CAN AMERICA REMAIN COMMITTED?

U.S. Security Horizons in the 1990s

edited by

DAVID G. HAGLUND

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Preface and Acknowledgments

The twelve months that spanned the period between the early springtimes of 1991 and 1992 may well turn out to constitute the most important year for American foreign and security policy in half a century. Encasing the dawning of a new and different security era, like macabre parentheses, were two columns of black smoke—that of 1991 over the newly liberated Kuwait, and that of 1992 over the embattled district of South-Central Los Angeles. Within these acrid temporal brackets unfolded a set of developments of utmost significance for American foreign and security policy and for the very meaning of the country's external commitments.

Who could have predicted, in the early aftermath of the victory over Iraq, that a year hence the American mood would be characterized by such an abiding sense of fatigue with foreign policy, which had simply become a taboo topic among political contenders, one not to be flaunted even by an incumbent president whose greatest—some say only—successes occurred abroad? In April 1991, there was much talk of America bestriding a unipolar world, throughout which its writ would run to assure the interests of itself, its allies, and even the "international community" as a whole. At that moment, the question was not *whether* America would remain "committed" but *how* it would do so.

By late April 1992, the mood had been radically altered. Although few were openly advocating isolation, there could be no question that the country's concentration on internal economic and social problems was such that the domestic agenda promised literally to swamp the foreign one for the first time in more than fifty years. Even before the Soviet Union disintegrated, pressures had been building for the country to "turn inward." With the demise of the great adversary thought necessary to keep America involved abroad, and especially in Europe, those pressures intensified.

What also could not have been foreseen in April 1991 was the speed with which the domestic malaise would envelop the policy debate in America. Although there is a certain risk of overstatement associated with the near-instantaneous analysis of contemporary events, one can at the very least suggest that the Los Angeles riots will have an impact

not only on America's domestic policies but on its foreign ones as well. The effect of Los Angeles will be felt abroad firstly through the weakening of America's "soft power," that is its ability to project influence through the strength of its social and political model. It is not just the country's adversaries such as Libya that have been quick to trumpet the inconsistencies in America's attempts to order the world when disorder is so prevalent at home; even the allies have not hesitated to say, in the manner of France's president, François Mitterrand, "we told you so." But that is not all; and America's allies, especially the Europeans, would be wise to reflect on what it might mean for them should Washington really decide that serious attention and resources needed to be allocated to solving the domestic crisis. It does not require powers of prophecy to envision a clamor for diverting to the "home front" assets that are currently being claimed by foreign obligations, with ultimate consequences no one can foretell.

It is with the myriad of foreign security commitments, and the means available to America to fulfill them, that the chapters in this book are concerned. This volume represents the scholarly results of the collective project (on US security horizons) mounted by the Queen's University Centre for International Relations in the 1990-91 academic year. The Centre annually undertakes one such endeavor, each time on a different security theme. As with all these projects, this one featured an authors' workshop, held in May 1991, followed by the redrafting and editing of the arguments vetted there. The mounting of these annual research efforts requires the support of many individuals and institutions, and it is a pleasure for me to acknowledge that assistance here.

As always, the Military and Strategic Studies Program of the Canadian Department of National Defence remains an indispensable sustainer of the Centre's research. It is with deep gratitude that I thank Joyce Agnew and others associated with that program for having so consistently and generously assisted our work. As well, the Centre is fortunate to have assigned to it each year four serving officers from three NATO countries: Canada, Germany, and the United States. In their year at Queen's, these Visiting Defence Fellows (VDFs) participate actively in both research and teaching in national and international security, and we are indeed heartened by the ongoing commitment made to us in this regard by the Canadian Armed Forces, the German Ministry of Defense, the United States Air Force, and the United States Army. Needless to say, the views expressed in the VDFs' chapters are their own and are not to be taken to represent the positions of their governments.

Others have contributed in various ways. Always of critical importance are the efforts of those who play such a large part in ensuring that the workshop becomes a de facto editorial committee for the ensuing

manuscript. To the following scholars and government officials, all of whom took the time to come to Kingston in May 1991, I am grateful to: keynote speaker Francis Fukuyama and discussants Cynthia Cannizzo, Michel Fortmann, Joseph Jockel, Paul Letourneau, Neil MacFarlane, Michael Mastanduno, Kim Richard Nossal, Jean Edward Smith, and Elizabeth Speed.

