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„America's Global Security Role“

Vortrag beim 9. Wiener Kulturkongress mit dem Titel
„Pax Americana – Chance oder Risiko für Europa?“

Pax Americana is not a term with which many American political figures have wished to hear their country identified. Dictionaries define it as „any peace dictated to a subjugated people by a conquering nation or empire“. The historical examples of Imperial Rome and of the British Empire – from which, after all, the United States achieved its independence – are not among those which the Founding Fathers sought to emulate. Steeped in the philosophy of Montesquieu, many of them accepted the proposition that a true republic could not long survive in freedom and peace if it came to dominate other lands and their populations.

When the Virginians President Thomas Jefferson and his Secretary of State James Madison acquired the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon in 1803, thereby doubling the territory of the new nation, misgivings, on many grounds, especially in New England, abounded. Yet at the same time as these two Virginians found themselves expanding the country, partly in order to prevent European wars from returning to North America, they were also fighting a distant naval war along the North African coast in the Mediterranean to prevent the Barbary pirates from interfering with American trading ships operating from the very ports of New England. New England port owners and operators felt threatened by the use of the Mississippi River by the traders to ship their products abroad through the port of New Orleans, which the Louisiana Purchase included.

What would now be called power projection to North Africa required the deployment by the US of naval vessels and several marine units to rescue Americans who had been taken prisoner and hostage and to punish the perpetrators of these acts thousands of miles from America. Thus, a „Mediterranean Naval Station“ was established by the US 140 years before the American-led invasion of French North Africa in the Second World War and 150 years before the permanent stationing of the US 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean.

Pax Americana: „Any peace dictated to a subjugated people by a conquering nation or empire“

Jefferson and Madison acquired the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon in 1803

Establishment of a „Mediterranean Naval Station“

**US operations against the
Muslim Pirates**

It should be noted that these US operations against the Muslim pirates, including the use of port facilities in Spain, France, Italy, Sicily and Malta, were not seen as a „Clash of Civilizations“ but as a means of both defending the honor and promoting the economic interests of the United States, in contrast to the century-old European practice of paying large monetary tributes to the pirate chieftains of the North African coastal fiefdoms of the Ottoman Empire. Nor did the US have any desire or ability to occupy any of the territories involved. There was no urge to build a distant empire.

John Quincy Adams

Less than twenty years later, the future President John Quincy Adams, son of President John Adams, who had actually begun building the US navy and marine corps in the 1790s to resist British and especially French assaults on American shipping in the Atlantic Ocean, warned his countrymen in terms that continue to echo through American debates about the nation's true calling. In an address in Washington, John Q. Adams, at the time US Secretary of State, said on July 4, 1821, the 25th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence:

... the nation's true calling

Whenever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will be America's heart, her benedictions, and her prayers. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and by the benignant sympathy of her example. She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standards of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force.... She might become the dictatress of the world. She would no longer be the ruler of her own spirit.

**The standard of freedom
and independence**

**... America goes not
abroad in search of
monsters to destroy ...**

But Adams was distinctly not warning against expanding the US across the North American continent. He himself in 1819 had acquired the parts of Florida still held by Spain, thereby ending the European presence east of the Mississippi River. Later in the 19th century, Mexico's presence in the southwestern portion of the continent and in California was ended. Russia's ownership of Alaska and parts of northwestern America was terminated in 1867 under Secretary of State William H. Seward and President Andrew Johnson by purchase, at a cost of 7.2 million dollars. Frugal Yankees thought this was excessive and the deal came to be widely referred to as „Seward's Folly“. But the deal held, and the states and territories – later to become states – of the United States essen-

**Russia's ownership of
Alaska was terminated in
1867 by purchase**

tially covered the continental territory we know today. Hawaii, far out in the Pacific Ocean, was annexed in 1898. But President McKinley saw it as a consummation of the „manifest destiny“ that had propelled the nation across the continent. Alaska and Hawaii attained statehood in 1959, the only two non-contiguous states of the Union.

At about the same time as „Seward’s Folly“, the US felt constrained in 1867 to invoke the Monroe Doctrine when Napoleon III, whose inclination to over-reach caused France much pain, sought to establish a European monarchy in Mexico under Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Austria. The doctrine, enunciated in 1823 by President Monroe, but mostly formulated by John Q. Adams, had proclaimed that America, North or South, would no longer be open to colonization from Europe. America, in turn, proclaimed that it would not interfere in the affairs of Europe. In the early 1820s, there had been agitation in the US to support Greece’s war of independence from Turkey. But Adams rejected it as interference in Europe. At the same time, there were fears that Spain and other European countries might attempt to reverse the independence recently won from Spain by several Central and South American republics. The Europeans did not do so. But they never officially accepted the unilaterally proclaimed Monroe Doctrine. Some of them were tempted to take advantage of the American Civil War as a means of slowing down America’s continental expansion and growth as a major world power. President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves in the South, however, ended British threats to support the Confederacy.

Early in the 20th century, President Theodore Roosevelt enunciated a „Corollary“ to the Monroe Doctrine insisting that European countries must stop collecting unpaid debts directly from Central American and Caribbean countries by the use of military force. He agreed that „civilized“ nations must pay their debts. But, suspicious of European, especially German, strategic ambitions in the Western Hemisphere, he said the US would do the collecting and ensure that the creditors would get paid.

