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# Memories of Leadership

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There have been moments in history when America led because of what it did and how effectively it did it, rather than because of what it said and how forcefully it said it. The aftermath of World War II was such a moment. The vision shaped the policies, even though, admittedly, the policies eventually changed the vision. Neither was welcomed readily, at home or abroad, and neither was enforced easily, then or in subsequent years. Altogether, the ever-more-ambitious goals attached to an increasingly global vision proved to be significantly more costly and painful than had been anticipated. But in the end, the policies worked and the vision was fulfilled, to our benefit as well as to the benefit of others.

The postwar leadership expected from President Truman and his administration was demanding. The United States had to be, and was, decisive and assertive. Memories of 1919 lingered. Europe was too important to be left to the Europeans and their failed diplomatic maneuvers. Decisions would have to come from the United States, and in the United States they would have to be made at the top—when announcing a (Truman) doctrine that carried the president's name or a (Marshall) aid program that bore the name of the heroic cabinet member. The foreign policy men surrounding Truman were all leaders in their own right: they stood where they did because of what they had achieved in the past, and they acted as they did because of what they believed about the future. Yet, even as the best and the brightest of their time, they remained the President's men. Chal-

lenges to power carried a price, as then-Secretary of State James Byrnes learned in early 1947, and so did the evidence of failure, as General MacArthur also learned three years later after his disastrous decision to bring the Korean War closer to China.

The Truman leadership was also bold and innovative. Its ability to think anew took it away from U.S. traditions and established patterns of international relations. Thus, when devising the mechanics of Europe's economic recovery and the dynamics of its political reconciliation, the United States turned its back on the nation's history of disentanglement from Europe and launched policies that were to force the nations of Europe to change the course of their own history. At one and the same time, these policies of reconstruction and reconciliation were preempting the distant memories of George Washington's bid for distance from the quagmire of Europe during the Napoleonic wars, as well as George Clémenceau's bid for revenge on Germany after World War I.

Boldness and innovation also made these policies generous, but such generosity was not extended to such a point as to deny the nation's interests. Reading the early critics who complained of the administration's "idealism" illustrates the shortcomings of theorists and pundits. When ending the war in the Pacific with two atomic bombs, drawing the line in Europe and Asia with unprecedented peacetime commitments, or joining the fray in the former European empires, the Truman administration rarely lost sight of the nation's interests. How ironic it is that it was up to the next school of revisionist historians to unveil, one generation later, the reality of the U.S. concern with its own interests.<sup>1</sup> Who dares think of what the world might be like today had the United States not been willing to make the needed commitments and provide the indispensable leadership—at least to and for those parts of the world that mattered most to the United States? When agreeing to unprecedented levels of aid to Europe, when providing that aid in the form of grants, when linking these grants to the development of cooperative institutions, the United States became committed to a redistribution of its power and, by implication, its influence as well. When making the security of many European states, and later, many states in Asia, an American responsibility, when making that responsibility credible with a nearly unlimited deployment of ground forces, and when allowing these forces to engage in costly wars of which bad memories still linger in the nation's psyche, U.S. leadership exposed the absurdity of those who had thought that American power could not be trusted because the will to endure the pain it caused could not last.

Although the general public hardly showed interest in, or comprehension of, initiatives that were introduced at a quick pace between 1947 and 1951, the persistently "new" Truman administration kept these initiatives sufficiently integrated to make the vision comprehensive. No policy, however bold it might be, and no crisis, however revolutionary it might seem, could "hijack" the policy

debate long enough to derail further decisions on other issues. Throughout, therefore, the Truman leadership relied on economic, political, and military instruments to combine institution-building and bilateral relations as the two sides of the same security coin, and understood the connectiveness of developments in Asia and developments in Europe.

Finally, even as U.S. postwar leadership proved to be domineering when imposing its will on others, it remained flexible when necessary. That the Truman vision would have seemed as erratic as it was for so many years was due, in part at least, to the adjustments that were made along the way: fighting a land war in Asia it had dismissed as “sheer folly,” but respecting the constraints that could keep it “limited” (also a new concept in American history at the time); developing an integrated military organization with its European allies, which made a sustained and substantial deployment of U.S. forces in Europe inevitable, notwithstanding earlier pledges to the contrary; and even giving containment the global dimension which it had been explicitly designed to eschew when first launched.