Finally, the technical staff of the Queen's Centre for International Relations and the School of Policy Studies continues to exceed this editor's expectations through the efficiency, diligence, and good cheer consistently demonstrated throughout all steps of the production process. To Kay Ladouceur, Mary Kerr, Marilyn Banting, and Valerie Jarus go my warm thanks for another job well done.

David G. Haglund

Contents

Tables

Introduction: America in a Unipolar World?

David G. Haglund

I

There is an old Russian adage that maintains that a pessimist is an informed optimist. If so, then the Defense Planning Guidance draft being developed by the Pentagon in early March 1992 seems, at first glance, to be a most Russian-like document. For in this 46-page attempt to identify America's likeliest security challenges in the post-Cold War world, Defense Department analysts were showing evidence of both optimism and pessimism as they scanned their country's security horizon.[1]

On the optimistic side, they betrayed little indication that they took seriously either the contentious debate among scholars and policy analysts about a postulated American "decline" or the palpable signals coming from the US electorate ever since the November 1991 Pennsylvania senatorial election of Harris Wofford—an event that seemingly indicated that foreign policy activism would not be as marketable in early 1992 as it had been just a year before, when the Gulf War had rallied the American people (if not the Congress) behind President George Bush's great coalition against Iraq. Indeed, to the Pentagon drafters, the salient feature of the post-Cold War world was that it was a unipolar world. In it, the United States was and presumably would remain in a remarkably blessed position, alone among nations the one chosen to provide leadership in the realm of military security, thereby guaranteeing that its and its allies' interests would be safeguarded for years to come. Significantly, given that during the height of the Gulf War the White House had been making much of a "New World Order" in which the United Nations would play a central part in the provision of international security, the Pentagon planners displayed remarkably little enthusiasm for the ideal of collective internationalism. Unilateralism, on the other hand, they would not reject outright, but their preferred approach was one in which Washington assembled coalitions of the willing as events might require. It goes without saying that collective

security, which a few analysts regarded as having made something of a comeback as a result of the Gulf War, would not be a viable means of ensuring global peace and order, if the writers of this document had anything to say about future US policy.[2]

On the pessimistic side, the drafters noted that the demise of the Soviet Union had not meant the end of threat to American interests. Even if they appeared to believe in the "unipolar moment," they still understood the world to be a menacing place.[3] Two principal sources of risk were identified in the draft document. Although the drafters themselves did not employ these terms, it might be fair to classify those risks in the following manner. The first was of some possible new geopolitical rival emerging to take the place of the vanished Soviet Union; let us call this the risk of the "loss of unipolarity." The second, less grave but still important, risk was associated with conflict in the Third World, where the US was going to have to intervene, alone or with partners, in order to assure that its security and its values were respected; this might be labelled the risk of "peripheral chaos." The challenges could take a multitude of forms, but one stood highest on the threat agenda, the problem of nuclear proliferation to Third World states thought crazy enough to want actually to employ nuclear weapons in warfare.[4]

For all of its stress on commitments in the new security era, the draft, if press reports can be credited, seems to have been rather less attentive to the corollary theme of capabilities. Put differently, there appears to have been insufficient recognition of what a celebrated chronicler of American foreign policy half a century ago identified as the tendency for states to fail to balance obligations with resources, otherwise known, after its popularizer, as the "Lippmann Gap."[5] It is the thesis of some of the contributors to this volume, and it certainly reflects the views of their editor, that it makes little sense to focus nearly exclusively on the military face of security without at the same time paying attention to the economic bases of security. The Defense Planning Guidance drafters are certainly on sound ground in propounding the end of the Cold War, and it is far from risky to postulate that the bipolar world has had its day. It is another thing altogether, however, to argue that unipolarity must be the dominant image for the global security arena in the 1990s. At the very least, one is entitled to raise the prospect that the world may be becoming once again "multipolar," not just in the economic context, but perhaps in the security one as well.