Roosevelt had fought in the Spanish-American War in 1898 which ended Spain’s role in the Caribbean Sea. He had become Vice President under President McKinley in the 1900 election. After McKinley’s assassination in September, 1901, Roosevelt became President. In his new role, he decided not to occupy formerly Spanish Cuba. The island became a sovereign state, albeit under American influence and with use by the American navy of Guantanamo Bay, which is still in the news today. The island of Puerto Rico also became American, but despite pressures from its population, has never attained statehood. Large numbers of Puerto Ricans with full citizenship rights have lived on the US mainland for over a century.

Alaska and Hawaii attained statehood in 1959

Monroe Doctrine

Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation

European Strategic ambitions

Spanish-American War in 1908

Puerto Rico became American

Cuba

In Cuba, the US backing over the decades of unsavory regimes contributed in the 1950s to the revolutionary movement led by Fidel Castro. He became a more effective dictator and a greater headache for the US than Spanish Cuba had ever been. In the end of course, he provided the Soviets the significant foothold in the Western Hemisphere which led to several crises of which the 1962 missile crisis was the most serious.

Phillipine Islands

The US had deliberately not enlarged the war against Spain in Cuba to Spain herself. This was consistent with the Monroe Doctrine's self-denying clause against American interference in Europe. But, concerned about potential European, again, especially German, interest in acquiring the Spanish Philippine Islands, Roosevelt, then serving as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, in early 1898, instructed the American Pacific Squadron to sail to Manila Bay as soon as word was received that war had started and to destroy the Spanish naval squadron stationed there.

**America's only significant
act of overseas colonization**

Admiral George Dewey accomplished this mission but almost became embroiled in a firefight with the then recently China-based five-ship German squadron which Dewey thought was violating international naval law by operating inside the Bay. The tempers fortunately subsided, as did the Kaiser's hope of enlarging Germany's scattered holdings in the Pacific in the event the Americans decided to leave the Philippines. Much to their later frustration, the Americans stayed, suffering and inflicting much loss of life in the early years of nearly half a century's occupation. This was America's only significant act of overseas colonization comparable to what European empires had been doing for centuries. But with the extension of the US from the East Coast to the West Coast, shipping routes between them had to be drastically shortened. The resulting Panama Canal, managed by the US, created special sensitivities that the canal's access routes were free from potentially hostile foreign territorial holdings, both in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Since the 1850s when the US opened Japan to the outside world, and the increasing American trading interests in China, had thus turned the US into a significant actor in the Pacific by the early 20th century. During the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 European diplomats sought refuge in the US and British Legations in Beijing. The US had not established ports and other territorial footholds in or around China. It had been promoting its „Open Door“ policy to assure trading access and continued to do so during the Boxer Rebellion. But it sent a contingent of troops, partly from the Philippines, to an international force which eventually managed to establish quiet. (After the murder of the German Minister, Kaiser Wilhelm urged the commander of the German contingent to act like Huns, a word that stuck to the Germans through two world wars.)

**Panama Canal,
managed by the US**

The Boxer Rebellion in 1900

Financial penalties were imposed on the Chinese to compensate for the rampage of the Boxers. The US made most of the money available to promote educational exchanges between China and the US, programs that have continued ever since with a few interruptions.

Theodore Roosevelt was convinced that the „big stick“ – while speaking softly – to which the United States had become entitled required a potent navy. American public opinion, despite long and bitter controversy between pro and anti-“imperialists” among publicists, scholars and other sectors of society, acquired an appetite for the display of American prowess. By the end of the first decade of the Twentieth Century, a Great White Fleet of sixteen battleships had been built and had sailed around the world to wide acclaim. It was also the decade in which the largest number of immigrants – 8,114,523 – had come to the United States in any decade between 1820 and 1930.

Nearly a century and a half after Adams's warning against looking for „foreign monsters to destroy“, President John F. Kennedy, on June 10, 1963, in a famous speech at American University designed to open opportunities for easing the tensions and dangers of the Cold War with the Soviet Union after the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, elaborated America's view of world peace, building on his Inaugural Address in 1961.

„What kind of peace do I mean? What kind of peace do we seek?“ he asked, and went on:

Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children – not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women – not merely peace in our time but peace for all time.

Kennedy did not minimize the conflict with the Soviet Union, something that would have been hard for him to do after the ringing phrases of his Inaugural Address in 1961 calling on Americans to “bear any burden” in defense of freedom. “So, let us not be blind to our differences,” he said to the Soviet leaders a few months before his death in 1963, “but let us also direct attention to our common interests and to the means by which those differences can be resolved. And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.”

This was using language derived from Woodrow Wilson's speech to Congress in April, 1917, seeking a declaration of war against Germany. “The world must be made safe for democracy,” Wilson urged then, a theme he seemed to have anticipated a few years earlier in sending American troops to

Educational exchanges between China and the US

A Great White Fleet ...

John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address in 1961

**„I am talking about
genuine peace, ...“**

Kennedy and the Soviet Union

„World safe for diversity“

**After World War II: US as
the single most powerful
country in the world**

American interests

**Moscow's late entry into
the war against Japan**

Mexico to bring order to the unsettled southern neighbor. Wilson indeed sent American troops to other countries in the region for similar reasons. Some stayed well into the 1930s without accomplishing much.

