

Strategic Vision and Presidential Authority in the Post-Cold War Era

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“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”
— Proverbs

Vision is in vogue, particularly strategic vision. As America begins to contend with the problems of the post-Cold War world, there is increased recognition that some sort of guiding image of the future is necessary if the United States is to steer its way through the uncharted contours of this new era after 45 years of dealing with a familiar strategic landscape. At the highest level of American government, the national strategic level occupied by the President and his advisors, this image is strategic vision. Simply put, strategic vision is that picture of future change desired by governmental elites. It takes into account the probabilities of informed extrapolations of current foreign and domestic trend lines that will affect national security. Thus far, primarily due to the Gulf crisis, much of this type of attention from the current Administration has centered on the management of power. “We have a vision of a new partnership of nations that transcends the cold war,” President Bush told the United Nations in October of 1990. And in his speech announcing the commencement of Desert Storm, the President was even more explicit: “We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order, a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations.”¹

But while we can agree with the prophet in Proverbs that vision is a necessary condition, we should also note that it is not a sufficient condition. As history has consistently demonstrated, there is a symbiotic relationship between strategic vision and decisive authority. Without such authority to

implement the vision, there remains only the sterile utterances of the prophet. On the other hand, decisive authority without vision, particularly at the highest levels of government, will produce politicians awash in a sea of expediency. But combine the insight of the prophet with the authority of the politician, and the result is the statesman at the national strategic level capable of achieving strategic vision.

It is by means of strategic vision that the statesman shapes and controls projected change instead of simply reacting to the forces and trends that swirl without direction into the future. He accomplishes this by dint of imagination and creativity and by balancing idealism with realism. Opportunism in this regard does not diminish statesmanship. Anyone desiring to shape events, whether politician or statesman, must be opportunistic to some degree. But the politician merely adjusts his purposes to fit reality, while the visionary statesman attempts to shape reality in terms of his purpose or the change he desires. "When technique becomes exalted over purpose," Henry Kissinger has pointed out in this regard, "men become the victims of their own complexities. They forget that every great achievement in every field was a vision before it became a reality. . . . There are two kinds of realists: those who use facts and those who create them. The West requires nothing so much as men able to create their own reality."²

Such leaders in times of upheaval and great change can inspire, challenge, and educate in terms of their image of the future. Education is particularly important, since statesmen have to bridge the gap between their vision and the experiences of their people, between their intuition and national tradition. It is not an easy process. As a result, there are few periods in history in which the confluence of strategic vision and decisive authority has lasted for very long.

Nowhere is this dilemma better illustrated than in the 1814-1815 Congress of Vienna. That assembly met in a time of great change at the end of 25 years of almost uninterrupted warfare in Europe. The Congress was

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marked by the high quality of representatives from the Great Powers, at least two of whom, Clemens von Metternich and Robert Castlereagh, demonstrate that strategic vision alone is not enough. Metternich, the Foreign Minister of the Austrian Empire, is an example of a statesman who limits his vision to the current experiences of his people and thus ultimately dooms his policy to sterility. In his case, it was a vision of the status quo, of the preservation of the multinational Austrian Empire in a time of great rising nationalism. Castlereagh, on the other hand, as the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, is an example of a statesman whose vision so far outruns the experience of his people that he fails to achieve the necessary domestic consensus for decisive authority, however wise the vision. That vision concerned the involvement of traditionally insular Great Britain in peacetime Continental politics in order to ensure equilibrium among the Great Powers.³

During the 20th century, the coexistence of strategic vision and decisive authority has come to depend in the United States on the ability of statesmen to resolve the natural tension in national security affairs between foreign and domestic policy. This requires, in turn, the expert manipulation of ends, ways, and means at the national strategic level.⁴ How well these elements are used will determine not only the quality of the statesman's strategic vision, but the length of time that vision is bolstered by decisive authority. In the light of these precepts, this article examines the use of strategic vision by US leaders after two victorious world wars, with a view toward clarifying the role of strategic vision in the tumultuous wake of the great Western victory in the Cold War itself.