This is not to deny the obvious, that the United States is today the principal possessor of raw military power, taken in James Lee Ray's somewhat unsettling usage as implying the "relative ability to destroy things and kill people."[6] If this were all that power meant, then a good case could be mounted for the unipolar claim, since few would wish to

dispute that both relatively and absolutely America's power has increased over the past decade. But power, if it is to mean anything over time, must also have an economic basis, and here the issue becomes more complex.

Even the Pentagon drafters seem to sense the complexity, their belief in unipolarity to the contrary notwithstanding. For their worry about the loss of unipolarity is only partly rooted in an apprehended restoration of Soviet (or merely just Russian) power in the service of anti-democratic governments of either the left or right; the planners also invoke the specter, if only implicitly, of a European or Asian challenger when they write that "our strategy must now refocus on precluding the emergence of any potential future global competitor."[7]

This last worry is hardly new, and one political scientist has made a name for himself theorizing about the prospects (held by him to be high) of a "hegemonic war" bringing about a reshuffling of the global power structure.[8] For this writer, Robert Gilpin, it is economic forces that ultimately will determine which powers rise and which decline, and though it may not be fair to lump him in with such avowed "declinists" as Paul Kennedy and David Calleo, he does nonetheless present a parsimonious, possibly even reliable, theoretical basis for understanding the future security challenges facing America.

Needless to say, neither Gilpin's "hegemonic-stability" thesis nor the "imperial-overstretch" vision of Kennedy represents an axiom for US security policy: it is quite possible that the contrasting vision of reality entertained by Joseph Nye is more in keeping with the truth (as well as with the Pentagon drafters), and perhaps it really is the case that America is "bound to lead"—if for no other reason than that no one else will.[9] But before one rejects entirely the message of the declinists, it would be well to take note of two developments in US foreign and security policy.

The first concerns the apparent growth in salience of economic issues (especially trade) as sources of division among allies who not too long ago had the glue of the Soviet threat to bind them together in common security cause. It has for some time been a staple of many writers on the left that capitalist states simply could not work in harness for very long, for the good reason that their natural (to some, necessary) competitiveness would engender political and military conflicts between them; this of course was a view also held by Lenin and Stalin, as well as countless Marxian analysts of international relations. More recently, emphatically non-Marxians have been inclined to draw a link between economics and security cooperation, and while they may see no reason for competition in a world of "geo-economics" to take non-economic forms (*pace* the Leninists), they do hold it likely that an increasingly fractious global

economy will bode ill for the security cooperation Western allies managed to attain during the Cold War.[10] During a conference on international security in Munich in early 1992, Vice President Dan Quayle seemed to link the fate of the Uruguay trade round to that of the transatlantic alliance—a linkage President Bush chose to recant later that same week.[11] Nevertheless, those who attended that conference came away with the clear impression that the GATT dispute over agricultural subsidies (of all things!) had become a major challenge for the Atlantic Alliance. As one of the conferees, Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) bluntly put it: "For the first time, it appears that trade may be a far more significant issue than NATO itself."[12]

The second reason to pause before discarding the declinist analysis completely has little to do with the "objective reality" of decline or power cycles, and much more to do, as the quote immediately above suggests, with the perception of Americans that their foreign policy interests have in many ways become too costly to maintain. We might call this "phenomenological declinism," and imply by that label that if the American public and much of the political class come to believe, as they apparently have, that the time has never been better to address compelling domestic needs now that the Cold War is over, then a retrenchment in US security commitments to others may be at hand. This does not and perhaps will not mean that America is once again going "isolationist," an issue to which I return in my concluding chapter, but it should at least give pause to those who are wont to imagine that leadership and unipolarity will definitely characterize the US security horizon of the 1990s.

II

It is with the theoretical issues of decline and "structural change" as well as with the practical implications for US security policy of an era marked by resource constraint that Allen Sens' chapter is concerned. To be sure, the Pentagon drafters are familiar enough with structural change, for do they not place great emphasis upon the preservation of unipolarity? For international relations theorists, a shift from one structural variant to another (viz., from bipolarity to unipolarity or multipolarity) is sufficient basis for concluding that structural change has occurred. (There are other bases, such as an altered differentiation of the functions fulfilled by units of the system, or a radical transformation in the system's ordering principle, which need not concern us further.)[13] But what the Pentagon analysts apparently devote little attention to,

namely the dynamics of "uneven growth," Sens spends some time discussing.