Kennedy, speaking in the nuclear age to the powerful Soviet Union, urged a more modest proposition than Wilson's plea for a "world safe for democracy". Yet given the nature of the Soviet system and the confrontation with it, it was doubtful that ensuring a "world safe for diversity" could in fact allow for the peace he had defined earlier in his American University speech. It was not until the 1980s that President Ronald Reagan was to hold out a much more ambitious prospect of fundamental changes in the Soviet system – something that critics at the time considered recklessly provocative. The prediction became a reality – for many reasons – a few years later.

When Kennedy spoke in 1961, the Cold War had been underway for some 15 years. The fact of international life was that the US had emerged from World War II as the single most powerful country in the world. This had not been a deliberate American war aim. But fighting a war on a global scale – more so than in World War I – against Hitler's empire in Europe and, until 1943, North Africa, and Japan's vast conquests in and around the Pacific Ocean, required an enormous, unprecedented mobilization of the American economy, which in 1941 was still recovering from the great depression, as well as of vast numbers of manpower for military and civilian purposes.

It was expected that when victories over the two major World War II enemies had been won, these huge wartime exertions could be converted and applied to building a peace-time American nation committed to the well-being of its people. The US had no major permanent territorial ambitions. But it soon became evident that American interests would increasingly extend around the world.

The US was going to participate in occupying parts of Germany and Austria, according to agreements reached during the War. It occupied all of Japan, including initially the southern part of the Korean peninsula. With Moscow's late entry into the war against Japan, Washington rejected a Soviet occupation role in the Japanese home islands. But the Soviet Union gained the island of Sakhalin, which Japan won from Russia in 1905, and several Kurile islands. Soviet forces also overran Manchuria, which they later helped the Chinese Communists capture from the Nationalists. Without US opposition, the Soviet Union also controlled the northern part of Korea. It installed a Communist regime led by Kim Il Sung and other Koreans who had lived in the USSR for decades.

In 1950, after obtaining Stalin's and Mao Tse-tung's approval and assistance, the North invaded the poorly governed

South in an attempt to "unify" the peninsula. The US, which had left South Korea largely to itself, intervened in what was called a "police action" under UN aegis. The Northern forces were driven back against the Yalu River, the border of China. The bloody war which ensued with North Korean and Chinese troops almost escalated into US attack on China itself. It lasted three years, with the 38th parallel in the end remaining the dividing line on the Peninsula.

American forces have remained in South Korea ever since under one of the many security treaties which the US entered around the world during the Cold War. Korea was to remain divided after the Cold War ended, with the South prospering economically and increasingly asserting itself politically. The North continues to suffer from rigid Communist rule while becoming a nuclear weapons state and thus the source of one of the world's most dangerous crises, not least because of its actual and potential export of missiles and nuclear weapons technology to terrorist groups.

US occupation forces in post-World War II Europe and Asia (even before the Korean War) required supply lines to support them and back-up forces for various purposes in various countries. Military strategists proposed American acquisition of some strategically placed islands in the Pacific Ocean, in part because the US returned to the Philippine Islands, albeit with the intent to grant them independence before long. This happened in 1946, with the US retaining bases originally under a 99-year lease, but abandoned much earlier.

European powers with colonies and other holdings in various parts of the world steadily returned to them. In most cases, despite American resistance to the Europeans' intentions to restore their colonial empires, relatively little thought seemed to have been given to the devolution of these empires toward independent status. But in practice, this began in the late 1940s, continuing for several decades, often with much bloodshed. The US was to discover that the retraction of European power from overseas possessions frequently led to instability and strategic opportunities in these regions for ambitious antagonists in the contentious years to come.

Even so, the United States, with the exceptions already noted above, was not looking for a colonial or any other kind of empire after World War II. There was, in fact, doubt in the American body politic whether even American occupation forces, particularly in Europe, should remain there indefinitely. President Harry S. Truman is reported to have expressed such doubts himself and welcomed the establishment of a substantial French occupation zone in Germany as a way to ensure the Western presence. The Soviets, it soon became clear, intended to remain indefinitely in eastern Germany and in the countries adjacent to it, turning the region into a satellite empire and a potential Soviet threat against the rest of

US had left South Korea largely to itself

The dividing Line on the Peninsula

North Korea: Source of one of the world's most dangerous crisis

Acquisition of some strategically placed islands in the Pacific Ocean

Retraction of European power from overseas possessions

The US was not looking for a colonial empire after World War II

**Churchill's
Iron Curtain speech**

Europe. Winston Churchill made that reality clear in Truman's home state in Fulton, Missouri, with his Iron Curtain speech on March 5, 1946 – exactly seven years before Stalin's death.

But even if relations with the Soviet Union had not deteriorated soon after the War, European and American leaders hoped not to witness a repetition of the experience of American withdrawal from Europe after World War I.

The Cold War began

As it turned out, American forces in Germany had indeed begun to thin out once it became clear that the Germans were complying with the conditions of the occupation. What came to be known as the Cold War began along the dividing line between East and West in Germany, and, as Churchill made clear, thereby in Europe as a whole. The Soviet blockade of Western sectors of Berlin beginning in 1948 highlighted the dangers of the situation. Within a few years, large military forces faced each other along the Iron Curtain. The United States had found it necessary to set aside the warnings of the Founding Fathers against entering "entangling alliances".