Post-World War I Strategic Vision

Woodrow Wilson brought a traditionally isolationist United States into World War I by representing it as a great crusade, as a means to create a better world. And when that conflict ended, he continued the crusade with his strategic vision for the management of power called "collective security." That vision was a reaction to the balance-of-power system, "that old and evil order" with its "ugly plan . . . of alliances, of watchful jealousies, of rabid antagonisms," which Wilson perceived as the primary cause of the war. Ultimately, that war had to be fought to "do away with the old order and to establish a new one, . . . the center and characteristic of the old order [being] that unstable thing we used to call the 'balance of power.'"⁵

It was also a vision that did not shrink from the application of force. Under Wilsonian collective security, peace would not be based upon a precarious, unstable equilibrium with its minimal capacity for deterrence, but upon an overwhelming preponderance of power automatically applied by a central organization, the League of Nations, against any aggressor nation. "Mere agreements will not make peace secure," Wilson emphasized.

It will be absolutely necessary that a force be created . . . so much greater than the force of any nation now engaged or any alliance hitherto formed or projected that no nation, no probable combination of nations, could face or withstand it. If the peace presently to be made is to endure, it must be a peace made secure by the organized major force of mankind.⁶

Despite this realistic approach to power, it was idealism that ultimately prevented Wilson from acquiring the decisive authority to implement his vision of collective security. For the heart of that vision was his belief that all the nations of the world were fused together in a seamless web of interdependence. Any one nation would thus be willing to surrender some degree of sovereignty to the League of Nations, accepting in consequence some rein on its own security initiatives, in order to protect the security of other nations. The US Congress, of course, looked upon the vision quite differently. Opponents there argued that the League, in contravention of the American tradition of avoiding entangling alliances, was in fact such an alliance, whose charter contained "clauses which threatened the very existence of the United States as an independent power."⁷ Wilson, in turn, would not consider reservations that he believed might mutilate Article 10 of the League Covenant, with its commitment "to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League."⁸

The result was an impasse that Wilson attempted to circumvent by appealing directly to the American people for the authority to implement his strategic vision. The United States, he repeatedly stressed throughout his whistle-stop tour of the country, could not be ordered to fight by the League. A firm commitment to that organization, on the other hand, would act as a major deterrent to aggression in world affairs. In any event, the President emphasized, US forces would not be required for every case of collective action under the League. "If you want to put out a fire in Utah," he concluded one speech, "you do not send to Oklahoma for the fire engine."⁹ Most important, Wilson tied strategic ways and means to national security objectives, consistently reminding the public that the alternative to the League for American security in an increasingly interdependent world would be a garrison state requiring the United States "to have the biggest army in the world."

There will have to be universal conscription. There will have to be taxes such as even yet we have not seen. There will have to be a concentration of authority in the Government capable of using this terrible instrument. . . . You will have to have a staff like the German staff, and you will have to center in the Commander in Chief of the Army and the Navy the right to take instant action for the protection of the nation.¹⁰

While attempting to gain public support for his strategic vision, an exhausted Wilson suffered a massive stroke and was incapacitated for the

remainder of his presidency. In the end, it hardly mattered. The Wilsonian vision was simply too far removed from the experiences of mainstream American society. Ultimately, Wilson failed to gain decisive authority for his strategic vision because he could not convince the American public that collective security was any different from the concept of balance of power in terms of entangling alliances.

Post-World War II Strategic Vision

Even before World War II ended, there was a general Western consensus that a collective security system with a genuine enforcement mechanism should be established for the management of power in the postwar world. As the San Francisco Conference of 1945 creating the United Nations revealed, however, it was still a vision that lacked a realistic basis for decisive authority, not only in the United States but in the international community as well. The problem was that having just gone through a cataclysm brought about by great power aggression and antagonism, the majority of conference members became convinced that it would be impossible to create a collective security system that could cope with any such future threats posed by the great powers. The result was the veto power given to the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. This decision was made not in the idealistic belief that the great powers would continue to live in peace and that the veto would never be used, but with the expectation that there would be occasions on which it would be used to avoid great power confrontation. That the final result was something less than the ideal vision was best expressed by the Mexican delegate, who noted that the conference was “engaged in establishing a world order in which the mice could be stamped out but in which the lions would not be restrained.”¹¹