Over time, the qualities shown by such U.S. leadership produced the policies and devised the architecture out of which victory ensued. Allies accepted these policies and moved into that architecture (or resisted the temptation to move into alternative structures) because they believed in the full range of commitments that were made by the United States to their recovery and security. In other words, there was a point for other states to follow U.S. leadership because there was a shared appreciation of its endpoints. Adversaries, too, respected U.S. leadership, including a continued American presence in Europe and a growing involvement elsewhere, because they respected the totality of the U.S. power that underlined them, even when they deeply disapproved of the manner in which such power was used or denied. In short, there was strength behind the American commitment to containment, and there was a common will to use such strength if the boundaries of permissible behavior were ignored; there was a vision behind containment, and there was a shared ability to enforce elements of that vision on the Western side of the line containment had drawn.

These memories need not carry a tone of triumphalism over what was achieved and seems to have been forgotten, but they can convey a sense of nostalgia over what used to be but seems to be no more. That William Jefferson Clinton is no Harry S. Truman does not only reflect the personal differences and experiences between the two men; no less, and possibly more, significant are the differences that separate the nation (and its people) over which Clinton presides after the Cold War, relative to the nation (and its people) which his distant predecessor inherited after World War II. These differences include the changed structural conditions of a world in which American power is now without peer and without immediate challenger, and the role of institutions that now regulate the behavior of nation-states whose sovereignty has been eroded steadily by the consequences

of membership.<sup>2</sup>

## II

The overwhelming amount of power accumulated by the United States during the Cold War and the impressive quality of its leadership since World War II were displayed most impressively during the Gulf War in January 1991. Since that time, when the world was first exposed to the unipolar consequences of the Soviet collapse, there have been only two moments of U.S. activism in the world. The first such moment occurred during the three-month transition that followed President George Bush's loss in the presidential elections of November 1992. As the tradition has it, presidential transitions demand a will for abstinence from the outgoing president and pleas of continuity from the president-elect, and departures from this tradition have been not only rare but ineffective. Thus, in 1968, President Johnson's hope to begin talks on strategic arms limitations was motivated by his consuming eagerness to leave office with some global statement of hope. Only the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had aborted the then-scheduled summit meeting of September 30, 1968 with Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin. After the election, however, Nixon's strong objections to any U.S.-Soviet summit before his inauguration were communicated in explicit terms in Washington as well as in Moscow, and ended both Johnson's efforts and Kosygin's responsiveness. As compensation of sort, Johnson was later "authorized" to urge the government in Saigon to accept an offer of compromise with Hanoi before his departure on January 20, 1969, on the explicit understanding that such an offer was "meaningless" anyway.<sup>1</sup> Eight years later, in November 1976, Henry Kissinger seemed to remember these conditions as he did little during the transition to Jimmy Carter which might be seen as distracting from, or obstructing, the "high expectations and ambitious goals" that surrounded the new president's hopes for a new beginning.<sup>2</sup>

In November 1992, however, George Bush showed little inhibition. Had there been any complaints from the President-elect, the outgoing president and his advisers would have simply ignored them: Bush's apparent determination to make last-minute foreign policy decisions was probably motivated by his conviction that Clinton was, and would remain, unable to understand the world, let alone manage it, with the same effectiveness as Bush knew he could and most Americans agreed he had. Accordingly, Bush spent his last weeks in office trying to edge against future policy reversals and errors by imposing on the president-elect decisions that he made and even began to enforce on his behalf.

Thus, the votes had barely been counted when Bush was ending the time-out which he had taken from the world during the previous twelve months: deploying U.S. forces in Somalia to fight against starvation at last; signing a trade

pact with Canada and Mexico; escalating a trade conflict over farm issues with the European allies to pressure them into a quicker agreement on the then-ongoing round of trade negotiations; going to Moscow in order to sign an agreement for deep missile cuts; sending a flotilla near Haiti, mainly to control the flow of refugees to Florida; raising the tone over Bosnia, but avoiding any tangible action; tightening the arms ban on Iran and striking at Iraq on several occasions, up to the very last day of January 20, 1993, as a (bitter?) farewell message to a defiant (and gloating?) Saddam Hussein.<sup>3</sup> Over these and many other issues, and in a variety of international fora, Bush defined his successor's foreign policy agenda, and constrained many of the decisions that Clinton was to make in 1993.