**The Soviet threat was not
seen as exclusively military**

Indeed, once it became clear that confrontation with the Soviet Union was not confined to the dividing line in Europe, the United States constructed a world-wide network of alliances and defense commitments. But the Soviet threat was not seen as exclusively military. Thus, American policy came to be designed to prevent Soviet expansion by political means such as aligning countries with large Communist parties or communist-dominated organizations and movements with Moscow. The Soviets were also seen as manipulating, on a world-wide scale, the grievances of weak and poverty-stricken countries and regions against the "capitalist" West.

**Founding the
United Nations**

The US had been instrumental, while the War was still going on, in founding the United Nations which, it was hoped, would prove more effective in safeguarding peace than the League of Nations – which the US had also been instrumental in founding but failed to join.

**Moscow's frequent use of
its veto in the UN Security
Council**

Among early symptoms of conflict was the paralysis of many of the functions which the UN was intended to perform. The debates in the UN's General Assembly were increasingly marked by Soviet tirades against the West. In the field of security, including the control of atomic energy and the promotion of general disarmament, progress was almost immediately blocked by Moscow's frequent use of its veto in the Security Council. (The Council was able to authorize the US police action in Korea while Moscow was boycotting the UN because Communist China had not been allocated the Chinese seat in the UN.) In the circumstances, the US and several of the countries of Western Europe devised major programs to energize recovery from wartime ravages and to find ways to prevent a recurrence of the intra-European strife which over the centuries had produced enormous human and material disasters.

Beginning in 1947-8, the Marshall Plan became a major project to these ends. Moscow had been offered formal participation but rejected it and denied the East European countries, which it increasingly dominated, the opportunity to join. The Soviet-erected Iron Curtain came not only to obstruct contact between the peoples on either side of it, but to constitute a dividing line between political, economic, and social systems. It also became the line behind which Soviet power was to be contained by means of a defense alliance negotiated in 1948 and signed in 1949 between the US, Canada, and, initially, ten European states. For the US, the North Atlantic Alliance was the second major break with tradition after the 1947 Rio Treaty between the US and nineteen Latin American nations. NATO was to play a major role in repairing wounds and animosities left in Western Europe from centuries of war, in contributing to the gradual emergence of a European Union, and in deterring war between East and West.

Greece and Turkey had already caused concern in 1947 because of pressure from the Soviet Union and its adjuncts and the inability of the British to maintain economic and other support for them. President Truman went before a special session of the Congress to urge approval of assistance to both nations as an "investment in peace". Congress approved this "Truman Doctrine". Five years later, the two countries – despite their long-standing animosities – were admitted to NATO. The US and its allies were thus extending their security commitments to the Near East and along the frontiers of the Soviet Caucasus.

In addition to the Marshall Plan, the US also launched programs of economic assistance for Greece and Turkey and extended a variety of assistance projects throughout the world, especially to countries, including newly independent ones, that, in Truman's words, "are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures." Over time, many western countries and UN specialized agencies undertook similar programs as a matter of general policy.

The containment strategy toward the Soviet Union being developed by the United States became controversial in American domestic politics in the early 1950s and voices began to be heard attacking the Yalta agreements as a betrayal of the peoples of Eastern Europe. There was talk of "liberation" and "roll-back". The Communist victory in mainland China triggered a debate about "who lost China?". Communists and their sympathizers were alleged to be doing the Soviets' work in the US government and parts of American society generally. President Truman, under whose administration the programs and institutions, domestic and international, that basically shaped American policies and strategies for the entire Cold War era, decided not to run for the presidency again in 1952.

Marshall Plan

North Atlantic Alliance

„Truman Doctrine“

US launched programs of economic assistance for Greece and Turkey

Voices began to be heard attacking the Yalta agreements

Eisenhower won the presidential election

Not surprisingly, General Dwight Eisenhower, who had been recruited by the Republicans, won the Presidential election.

He was not willing to accept Churchill's proposals to explore the possibilities of better relationships directly with Stalin's successors, at least until Soviet intentions and policies became clearer. But in his 8-year presidency, America's global interests became more clearly defined, the Korean War was ended, and the containment strategy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and its empire – in which China appeared to have become a major member – came to include a strategy of „deterrence“.

NATO

Eisenhower ruled out the use of atomic weapons

The North Atlantic Alliance, after the outbreak of the Korean War, which many thought presaged an attack against the West, added a military organization to its structure (hence the name NATO) initially commanded by Eisenhower. It was unlikely to be able to match the masses of Soviet military forces, although these were gradually reduced by Stalin's successors. Moscow was put on notice that Soviet aggression could provoke "massive retaliation at places and times of our choosing", as Secretary of State John Foster Dulles put it. In practice, however, Eisenhower as President ruled out the use of atomic weapons to punish China's large involvement in Korea, although there are indications that a warning that this might occur was relayed to the Chinese.

The Soviets made significant progress of their own in acquiring atomic bombs

The deterrent role of atomic weapons, especially in response to conventional aggression, became more problematical as the Soviets made significant progress of their own in acquiring atomic and hydrogen bombs as well as long-range aircraft to deliver them. So-called battlefield nuclear weapons with lower yields, shorter range and greater mobility were advocated by military scholars outside the government and strategic planners in the US Defense Department. Large numbers of these were eventually deployed, some with "double-key" arrangements, i.e. the delivery vehicle was owned by an ally and the nuclear warhead by the US; the weapons could not be launched unless the US President and then both parties agreed to do so.

A complicated arrangement

This was obviously a complicated arrangement, but with experience having demonstrated repeatedly that NATO members had difficulty meeting conventional force requirements, potential recourse to nuclear weapons to stop major Soviet attacks across the North German plain remained part of NATO's doctrine until the end of the Cold War.