His first assumption, derived from his reading of international relations theory, is that whether or not the declinists or their rivals, the "revivalists," are correct, both sides in the dispute agree that America must allocate more of its scarce resources to rebuilding the country's physical and social infrastructure. It may be that there is no consensus at all on the "facts" of US decline, or on whether the US is less "productive" than its Western competitors.[14] But in light of the recession of 1991-92 and the burgeoning federal budget deficit, nearly all agree that spending for defense must come down. How far it can or will drop is still open to dispute; less uncertain is the contention, as Sens phrases it, that "[f]or the next few years, and possibly for some time thereafter, Americans will find that the *relative* costs of foreign policy commitments are going to be steeper than they would like."

Whether they will be steeper than Americans will bear is a matter explored in this volume's concluding chapter. Sens is of the view that although some commitments will be reduced (for instance, the one to Europe), it is unlikely that America will embrace anything like the isolationism of the interwar period. The real debate will be over which variant of internationalism it pursues—the unalloyed multilateralism associated with collective internationalism, which places a premium on cooperation not only with allies but perhaps more importantly with the United Nations, or a more unilateral version of internationalism, termed by Sens "soft multilateralism." He tends toward the latter, and concludes by observing that the US should be able to avail itself of a cushion of time in the 1990s to make the necessary adaptations in its security policy, away from the far-flung obligations incurred during the Cold War. Although the restructuring of the smaller military should endow the US with enough capability to continue to safeguard important interests, he cautions that "American policymakers would be unwise to find themselves at the end of the decade with the same global military obligations they possessed at the beginning of it."

One of those global military obligations about which there is currently much discussion, of course, is that toward the European allies. The US has been, by any reckoning, a European power for a half-century, a period sufficiently long that one sometimes forgets that for most of its history it had chosen to be a decidedly non-European power. James Winship's chapter dares, as he suggests, to "question the unquestionable," namely the persistence of the American commitment to European security.

The Cold War's end may have complicated, but it has not settled, the question of the future American role in Europe. Winship, in what is really a literature review, presents a series of contrasting opinions on the part of Americans who have been pondering the country's European commitment, and while he is careful to avoid intruding too conspicuously into their debate, he does offer some thought-provoking suggestions. The most important of these is his contention that, for policymakers in Washington, there is great folly in trying to pretend that transatlantic security affairs can continue to be managed in the post-Cold War era exactly as they were before 1989, as basically an arrangement in which one of the allies, the US, was decidedly more equal than the others. Washington, in his opinion, cannot expect that as its forces get drawn down (to levels that still have not been decided, as I discuss in the conclusion), its ability to preside over transatlantic security will continue undiminished. Inherently skeptical about unipolarity assumptions, Winship cautions that "in its efforts to avoid being shut out of the new Europe, the United States must avert the final irony of being either so assertive or so protective of its national interest (narrowly viewed) as to fulfill its own worst-case scenario."

Not surprisingly, America has yet to debate its place in that new Europe, partly for reasons relating to its inability to conceptualize its interests in remaining militarily committed to Europe, with no apparent threat to justify it being there.[15] But there is another reason why it has proven so difficult for Americans to figure out what should be the country's interest in European security, and how best it should be advanced, one that relates to developments within Western Europe. Simply put, it is far from easy even for Western Europeans to explain what this new security "architecture" they are elaborating should or will look like. If there can be said to be consensus in Western Europe on the ongoing need for some American troop presence (and even France seems to accept that need), there is much less consensus on what the institutional arrangements for European security in the 1990s will be. Winship warns against the assumption that Europe after 1992 must take on supranational dimensions, say some even along the lines of the American federation. "Europe may well move toward a measure of political union," he concedes, "but it is far more likely to be based on a high degree of policy coordination between sovereign states than upon a grant of authority to a single sovereign authority."

Should one be optimistic or pessimistic about the future ability of the Western Europeans to manage their security challenges, whether those be internally or externally derived? Here, the authors Winship canvasses are, as one would expect, divided. But on one point there would seem to be unity: that if European and, by extension, transatlantic security

arrangements are to make a successful adaptation to the post-Cold War era, it will be in no small measure as a result of Germany's ability to continue working in harmony both with its European neighbors and with its transatlantic partner of the Cold War era. It is this issue that Klaus-Dieter Mensel addresses in his chapter on German-American security cooperation.

