-413.
16. Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 72.
17. I assume, of course, that no completely unexpected catastrophe occurs—massive earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, a terrible epidemic, or some other event—that would greatly damage the United States and destroy its ability to maintain its preponderance.
18. In fiscal year (October 1-September 30) 2005 it spent approximately \$400 billion, and in fiscal year 2006, about \$420 billion. This figure does not count supplemental appropriations to fight the War on Terrorism or the war in Iraq. From initial deployments of troops in the fall and winter of 2002 through the end of fiscal year 2004 (September 30, 2004), the United States spent \$102 billion in Iraq, at an average cost of \$4.8 billion a month. If the spending of other governmental agencies, such as the CIA, is included, the amount would be greater, probably by several billion dollars. The United States spent \$39.8 billion in Afghanistan from the October 2001 invasion to overthrow the Taliban government until September 30, 2004.
19. Newt Gingrich, "Remarks Delivered at the Center for Strategic and International Studies," quoted in Ivan Eland, *The Empire Has No Clothes* (Oakland, Calif.: The Independent Institute, 2004), p. 184.
20. Steven Kosiak, "Historical and Projected Funding for Defense: Presentation of the FY 2005 Request in Tables and Charts," Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, February 2004, Table 2.
21. Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Interview with Tempo, United States Department of Defense, Sunday, January 16, 2005, <http://dod.mil/transcripts/2004/tr20050116-depsecdef1986.html>.
22. Barry R. Posen, "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony," *International Security* 28 (1): 5-46.
23. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, "Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Holds Joint Press Conference in Indonesia," Jakarta, Indonesia, January 16, 2005, <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2005/tr20050116-depsecdef1989.html>.
24. Ibid.
25. An excellent overview of NATO's crises during the Cold War as well as its post-Cold War missions is provided by Lawrence S. Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance* (New York: Praeger, 2004).
26. Data are drawn from the CIA's World Factbook. GDP for European Union member states is drawn from the European Union: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ee.html>; and for the United States: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/us.html>. The fact that the U.S. estimate is a year behind may actually mean that in 2004 the United States had a larger economy given that the CIA estimates the EU had a 1 percent real growth rate and the United States had a 3.1 percent real growth rate in 2003, which means that the economies are the same size.
27. Niall Ferguson, "Our Currency, Your Problem," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 13 March 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/13/magazine/13WWLN.html>.
28. Ibid.
29. Michael E. Porter, et al., *The Global Competitiveness Report 2004-2005* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2004), p. xii.
30. Deepak Lal, *In Praise of Empires: Globalization and Order* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 69. Emphasis in original.
31. Porter, et al., *The Global Competitiveness Report 2004-2005*, p. 154.
32. Paul Kennedy, "Empire without 'Overstretch'," *Wilson Quarterly* 26 (3), online edition.
33. Ibid.
34. Each of these problems is delineated and solutions are offered in *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, 2004).
35. Powell is quoted by Joseph S. Nye Jr., "You Can't Get Here from There," *The New York Times*, November 29, 2004, online edition.
36. Oleg Kalugin recounts his experience as a KGB agent posing as a student in *Spymaster: The Highest-Ranking KGB Officer Ever to Break His Silence* (London: Smith Gryphon, 1994).
37. Joyce Howard Price, "World Speaks Our Language and Attends Our Colleges," *The Washington Times*, December 29, 2004, online edition.
38. Although film and television are wonderful popular entertainment, Americans and others often forget that America is the home to 1,700 symphony orchestras, 7.5 million people attend the opera each year, and 500 million people visit America's museums.
39. David R. Sands, "America Enjoys View from the Top," *Washington Times*, 27 December 2004, online edition.
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The Case Against the American Empire

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Introduction

The Issues

Since the Cold War’s end, the United States has dominated international politics. It is—as international relations scholars put it—a “global hegemon.” Indeed, in recent years in books and articles about U.S. foreign policy it has become commonplace to see the United States described as the most powerful actor on the international stage since the Roman Empire was at its zenith. This doubtless is true. The central question I address is whether the United States should seek to maintain its current primacy in world politics and use this preeminence to construct a new American Empire. At first blush, this may seem an odd question to ask. After all, since the ancient Greek historian Thucydides wrote his classic *History of the Peloponnesian War*, realists have understood that international politics is fundamentally about power. If this is true—and it is—how can it be argued that the United States might possess *too much* power for its own good?

The events of the last five years suggest the answer. In the aftermath of 9/11, Americans—citizens and policy-makers alike—asked repeatedly, “Why do they hate us?” President George W. Bush answered by claiming that the United States was the target of *al Qaeda*’s terrorist strikes because radical Islamicists hate America’s freedom. More thoughtful analysts have pointed out that it is U.S. policies in the Middle East and Persian Gulf that caused the terrorists to attack the United States. In March 2003, the United States invaded Iraq. In this endeavor it was opposed not only by Russia and China, but also by long-time allies like Germany and France. Around the world, public opinion—which largely had been sympathetic to the United States in 9/11’s wake—turned sharply against the United States. Increasingly, the United States has come to be perceived globally as an 800-pound gorilla on steroids—out of control, and dangerous to others. Far from being regarded as a “benevolent hegemon,” America has come to be seen as a kind of global Lone Ranger, indifferent to its allies, ignoring international institutions like the United Nations, and acting in defiance of international law and norms. In