A second recent burst of U.S. activism occurred in 1995. After the new Republican majority in Congress had denied President Clinton sufficient political space at home, Clinton sought relief abroad. Where else could the President still gain bipartisan support in Congress and public applause throughout the country? The world gave the politically embattled president the stage he needed for the many roles he assumed: appropriately somber when threatening foes that offend America's civility and threaten U.S. interests, convincingly joyful when endorsing peace initiatives that would save children from ongoing or future wars, and historically mature when welcoming at the White House rogue leaders now willing to proclaim their intention to change their ways.

In so doing, the president developed his foreign policy agenda as he had earlier masterminded his domestic agenda: at home, one majority per issue and one issue per majority; abroad, a commitment for each crisis, but only one crisis for each commitment. Wherever there was ground for asserting ownership of an initiative launched by others (on the Arab-Israeli peace process in Oslo, or elsewhere) or for launching an initiative of his own (on Northern Ireland or for some other issue), Clinton moved quickly and eloquently. An impending peace in the Middle East, a fiery speech in Dublin, a few tears over Rwanda, some Stingers against Iraq, a dialogue with Russia or China which could be equally defiant or conciliatory, a bit of lecturing about good governments south of the border or about sound economic management across the Pacific—and many trips, especially in Europe where he could enter history through the backdoor of his predecessors' achievements, from the fiftieth anniversary of the landing in Normandy, symbolically spent in May 1994 at Omaha Beach (and less appropriately in Moscow as well), through the fiftieth anniversary of the Marshall Plan (spent near Maastricht, where he could also connect with the aspirations of European unity signed into a treaty six years earlier), to the fiftieth anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty (when enlargement will be signed in Washington in April 1999, as a prologue to a grand historical farewell to the twentieth century).

Such an approach worked. In 1996, the statesmanship Clinton seemed to display in the world helped restore his image in the United States. Throughout,

however, these initiatives all suffered from the same disturbing flaw: they entailed a commitment that was made without a clear explanation of the interests that should have motivated them, and, no less importantly, without an appreciation of the capabilities needed to enforce them. The tempting “distraction” that was passing for leadership was the shoving and cajoling of allies and adversaries alike over small and large issues alike. In time, however, the temptation could prove fatal, as is often the case with foreign policies that are domestically motivated: with no opportunity too small to be ignored, no commitment might be deemed too big to avoid. What then passes for commitments and is praised as leadership is the illusion that new friendships can be built at no cost and enemies can be defeated without tears.

### III

Clinton’s management of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its enlargement is a case in point. As the Cold War was ending in 1989–1991, NATO started a remarkable transformation that showed an institutional will for changes in strategy, structure, and missions. These changes, however, did not aim at producing a “new” security structure, but confirmed instead that an alternative security system could be built with the same structure, however adapted it would have to be to the new post–Cold War era. In 1991, these adaptations were to be engineered by the United States with the allies. In 1993, Clinton was more sensitive to Europe’s will to play an expanded role of its own, and the adaptation of NATO was to be completed, therefore, by the allies with the United States. Only after the states of Europe had demonstrated their inability to do as much as they had intended did the United States revert to doing as much as Bush had envisioned, and more than Clinton had wanted. “Lessons” taught early, in Bosnia and elsewhere, were, therefore, lessons that had been learned before but were conveniently forgotten or deceptively ignored in 1993: the continued unavailability of European power made American power indispensable, and the persistent centrality of U.S. leadership made NATO central as well since NATO was the only multilateral conduit to Europe for both U.S. power and U.S. leadership.