„Doctrine of pre-emption“

The nuclear confrontation gave rise to concerns on both sides with the threat of a surprise attack designed to knock out the other side's weapons, command centers, and other "high-value" targets. This placed a great premium on reliable and timely warning intelligence. Assuming that was available, both sides developed a "doctrine" of "pre-emption", meaning a forestalling strike against the other side to prevent the

enemy from launching effective attacks. In current circumstances, it hardly needs pointing out that the revival of this concept in the US National Security Strategy of 2002 was not accidental in the face of terrorist or "rogue state" threats potentially involving weapons of mass destruction. However, while in the earlier situation pre-emption involved the use of nuclear weapons, the recent version of it does not mention this. Moreover, the 2002 document uses the term pre-emption in the broader sense of preventing the acquisition or development of these types of weapons by terrorists or by states that might use them or provide them to terrorists. It has to be observed that during the Cold War, the major nuclear powers viewed their nuclear weapons as deterring major military assaults by the other side. Whether this was really an iron law of the Cold War or just luck remains an open question. In current conditions reliance on deterrence vis-à-vis suicide bombings and people who have no state or territory to defend would be hazardous indeed.

Khrushchev's ascent to the Soviet leadership brought with it policies that expanded Soviet international ambitions and accelerated military and outer space programs. With hindsight, it may well be that by the resulting over-extension, he sowed the seeds for the collapse of the Soviet Union. John F. Kennedy had severely criticized the Eisenhower administration for failing to meet Soviet challenges, but soon after he became president himself he learned that the US had not fallen behind either militarily or technologically. The Deputy Secretary of Defense of the US was directed to give a speech making this clear publicly. Khrushchev may well have known the truth but chose to bluff with all kinds of demands, e.g. about Berlin, or when his colleague Bulganin threatened the British and French with nuclear attacks at the time of their joint attack with Israel on Egypt in 1956 to reopen the Suez Canal. Any such Soviet action would have triggered NATO's Article V. NATO's American commander announced this publicly, even though the US strongly opposed the British, French, Israeli attack.

Khrushchev's secret deployment of medium range missiles to Cuba in 1962 may have been an effort to offset US missiles capable of reaching the USSR. This move was thwarted by Kennedy's "quarantine" of Cuba, forcing Soviet ships carrying missiles to turn back and leading to an agreement for the dismantling of Soviet missiles already installed in Cuba – a US action undertaken in "self-defense", given the Soviet veto in the UN Security Council. The development of the Cuban missile crisis was an example of Cold War crisis management and of the operation of deterrence between the super-powers.

But this episode was also a blow to Khrushchev's prestige and, more important, it led him to commit even more re-

Revival of this concept

Terrorists, suicide bombings ...

Kennedy had severely criticized the Eisenhower administration

Khrushchev chose to bluff

The Cuban missile crisis

Kennedy was wise to open channels to Khrushchev

sources to the arms race with the US. Kennedy was wise to open channels to Khrushchev, private and public, rather than add to his humiliation. But, Khrushchev's eventual legacy, while including his revelations of Stalin's brutalities and some modest relaxation of restrictions on free expression, was to leave Moscow overextended in its costly interventions and commitments in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, which broadened the Cold War far beyond Europe. Moscow's barely concealed disputes with China, led in the Nixon administration to American opening of relations with Beijing.

Moscow's debilitating arms race with the West starved the Soviet civilian economy, leaving it before long worse off than many so-called third world countries.

Barriers between military and civilian technologies were less rigid in the US

In the US and several other Western countries the barriers between military and civilian technologies were less rigid. Many of the information technologies, for example, emanating from military and space programs were usable for civilian purposes. Indeed, the civilian sector developed many of its own technologies which were then acquired and adapted by the military, often more cheaply than technologies developed and procured by the military.

Moscow's contest with China for leadership in the „third world“

In the Brezhnev era, various efforts were made to work out agreements to reduce chronic Cold War crises, for example over Berlin. But in the Middle East confrontations recurred; Soviet and Cuban activities in Africa, begun by Khrushchev in countries moving toward independence, turned parts of that continent into areas of strategic contention. To some extent, Soviet actions in Africa and also in South and Central America were actually part of Moscow's contest with China for leadership of the 'third world' but not necessarily recognized as such in the US.

US became involved in South Vietnam's war with North Vietnam

In Southeast Asia, starting in the 1950s, the US also saw Soviet intrusions and negotiated defense treaties in the region. Kennedy, when launching his presidency in 1961, saw Moscow engaging in "wars of national liberation" around the world and moved to block this offensive. Beginning before his assassination in November 1963, the US became increasingly involved in South Vietnam's war with the Viet Cong and North Vietnam. This debilitating war became increasingly controversial in the US. It was also a precursor to the current struggle against terrorism, but at the time identified as a battle of counter-insurgency fought on many fronts rather than as a traditional war of massed armies along a single front.

The Vietnam War ended in defeat, with US troops withdrawing in the 1970s and South Vietnam taken over by the North. But the anticipated regional "domino effect" failed to materialize, at least in terms of new Soviet or Chinese political gains. Indeed, the Soviet-Chinese conflict became more embittered while, ironically, US-Soviet and US-Chinese relations, particularly the latter, improved substantially. China, it

turned out, with its long-standing frictions with Vietnam, also fought a war over territorial issues with its tough neighbors, but did no better than the US. Moscow retained a naval base in Vietnam which worried the US and probably China. In the end however, it was another instance of Soviet over-extension and is now being abandoned. Vietnam, meanwhile, has joined ASEAN, sharing with several of its members territorial claims in the South China Sea which China contests.