For the United States, it was left to George Kennan, a career foreign service officer, to define a strategic vision for the management of power in the years after World War II. Beginning with his famous “long telegram” to the State Department from his Moscow posting in 1946 and continuing in the next few years with speeches and articles, Kennan outlined a vision squarely focused on the Soviet threat. That threat was not going to go away, he emphasized, because Soviet legitimacy was based on the fiction of an external American menace. As a consequence, the United States must give up idealistic visions such as making the world safe for democracy. Instead, American efforts should be focused on making the world safe for diversity, on creating a multipolar balance of power that would include the restoration of Germany and Japan. The objective of all this, Kennan concluded, would be to contain Soviet expansionism, to use a combination of patience and firmness to keep the Soviet Union confined to the Eurasian landmass until such time as citizens throughout the USSR insisted on major domestic reform, thus moderating

Soviet foreign policy. "The United States has in its power," he elaborated in his famous "Mr. X" article of 1947,

to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.¹²

The orientation of Kennan's strategic vision on the Soviet threat was significant. To begin with, as that threat became more apparent in the opening years of the Cold War, the orientation insured the acceptance of that vision, first by governmental elites and then by the American people. Moreover, because that threat was to endure for 45 years with varying degrees of intensity, the entire succession of US Presidents in the Cold War from Truman to Reagan enjoyed the historically anomalous coincidence of a coherent strategic vision and overall decisive authority.

There was, however, a price to pay. The ability of each administration to remain in office after 1945 was still dependent on reducing the natural tension between foreign and domestic policy, a tension that was increasingly exacerbated by the requirements of containment. As a consequence, the application of national ways and means to implement the strategic vision during the Cold War fell into two distinct patterns oriented on this national security tension. They reflected the strategic paradox that actions designed to minimize cost tend to escalate risks, while those aimed at minimizing risks tend to drive up costs. The alternation between these two patterns—cost-minimization and risk-minimization—had profound social, political, economic, and military implications that continue to affect the ability of American leaders to realize their strategic vision in the post-Cold War era.¹³

The initial pattern of minimizing costs in dealing with the new strategic vision was a natural outgrowth of the cutback in national means as the United States began its traditional postwar demobilization. This approach to containment was favored by Kennan because it allowed the United States, as he perceived it, to choose not only the time and place of responding to the threat, but the appropriate elements of power as well. The basic requirement of the strategy, he pointed out, was to distinguish between vital and peripheral interests, the *sine qua non* for avoiding reactive policy. At the heart of this approach was Kennan's belief that any attempt to generate enough means to meet all possible threats in implementing the strategic vision could bankrupt the country or at the very least have seriously adverse societal impacts. Political authority might not long remain with a leader who sacrificed national economic prosperity on the altar of indiscriminate containment.¹⁴

The Truman Administration officially promulgated the strategic vision of containment—the Truman Doctrine—in March 1947, but, despite the apparent open-ended commitment of US means worldwide implicit in that doctrine, quickly adopted the cost-minimizing strategy of implementation. The basic problem with the pattern, however, as Korea and Vietnam would prove, was that the strategic premise of making rational distinctions between vital and peripheral interests did not take into consideration psychological insecurities, always a problem in an open pluralistic democracy. Losses of peripheral areas to Soviet domination, for instance, might be psychologically damaging in more vital ones. For such scenarios, minimizing costs appeared to add the possible loss of deterrent credibility to the concomitant increase in risk. These insecurities, as John Lewis Gaddis has pointed out, “could as easily develop from the distant sound of falling dominoes as from the rattling of sabres next door.”¹⁵

The second pattern of strategic ways and means—risk-minimization—also emerged in the Truman years, outlined in one of the most famous of all Cold War documents, NSC-68. That document officially enshrined the strategic vision of containing the expansion of the Soviet Union for an indefinite period until domestic pressures brought the Kremlin “to the point of modifying its behavior to conform to generally accepted international standards.”¹⁶ But NSC-68 outlined a risk-minimizing strategy based on the fundamental assumption that the United States could generate enough means to defend its interests wherever they existed. Interests, in fact, were a function of the threat, and since that threat could be anywhere, there was no need to accept the risks involved in attempting to differentiate those interests that were vital from those that were not.