How enlargement came to be a central feature of the required adaptation has been reviewed and interpreted at length elsewhere. “No issue,” wrote Richard Holbrooke, “has been more important, controversial or misunderstood than whether NATO should remain an alliance of its sixteen current members or expand, and if it expands, why, where, when and how.”<sup>1</sup> Not the least reason behind such public misunderstanding was that the two questions that should have been raised first—why and how—were addressed after the two questions that should have been raised last—where and when—in Central Europe, which included Poland but did not include any of the states that might be most offensive to

Russia, and in April 1999, when the President could thus make a blind date of history.<sup>2</sup> To delay or deny membership for the countries of Central Europe after enlargement had been pledged unequivocally would have verged on irresponsibility, as it would have endangered an institution acknowledged as essential to stability in Europe. The criteria for membership, endorsed by all 16 NATO members in December

1995, therefore justified a political decision (where and when) rather than defined a strategic choice (why and

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how). Even in the context of the then-impending ratification debate in the U.S. Senate, the President would still not tell why and how enlargement was to take place as his 1998 State of the Union Message gave NATO only ninety-two banal and inconsequential words. In February 1998, on the eve of the Senate vote for ratification, which fewer than twenty Senators were prepared to oppose, 61 percent of the American public approved of enlargement even though 68 percent admitted no or little knowledge of what enlargement was all about.<sup>3</sup>

Denied a case based on U.S. interests, enlargement from 16 to 19 members rests on a logic deemed so self-evident as to require no explanation: expand or disband. Pointedly, therefore, the logic of enlargement from 16 to 19 members can also be used to justify a pause before any further enlargement: concern over Russia's reaction, which conditioned the choice of the new members but stands in the way of other members in areas to which Moscow would be more sensitive; the pace of Europe's expansion, which left NATO with no alternative to stepping up its own enlargement but would now justify a delay pending Europe's completion of its own process started at last in March 1998; and the state of domestic support, which favored enlargement now but might turn against it should the costs, financial and human, prove to be more demanding than predicted. The ambiguity cultivated by Clinton before 1997 will lose its constructive qualities after 1999, when countries from the Baltics to the Balkans will complain of the predictably gloomy future which they fear in the absence of NATO membership. To bring in one of the Balkan states (including Romania) without the Baltic states would be viewed as conceding to a weak and divided Russia a right of veto over NATO decisions which Moscow did not have when the Soviet Union was strong and seemingly united. To bring in the Baltic states without Romania, however, would be to worsen Romania's isolation as EU membership for that state is unlikely to come for many years. To bring in both the Baltic states and Romania (not to mention others like Bulgaria and Slovakia) might deny NATO the cohesion it would need all the more explicitly as Russia's future response would remain itself

unclear for years to come.

The Gulf represents yet another demonstration of a U.S. failure of will and vision. Initially, the policy of dual containment was an elegant adjustment to the domestic needs faced by the new president. In opposition to Jimmy Carter, President Reagan's firmness toward Iran had coloured a revived American image in the world until the so-called Contra scandal had tarnished both the president's and the nation's image. Notwithstanding Reagan's accomodation of Iraq during and after its war with Iran, President Bush's will for war with Iraq when its armies invaded Kuwait, and his firmness after the end of the war, had also helped confirm U.S. primacy in the world. Such unconditional opposition to the Ayatollahs and to Saddam could not be changed by a young Democratic president. These states had at their helm rogue regimes whose demise was an unnegotiable prerequisite to a public willingness to accept a change in U.S. policies toward either. Thus evolved the rationale of "dual containment"—a rationale which neither suggests a geopolitical vision nor permits an effective political leadership.

As a geopolitical vision, dual containment assumed that the Persian Gulf would become both less important and less dangerous; that Western and Gulf countries would remain willing to accept U.S. leadership; and that broader trends in the region would continue to improve. In practice, these assumptions proved to be wrong as they progressively lost whatever justification they had after the Gulf war.<sup>4</sup> Now instead, many of yesteryear's allies find the strategy dangerous and self-defeating given the possible backlash from a demonized Iran, a disintegrating Iraq, and a rapidly deteriorating Arab-Israeli peace process. In early 1998, five months of U.S. diplomacy designed to convince Saddam "that the international community has [not] lost its will" had brought on board a relatively small group of nations relative to both the 1991 coalition and the reality of the threat—the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain and Portugal, Denmark and the Netherlands, Hungary and Poland and the Czech Republic, Argentina, Iceland, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada—and a sense that a future resolution of the UN Security Council aimed at lifting the sanctions imposed upon Baghdad would require a U.S. veto to be denied.