Beginning in the Eisenhower administration, the problem of nuclear proliferation became a matter of increasing US concern. The US had strict legislation preventing exports of technologies and know-how usable for the production of nuclear weapons. It was an outgrowth of concerns, first voiced by members of the Manhattan Project which produced the first atomic bombs, that dozens of countries would be able to produce nuclear weapons by the end of the 20th century. Yet the peaceful uses of atomic energy, for example for propulsion and energy production, began to interest both nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states. The Soviets toyed with nuclear explosions to build tunnels through mountains and reverse river flows. Eisenhower advanced an "atoms for peace" program in 1953 which led, even amidst the Cold War, to US-Soviet negotiations to devise an international system that could manage and prevent diversion of "peaceful uses". After multilateral negotiations, the International Atomic Energy Agency was established in 1957. Over the decades, that agency and numerous multilateral agreements involving safeguards led many countries to conduct their own nuclear research and the installation of nuclear power reactors acquired by import and indigenous programs.

But despite international safeguards, nuclear weapons programs also spread. France, China, and Israel (without admitting it) joined the "club" in the 1960s. India tested a nuclear device in the 1970s sustaining the dubious distinction between peaceful and military explosions. It openly tested weapons in 1998. Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Libya, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and others launched efforts to do so. Pakistan followed the Indian weapons tests with its own in 1998. Several of these countries eventually dropped or slowed their programs, joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty signed in 1967, and met IAEA standards. But it became clear that the nuclear age could not be abolished. As time moved on, the US became a major actor in the efforts to block the process of spreading nuclear weapons, in several cases by entering into defense relationships with countries considering themselves vulnerable to nuclear attack or blackmail.

Earlier in this text it was noted that "counter-insurgency" became a serious US pre-occupation in the Kennedy administration. It should also be pointed out that in that admini-

Vietnam, meanwhile, has joined ASEAN

The problem of nuclear proliferation became a matter of increasing US concern

International Atomic Agency was established in 1957

Nuclear weapons programs spread

The Non-Proliferation Treaty

**New programs of civil
defense**

stration the threat of nuclear attack on the United States, even before the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, became a major concern. There was indeed a sense of vulnerability not only in the administration but in many sectors of society. The result was the introduction of new programs of civil defense, almost a form of mobilization in the amount of attention given to it. People were urged to build shelters either near their homes or in more remote locations and to equip them with living necessities and counter-measures against radiation. Evacuations of large population centers were planned and school children were trained to lie on the floor with heads down in the event of attack. Tunnels were carved out in mountains to house government offices from the President down.

**Activities supported
by the public**

On the whole, these activities were supported by the public although there were inevitable opponents. The program remained on the books and official organizations remained in place but it gradually lost its urgency in succeeding presidencies. Elements of these civil defense precautions came to life after 9/11 and have since been up-dated and enlarged.

**The Kennedy period is
generally seen as one of
high morale**

It is worth noting that while the Kennedy period is generally seen as one of high morale and commitment – the Peace Corps and a special Arms Control and Disarmament Agency were among its creations – there was perhaps a more acute sense of vulnerability in the country than at any time since World War II, until the 1980s and 1990s when terrorist acts against American interests abroad produced heavy casualties and innumerable official and unofficial studies of the vulnerability of the US homeland to such acts.

**Vietnam War became a
major source of public
opposition**

In Kennedy's days, his brother Robert, later himself killed, was the Attorney General and US law enforcement agencies were not significantly enlarged in their functions. In the Johnson and then Nixon administration, when the Vietnam War became a major source of public opposition and led to substantial avoidance of conscription or even desertions, heightened law enforcement operations became controversial. Demonstrations and marches were infiltrated, producing Congressional investigations and media revelations ensued. Public morale eroded and Johnson came to the conclusion that he should not run for another term in 1968. Harry Truman in 1952 had similarly left politics in an atmosphere of public hostility. Nixon resigned in different circumstances. Comparisons with contemporary conditions would not be wise, especially since after 9/11 President Bush is unlikely to decide to leave office and retains considerable public support. But of course it is hazardous to predict elections.

In the late 1960s, American opponents of the Vietnam War joined earlier critics of American policies after World War II during the Cold War. Some believed that the Soviets were justified in questioning American motives in expanding US

interests around the Soviet periphery. Many observers thought the US was associating with states with dubious leaderships of interfering in states, like Iran and later Guatemala and Chile, governed by people deemed too far left.

Prominent critics in the US Senate, like William Fulbright, accused successive administrations of an "arrogance of power". In this period, some of the debates early in the twentieth century about the US turning into an imperialist nation re-appeared. In 1967-68 a book entitled "Pax Americana-The Cold War Empire, how it grew and what it means" by Ronald Steel was widely circulated. "In the eyes of much of the world," Steel wrote, "America is a nation possessed of an empire of nominally independent client states and pursuing ambitions consistent with those of a great imperial power. Although we do not consciously seek hegemony over other nations and covet no other territory, there is more than one kind of empire, more than one way of exerting control over others, and more than one justification for doing so." Not surprisingly, Steel began his book with the 1821 quotation from John Quincy Adams cited at the outset of the present text.