For Mensel, there is no reason why German unification, accompanied as he believes it will be by a quickening of European integration, should prove inimical to American interests. To the contrary, he argues that "German unification can certainly serve American interests, primarily though not exclusively through the Germans assuming more responsibility in the pursuit of international order." In short, there may be some basis for assuming that a true "partnership" between the US and the united Germany can evolve in the 1990s. To date, however, such rhetoric has tended to disguise some real differences that have marred the bilateral relationship.

Mensel shows the damaging impact, even if only a short-term one, that their divergent responses to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had upon the two countries, who in the months prior to Saddam Hussein's aggression were being touted as the constituents of the Atlantic Alliance's newest "special relationship." The Gulf Crisis and subsequent War threatened to make a mockery of that relationship, just as it served to drive a wedge between Germany and its European allies. To Mensel, the contrasting perceptions of Washington and Bonn were unfortunate, but at least the latter's behavior was consistent with the record of postwar German strategic thinking, even if alliance solidarity seemed to have disguised the most profound of German-American doctrinal cleavages during the Cold War. But cleavages there were, and Mensel holds that Germany's initial Gulf War diplomacy was in keeping with its post-1949 stress on the avoidance of using (or even contemplating) force save to repel an invasion of its own territory. "Nobody," he states, "should condemn the Germans for their reaction, the wise reflection of a disastrous history." Ironically, Germans just a short time before were triggering fears on the part of those who were certain that unification must be merely a prelude to the rebirth of militarism; now in the heat of the Gulf combat, they were being excoriated for their pacifism.

Mensel accepts that Germany will have to evolve a new security consensus, one that will allow its military forces to play a greater role in ensuring national and international security, even if that must mean having the ability to deploy outside NATO's traditional "area" of operations. Mindful of the negative images such a policy adaptation would stimulate outside Germany (not to mention *inside* it), he argues that the

country's 40 years of democratic development within the tight embrace of Western integration will permit the united Germany to conduct itself as a trusted security partner. It is essential, in his vision of the new Europe, that the United States maintain a military presence, albeit a reduced one. For a meaningful German role to evolve, there must be a similarly meaningful transatlantic partnership, one resting upon two equal pillars of NATO. Thus, says Mensel, the US should work to support, and not try to frustrate, European efforts to achieve greater defense integration, including such initiatives as those relating to Franco-German military cooperation.

In many ways, the American security relationship with Japan displays intriguing parallels with the German-American partnership. To start with the obvious, both Japan and Germany were occupied by the United States after World War II, and both developed into stable, pro-Western democracies whose support could usually be counted upon by Washington in important matters related to the common security. Both Japan and Germany, moreover, evolved into formidable economic powers as well, and given each country's political and even constitutional inhibitions against the pursuit of policy ends through the use of force, each can serve as an exemplar of the "trading state," or the quintessentially "civilian power."[16] Moreover, each country came to represent, during the Cold War, the sheet anchor for America's security commitments in a vast region, with Japan constituting for the commitment to Asian security what Germany represented for America's European commitment. Finally, and in light of the above, not surprisingly, both Japan and Germany found themselves in temporary conflict with the United States as a result of the Persian Gulf Crisis and subsequent War.

If the Mensel chapter concluded on a reasonably optimistic note (concerning the likelihood of Germany's assuming more responsibility for the provision of regional and international security), the same cannot be said for the chapter by Michael Hawes. While it is certainly the case that some in Washington have expected both Bonn and Tokyo to be more active in taking up what the US often assumes to be their international "obligations," it is far from evident, as Hawes demonstrates, that the Japanese are prepared to modify very much the foreign-policy orientation that served them so well during the Cold War. "In a very real sense," he writes, "the postwar era was an extremely fortuitous period for the Japanese." The country became democratic, peaceful, and prosperous. But the structural underpinnings of the Cold War years have gradually been eroding, producing a security situation that is at once novel and potentially troubling for the Japanese, and problematical for their all-important alliance with the United States.