With many of the allies suspicious of U.S. intent and the ability to explain what it does and execute what it says, there is limited will for followership because there is little understanding of the proposed leadership. Thus, Saddam is periodically described by the President as one of the leading "predators of the twenty-first century."<sup>5</sup> Yet occasional attempts to justify war against him remain surprisingly modest. Saddam, explained Clinton at the Pentagon on February 17, 1998, breaks his promises, does not play by the rules, makes false declarations, imposes "debilitating conditions" on United Nations inspectors who try to do their jobs, and lives lavishly in oversized palaces. It is almost as an afterthought that the President reminded his audience that Saddam also builds a lot of danger-

ous chemical and biological weapons at great cost (which the Secretary of Defense had previously attempted to make more real by displaying on national television a one-pound bag of sugar as a prop). Even the warning that “he’ll use the arsenal” for sure in the future could be heard almost as an afterthought. Although there is no mention as to whom it will be used against, the solution is to “seriously” weaken Saddam and, if that is not enough, to “be prepared to strike him again” seriously but never decisively.

#### IV

Clinton’s hopes to gain a place in history came naturally in the area of domestic policies. Notwithstanding some serious misgiving about his personal demeanor, the public responsiveness to the president’s leadership has been repeatedly confirmed. His flair for leadership is not, however, nearly as spontaneous in the area of foreign policy. There, the discomfort Clinton still feels is always apparent. Speeches prepared by his advisers are read carefully, as Clinton laboriously gives his voice the right tone and his stare the right look. George Kennan, who knows a lot about leadership and visions, put it well many years ago when he wrote of leaders who ask “not: how effective what I am doing [is] in terms of the impact it makes on our world ... but rather: how do I look, in the mirror of domestic opinion, as I do it? Do I look shrewd, determined, defiantly patriotic, imbued with the necessary vigilance...? If so, this is what I do, even though it may prove to be meaningless, or even counterproductive...”

Henry Kissinger, too, knows a lot about leadership and visions. The words he wrote about President Johnson also apply well to President Clinton: “one never had the impression that he would think about the topic spontaneously—while shaving, for example.” The qualities shown by Clinton when attending to his domestic agenda—a sense of timing, a responsiveness to compromises based on a knack for multiple convictions, a will for consultation based on a passion for diversity, an open predilection for the feasible over the ideal—are not suited as well for foreign policy, about which his interest, rather episodic, takes the form of a transfer of his practices from the domestic to the foreign arenas. So it was, for example, when Clinton chose to dispatch his national security team to a town meeting in Ohio in order to explain the then-imminent U.S. strike against Iraq, in late February 1998. What works for a battle with the Republicans over the budget and even trade policy when money and jobs are at stake does not work as effectively for war, a life-and-death issue. Richard Holbrooke has told of Clinton’s decision to send a substantial number of American troops to Bosnia in 1995, after the president was reminded, at the close of a “magical” evening full of glitter and glamour, that he had earlier made a promise he could not now unmake. So emerged America’s “leadership” in Bosnia, and so was launched the creeping esca-

lation of a U.S. commitment that was initially limited in time—one year as part of an International Force (IFOR), then another as part of a Stabilization Force (SFOR)—but became unlimited in December 1997. A commitment to enlarge NATO is articulated as such, first with more or less formal Partners for Peace, next with a very few additional members (Poland and a couple more), and next, after April 1999, to an ill-defined group designed to make Europe fully “undivided, democratic and peaceful.” The rhetoric drives the commitment, the commitment shapes the action, and the action is occasionally made to fit into a vision.