It is interesting to observe that 20 years later, German authors were using the concept of "Pax Americana" to praise the United States for having supported the reunification of Germany despite the lukewarm, if not outright opposed, views of some of America's European allies including Britain and France. Quite recently, former Philippine President Fidel Valdez Ramos, far from uncritical in some of his views of the US, told a Washington audience that "the immediate reality—as I see it – is that a de facto "American peace" is being imposed on East Asia and other troubled portions of the world... Our countries in East Asia must work together, to use this Pax Americana just as the European Union did, to speed up East Asian and Asia-Pacific economic integration and security cooperation."

Still other authors in considerable numbers criticize Americans for resisting to acknowledge their nation's imperial status and remind them that their global interests and influence oblige them to deal with threats to peace, terrorist groupings, proliferators and owners of weapons of mass destruction, and a broad range of social, medical and other crises. Still others, focused specifically on the unending conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, insist that America must find the answer, as Bill Clinton tried at the end of his term, even if it had domestic political costs. Another version of this particular proposition includes proposals for deployment of US troops to the region to enforce or at least supervise a solution.

It is doubtful that this particular option would obtain Congressional support and funding, even if an administration were ready to send troops. One has to wonder whether NATO or the EU, where complaints about American unilateralism

„Arrogance of power“

Ronald Steel's book was widely circulated

Ramos: „American peace“ is being imposed on East Asia

Unending conflict between Israel and the Palestinians

**EU, where complaints about
American unilateralism
abound**

**US military and economic
support of Yugoslavia**

Tito's death

**Break-up of the
Soviet empire**

**Poos: „... hour of Europe
not the hour of the
Americans“**

abound and ambitions to build Europe into a major international power are expounded, would contemplate a role as arbiter and guardian of a Middle East settlement which is bound to have opponents on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides.

On the other hand, after overcoming serious differences, it proved possible for the US and its European allies to cooperate in dealing with the severe crisis that erupted in the early nineties in the Balkans. Yugoslavia had long been a concern for the US and the Europeans in the early post-war period. Tito was seen as a mounting Soviet-directed threat against Greece, resulting in the previously mentioned programs of assistance for both Greece and Turkey in the Truman administration. In fact, however, many of Tito's activities aroused Stalin's anger and led to Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform and to a major Soviet campaign against "Titoism". US military and economic support of Yugoslavia resulted and later in the Cold War NATO considered contingency plans in the event of Soviet and Warsaw Pact actions against the country.

Given underlying tensions within Yugoslavia, there also was concern about Soviet-backed efforts to remove Tito or to dismantle the Yugoslav state. While there were occasional efforts to reduce the acute hostilities between Moscow and Belgrade, Western concerns remained, especially in the event of Tito's death. The latter had made provisions to maintain the country's unity after his death but with the end of the Cold War and declining fears of Soviet intervention, unity began to crack openly.

Thus, while the break-up of the Soviet empire and the Soviet Union itself was remarkably bloodless (except in Romania), age-old hostilities among the various ethnic, confessional, and national groups reappeared with much bloodshed in Yugoslavia. The US, having just led the defeat of Saddam Hussein in the first Gulf War, and no longer concerned about Soviet exploitation of internal Yugoslav strife, was disinclined to become militarily involved in the Balkans. NATO initially adhered closely to the definition of the alliance's "treaty area", which did not include Yugoslavia. Luxembourg's Prime Minister Jacques Poos proclaimed in 1991 that the crisis signaled the "hour of Europe not the hour of the Americans". Even so, turbulence in proximity to NATO could not be ignored.

The UN intervention, approved by the Security Council, proved largely ineffectual, resulting eventually in NATO's first military campaign. The US participated, in part in response to appeals from newly-elected French President Chirac. Non-NATO countries also participated, including Russia under special terms avoiding Moscow's subordination to NATO's chain of command.

The Dayton agreements in 1995 ended the Yugoslav state that had emerged after World Wars One and Two. In the process, much disagreement was evident between the US and its allies and among the European allies. Within the US it proved difficult to get consensus that American vital interests were at stake in the Balkans. President Clinton felt obliged to assure the public and Congress that US forces would stay no longer than one year, a commitment that proved impossible to keep. Still, NATO operated and fought together for the first time and thus transformed its role as a Cold War alliance. In addition, new members from the East were invited to join and others participated in the Partnership for Peace.

A new identity was not easy to define or achieve, especially as the European Union began the process of establishing a security and defense identity for itself. While the gradual transfer of NATO's Balkan role to the EU has been proceeding relatively smoothly, the relationship between the transatlantic alliance and the European Union has found itself caught up in the transatlantic divergences of recent years. Even so, it is NATO rather than the EU's ESDP that has assumed significant new military responsibilities in working toward security in Afghanistan alongside a separate US command. So far, at least, similar arrangements have not proved feasible in Iraq. But NATO has clearly had to reshape its military concepts and force postures and replace those of the Cold War.

Conjectures about an American role in solving long-standing and dangerous disputes are sometimes heard about Kashmir. There is no doubt that peace between India and Pakistan is a major American interest. In some respects, American relations with India have lately been better and broader than those with Pakistan, even if historically there have been times when the US has tilted toward Pakistan. This may happen again in some form and therefore allow an American role in Kashmir and other Indian-Pakistani problems. (It is virtually excluded that either country will dismantle its nuclear weaponry). But the problems between the US and Pakistan in regard to Afghanistan difficulties would probably stand in the way of whatever assistance the US could render on Kashmir. Even if there should be a miraculous agreement, it is hard to see the US alone providing forces to police such a deal.