No wonder, then, if nearly a decade after the end of the Cold War, a world in awe of American power, economic as well as military, has been growing increasingly uncomfortable with a U.S. leadership that is questioned as intrusive, hazardous, deceptive, and unreliable: intrusive because of hegemonical tendencies said to be especially evident since Dayton; hazardous because the cost of U.S. policies and the price of its failures must often be borne by other states; deceptive because of a U.S. tendency to rely on ideals to hide its self-interests; and unreliable because of its dependence on constitutional and even historical guidelines that are not fully understandable abroad.

A vision grows out of what is praised before anything has failed, but it is remembered after everything that failed has been forgotten; it is the evidence of success, therefore, that defines a vision worth adopting and, conversely, it is the realities of failure that make it worthless. Praises for the Truman Doctrine as the visionary setting of containment, after World War II and during the Cold War, were more emphatic in 1948 (the year of the Czech coup and the Berlin blockade) and in 1988 (when Mikhail Gorbachev was paving the way for the Revolutions in the East) than in 1968 (the year of Vietnam, from the swamps of Southeast Asia to the streets of Chicago). With the understanding that the evidence of success comes slowly and must be accumulated over time, a leadership worthy of followership is one that is not only viewed as necessary now but is also deemed sustainable over time. Although fifty years of Cold War should have confirmed America’s staying power once and for all, the future of America’s role in the world continues to be debated around the two poles of complete withdrawal and global engagement, as if there could be a choice between either of these extremes, now less than ever before.

At half past Clinton, there have been several tactical successes for an administration which, as was the case in 1991 at half past Bush, often deserved more credit than it received. The world is safer and more responsive to U.S. interests and influence than was the case in 1993 (or at any other time during the Cold War and during the interwar years). Throughout, warnings from critics and pundits alike have proven wrong more often than not. Russia learned to live with NATO enlargement to the countries of Central Europe, and so did the U.S.

Senate, notwithstanding earlier warnings that Russia would rebel, the Senate would object, and the public would defect. Peace still prevails in Bosnia, and the philosophy of a unitary state that conditioned the Dayton agreements has stood the test of time without the casualties that were anticipated in large numbers. The bailout in Mexico worked, the Boeing-McDonnell merger did not derail U.S. relations with the European Union, the financial crisis in Asia caused no meltdown, and the launch of a common European currency is not having any turbulent impact on exchange rates and the role of the U.S. dollar.

From the Gulf to the Caribbean, the likes of the Ayatollahs, Saddam Hussein, and Fidel Castro are still in power, to be sure. Yet Iran's language has turned less hostile and its demeanor is opening the door to a constructive dialogue with the United States to which Clinton is responding; the effective containment of a defanged Saddam Hussein keeps him in a small cage out of which his occasional barks lack the military bite they used to have to force an explosion in the region, even if they continue to disrupt U.S. relations with the allies in the region and elsewhere; as to Castro, time, which has become his main obstacle to staying the course, has also turned into America's most reliable partner for justifying the adjustments that are now quietly contemplated. Finally, in the area of conflict resolution, prospects for an early resolution of the Arab-Israeli peace process are unquestionably dim or worse, but signs of a growing European involvement, apparently coordinated with the United States, is an encouraging sign in 1998. And beyond the Middle East, the recognizable failure of the Clinton administration to pull its weight in the Middle East comes together with the remarkable agreement negotiated under its sponsorship over Northern Ireland and its continued efforts toward the resolution of yet another endless conflict, in Cyprus this time.

Why, then, should Americans seem concerned about the fact and the condition of American leadership and its role in the world—particularly now? A century of increasingly global involvement in the world has left the United States as a power without peer because of the totality of its economic, military, political, and even cultural reach. Alternatives to an effective U.S. leadership are, therefore, few: if not America, who; if not now, when? But, it can be asked, why should Americans care about anarchy? Why not retire or, at the very least, rethink the entangling relationships that were developed over the past fifty years in an alleged fit of absent-mindedness? Again, answers should be all too obvious. America's involvement in the world is not a matter of vocation, assuredly, but it is not just a matter of position either, even though, admittedly, the country has become far too powerful to desist and remain aloof as it once did. Rather, America's involvement in the world is a matter of interests that have become themselves much too significant to be viewed as anything less than vital to the nation's welfare and well-being, and far too vital to leave them dependent on the will and capabilities of the

allies, or the intentions and ineptitude of adversaries.