Prominent on the list of crises which the US finds it necessary to deal with is the North Korean nuclear weapons program. This is by now at least a ten-year program which early in the 1990s looked like it had been resolved by the two Koreas in an agreement to keep the peninsula nuclear-free, and then by the so-called Framework Agreement between the US and North Korea which essentially committed the North Koreans to stop their weapons program under IAEA safeguards in return for US provision of heavy oil and after several years two light water reactors through an organization cal-

The Dayton Agreements in 1995

NATO transformed its role as a Cold War alliance

Gradual transfer of NATO's Balkan role to the EU

Peace between India and Pakistan is a major American interest

The North Korean nuclear weapons program

KEDO

led KEDO (Korean Energy Development Organization) with US, Japanese, South Korean and EU membership, as well as establishment of diplomatic ties and other kinds of normalized relations.

North Korea threw out the IAEA

This agreement never worked smoothly and military clashes between North and South continued periodically. The Bush administration did not admire the Framework Agreement worked out under the Clinton administration and it took its time to develop a new approach. By the time the first contacts were made, the US had learned that the North Koreans had in fact been developing a uranium enrichment program as an alternative to the prohibited and safeguarded plutonium-based program. North Korea threw out the IAEA and insisted that it would only deal with the US, which in turn refused further contacts unless the North Koreans stopped their entire program.

Eventually, a six-party forum was arranged (US, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and North Korea) with Pyongyang demanding a full-fledged non-aggression treaty from the US and insisting that it would resume its earlier program and in any case was entitled to have its own deterrent against US aggression.

In the US pressures were mounted on the administration to make the first move

Once again, both in the US and elsewhere, pressures were mounted on the administration to make the first move toward a deal, while the other five powers would use their limited influence to move the North. China, long reluctant to spend political capital in the North, did evidently exert some pressure but still remained cautious for fear economic sanctions could lead to large refugee flows and perhaps even the collapse of the Northern regime.

Many ups and downs and much bargaining with North Korea are to be expected

The US, facing difficult relations with South Korea on several problems, understandably including opposition to military action which would leave Seoul dangerously exposed, has made efforts to get agreement to a collective security guarantee for North Korea, in writing if necessary. (A somewhat similar arrangement through the UN Security Council was worked out for Ukraine when it turned Soviet weapons and delivery systems over to Russia.) No doubt many ups and downs and much bargaining with North Korea are to be expected. But as elsewhere, for example, with the Iranian nuclear program, the US is in no position to impose an agreement on North Korea. In the Iranian case, the French, British and Germans have lately taken political initiatives. Some see this as a "good cop (Europe) – bad cop (US)" approach. Maybe so, but not desirable in the longer-run.

The US-led Proliferation Security Initiative

One result of both the North Korean and Iranian and possibly other nuclear programs is the recently established US-led Proliferation Security Initiative, including Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Britain. Others can join but it is not a UN body. It is desi-

igned to interdict shipments of weapons of mass destruction and related delivery systems and technologies. Similar partnerships regarding WMD problems have been established over the years with mixed success.

How effective such multilateral arrangements can be against determined states or groups is uncertain but it is an example of American willingness to share the burdens of dealing with proliferation threats. It is noteworthy that NATO and EU members have associated themselves with this undertaking, and, particularly, that France and Germany are among its members.

This paper has been selective in reviewing both the historical background to the emergence of the US as a global power and some of the contemporary manifestations of this status. Events have shown that whatever terminology is used in describing this status – Pax Americana, Empire, hegemony, etc. – it is evident that American power has its limits, not only in material terms but in the readiness of Americans to wield this power to deal with problems around the world. Americans respond positively to the role of America as a leader but do not necessarily do so when the US appears in the role as a global policeman. (East Timor and Liberia were instances of very limited American participation in peace operations. In Africa, currently several such operations are being conducted by ad-hoc coalitions or under EU auspices.)

Moreover, it needs to be observed that even the greatest powers, whether imperial or not, are not invulnerable, especially when less powerful state actors or non-state groups, choose to concentrate their power on a particular vulnerability, a form of conflict known as asymmetric. Great power does not necessarily bring with it omnipotence and omniscience. Collective wisdom may produce greater wisdom, although this too is no axiom. And collective action, if properly and effectively organized, is preferable to individual action.

But the US, long before the Bush Presidency, has encountered among some of its allies, and others, the proposition that it cannot be trusted with its power and must therefore be restrained by counterweights and vetoes in the UN Security Council or in other bodies operating by unanimity.

But the US like others, obviously has significant interests. If a pattern emerges that handicaps or prevents the US from pursuing such interests, the world is likely to become a more turbulent place than it already is. If the US is driven to unilateral interventions, its global security role could well be diminished. If the Europeans believe that threats and crises can be dealt with by "engagement" and diplomacy they may well be mistaken, the more so since the planned ESDP forces will have their limits. Statecraft in the Atlantic world should get to work to stop the current drift and build on the great achievements of the last half century.

An example of American willingness to share the burdens of dealing with proliferation threats

It is evident that American power has its limits

Collective action is preferable to individual action

Statecraft in the Atlantic world should get to work to stop the current drift