That the world may be wary of American power may well be true, even though no ally is showing much interest in being rid of it. That Americans are weary of the world may well be true too. But unlike previous generations, they have become sufficiently aware of the world to be as sensitive to its promises as they are leery of its problems. Forget isolationism and all that: the know-nothings

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of yesteryear know better now. Calls for restraint in the use of U.S. power are limited to "places where we have no interests" rather than based on a broader sense of

national indifference or moral irrelevance. Calls for selective unilateralism are mainly justified by the absence of willing posses—"of states and others for specific tasks"—rather than in terms of a broad decline that has exposed the irreversible limits of American power. Calls against using that power may well reflect an aversion to pain that contradicts an urge for dominance; but in an increasingly civil world in which affluence need not rhyme with dominance and is unquestionably defeated by war, this apparent contradiction needs no apology, assuming it ever did. In short, Americans will do what is needed so long as they are told what it takes and why.

## Conclusion

What is lacking after the Cold War is not a new vision of world order. There is already a vision, stated and tested during the many years of Cold War and the many years before. It is a vision based on the "self-evident truths" and "inalienable rights" of the American Republic: life, which has to do with security and the most fundamental goal of self-preservation; liberty, which has to do with human rights and the grand aspiration of self-abnegation; and the pursuit of happiness, which has to do with the less lofty objectives of affluence and economic self-expansion. That most nations, and all citizens within each nation, can now seek "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" more openly and achieve these more widely than ever before is not the least achievement of the twentieth century. Enlarging the democratic space thus defined is not a modest vision. It can do for now.

What is needed after the Cold War is a will for leadership. Pessimism about order in the world and doubts about U.S. leadership reflect much ambivalence over the accomplishments that lie behind. By the standards of history no

less than by the standards of self-interest, the role played by the United States in the world has been extraordinarily effective. Why not tell the American people about it, Mr. President, as assertively as you have on occasion told people abroad? Why not speak to them about foreign policies with the same measure of competence that you display when presenting domestic policies, even if such competence must occasionally use the cover of pretense. Internationalism is not shameful, to be performed for but not to be mentioned. Public support for foreign policy is a process of education. People must be told about the problems and risks faced by the nation in the world, about proposed solutions and the threats they entail, as well as the greater risks which failure to achieve the desired objectives would entail. America is not a nation of passive and slightly embarrassed voyeurs: Americans are active and proud doers who have gained the right to be told what their leaders are doing in the world, and why. When in doubt, they will listen to your explanations, Mr. President, and they will learn to understand their interests better. But you must start trying, and keep on trying, as did the president whose role in history, played fifty years ago, you now hope to duplicate and renew. 

## Notes

1. Simon Serfaty, "No More Dissent," *Foreign Policy* 11 (Summer 1973): 144–58.
2. G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of International Leadership," *Political Science Quarterly* 111, no. 3 (1996): 386–7.
3. Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979) 49–53.
4. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983) 81. See, for example, "Carter Pledges Continuity in Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, 5 November 1976; "Carter Gets Briefing by Kissinger and Sees a Smooth Transition," *New York Times*, 21 November 1976. Carter's influence grew during the transition over a wide range of issues. See, for example, "Brezhnev Appeals to Carter to Push Stalled Arms Pact," *New York Times*, 1 December 1976; "Carter Backs Move for European Parley," *New York Times*, 6 January 1977.
5. "Now Bowing Out, A Busy, Busy Bush," *New York Times*, 1 January 1993: A8; "Aides Say U.S. Role in Somalia Gives Bush A Way To Exit In Glory," *New York Times*, 6 December 1992: A14; "Transatlantic Impasse," *New York Times*, 7 November 1992: A1; "Trade Pact Signed In Three Capitals," *New York Times*, 18 December 1992: D1; "Bush's Last Hurrahs in Cold, Wintry Moscow," *New York Times*, 3 January 1993: A8; "U.S. Sends Flotilla To Prevent Exodus from Haiti By Sea," *New York Times*, 16 January 1993: A1; "Bush Warns Serbs Not To Widen War," *New York Times*, 28 December 1992: A6; "U.S. Hopes To Broaden Ban On Arms Sales To Iran," *New York Times*, 18 November 1992: A5; "Bush Sends Final Message To His Old Nemesis in Iraq," *New York Times*, 14 January 1993: A9. (So it went to the last three days, November 18, 19, 20, when first page headlines on the *New York Times* all emphasized the "U.S.-Led Raids on Iraq.")
6. Richard Holbrooke, "America as a European Power," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 2 (March/April 1995): 44–5; James M. Goldgeiger, "NATO Expansion: The Anatomy of a Decision," *Washington Quarterly* (Winter 1998): 85–102; Jonathan Eyal, "NATO's Enlargement: Anatomy of a Decision," *International Affairs* 73, no. 4 (Autumn 1997); Roberto Menotti, "The U.S. Policy of

NATO Enlargement: The 'Unspoken Agenda' Behind Clinton's Approach, 1993–1996," unpublished paper, February 1998.

7. From early 1995 on, Holbrooke, the main architect of enlargement, was explicit about the three candidates he favored. Why the European allies were surprised in the spring of 1997, when the U.S. preference became official at last, is itself surprising. One year before the 1997 Summit in Madrid, the former U.S. Ambassador to Poland, Donald Blanken, was equally explicit as he wrote about "America's Stake in NATO Enlargement," *Wall Street Journal*, 5 July 1996. On both questions, who and when, see also Simon Serfaty, "All in the Family," *Current History* 93, no. 586 (November 1994): 353–58; Simon Serfaty, "Half Time Before Europe, Half Time Past NATO," *Washington Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (March 1995): 49–58.

8. Steven Kull, "Americans on NATO Enlargement," Program on International Policy Attitudes, 23 February 1998, 2. Clinton's reluctance to make the case for enlargement is significant for the impact it may have on the debate that will surround future decisions on NATO. See, for example, Charles Krauthammer, "Good Geopolitics," *Washington Post*, 17 April 1998.

9. Anthony Lake, "Confronting the Backlash States," *Foreign Affairs* 173, no. 2 (March/April 1994); Martin Indyk, "The Clinton Administration's Approach to the Middle East," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C., 18 May 1993; Simon Serfaty, "Bridging the Gulf Across the Atlantic: Europe and the United States in the Persian Gulf," *Middle East Journal* (Summer 1998).

10. See, for example, President Clinton's 1998 State of the Union Message and his speech at the Pentagon three weeks later, 17 February 1998.

11. George Kennan, *Memoirs*, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

12. Kissinger, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

13. Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998), 68; Jim Hoagland, "Holbrooke's Prophetic Memoirs," *Washington Post*, 9 April 1998: A25; Jane Sharp, "Dayton Report Card," *Survival* 22, no. 3 (Winter 1997/98): 136.

14. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).

15. The USIA Office of Research and Media Reaction usefully tracks foreign reactions to the United States. See, for example, "Trend Analysis: Mixed Assessments of U.S. 'Undisputed' Role as Superpower," *Daily Digest*, 29 September 1997; Stanley Sloan, "The U.S. Role in the World: Indispensable Leader or Hegemon?" CRS Report for Congress 9701946 F, 10 December 1997, 3; Simon Serfaty, "Vision américaine de l'Europe: ni ingérence ni indifférence," *Revue Française de Géographie* (Summer 1998).

16. Jeremy D. Rosner, "The Know-Nothings Know Something," *Foreign Policy*, no. 101 (Winter 1995/96): 120.

17. Martin Walker, "The New American Hegemony," *World Policy Journal* 13, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 14; John Hillen, "Superpowers Don't Do Windows," *Orbis* 41, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 241.

18. Richard Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States After the Cold War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997), 6.

19. Robert W. Tucker, "The Future of a Contradiction," *National Interest* (Spring 1996): 20.

20. Stanley Hoffmann, *Primacy or World Order: American Foreign Policy Since the Cold War* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978), 312; Will Friedman and John Immerwahr, "Discussing Foreign Policy with the Post-Cold War Public," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 3, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 1996): 261.