As we have seen, however, as the risks were lowered the costs inevitably increased. The decision to respond wherever aggression occurred but to limit that response to the level of provocation encountered placed the United States in a reactive mode, leaving it to potential adversaries to determine how and under what circumstances American resources would be expended. As the United States, in its first encounter with the complexities of limited war, saw the Korean War drag on, public frustration mounted. With the prospect of indefinitely high expenditures of men and materiel in pursuit of a strategy alien to American tradition, this public frustration began to erode the authority of the Truman Administration to pursue its strategic vision.

Subsequent approaches to the implementation of containment oscillated over the years between the two extremes of cost-minimizing and risk-minimizing. These shifts were due primarily to public perceptions of how well each administration achieved an equilibrium between the domestic and foreign elements of national security policy while realizing the strategic vision. The Eisenhower-Dulles “New Look” was clearly a cost-minimizing reaction to the risk-minimizing strategy of the last years of the Truman Administration. It was also a strategy, however, that Eisenhower believed was the only way to achieve

the strategic vision. Like Kennan, he perceived that any attempt to generate enough means to protect undifferentiated interests against all possible threats would require a degree of fiscal austerity that would alter American society—that any attempt at absolute risk-free security might destroy what the United States was trying to achieve. For Eisenhower, ever conscious of the tension between foreign and domestic policy, national security and economic stability went hand in hand. He remained convinced that if the American public perceived the cost of internationalism in the strategic vision as indefinite national sacrifice, the result would be isolationism.

The combination of cost-minimizing and a determination to regain control over how and where the United States would defend its interests resulted in an explicit willingness by the Eisenhower Administration to run risks in pursuit of the strategic vision, most notably with its conspicuous reliance on nuclear deterrence combined with a relative deemphasis on conventional military forces. The Administration's problem was that the American people, by that time very much aware of the principal external national security threat and thoroughly imbued with the strategic vision, were not willing to run such risks. Increasingly, criticism centered on the strategy of massive retaliation, particularly in its possible implementation in minor crises such as Quemoy and Matsu. Most important, there was the Sputnik crisis and the so-called missile gap. And although no such gap actually existed, it was the public perception of inadequate means in pursuit of the strategic vision that was politically decisive.

The result of the perceived deficiencies in the Eisenhower approach was the strategy of flexible response in the Kennedy-Johnson years, which renewed the emphasis on minimizing risk, regardless of cost. Once again there were the basic NSC-68 assumptions of undifferentiated American global interests and unlimited means to defend them. Added to this was the idea of calibrating any response to aggression in order to avoid the dangerous choice between escalation and humiliation that appeared to have dominated the Eisenhower years. To sustain this strategy, the new Administration embarked on a massive buildup of conventional and nuclear forces capable of fighting simultaneously two major wars and one minor one ("two and one-half wars") across the conflict spectrum. The test of this strategy was Vietnam, which, with the loss of American initiative coupled with mounting US casualties, demonstrated to an increasingly disenchanted American public not so much the cost of committing aggression as the cost of resisting it. Equally important, the guns-and-butter economy that moved the Great Society forward even as the United States poured its resources into the "half war" in Southeast Asia unleashed social, economic, and political forces that would seriously erode the authority of future Presidents to implement the strategic vision.

During the Nixon-Ford years, the strategy of detente under Henry Kissinger shifted emphasis back to minimizing costs. This approach was a

major ingredient of the Nixon Doctrine, which sought to restore a measure of equilibrium between the foreign and domestic aspects of national security policy by sharing at least some of the burden of realizing the strategic vision with American allies. That doctrine also emphasized the need for negotiations with the Soviets. This was a key element of Kissinger's use of diplomatic linkage as a means to persuade the USSR to make pragmatic adjustments which would help the United States implement its strategic vision. If, for example, the Soviets wanted SALT negotiations or Western recognition of post-World War II Eastern European boundaries, then perhaps there could be an end to Berlin as a Cold War flash point.

The problem in all this, however, was that the United States was not negotiating from a position of strength as the Nixon Doctrine had mandated. Public and congressional reaction to Vietnam ensured a drastic decline of conventional military power even as the Soviet Union continued its major buildup of conventional and strategic nuclear forces in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis humiliation. Moreover, the social and economic forces unleashed by Vietnam were producing a disequilibrium between foreign policy and domestic policy priorities that was exacerbated by the increasing post-Vietnam involvement of Congress in matters affecting pursuit of the strategic vision. Finally, there was Watergate, the last straw in the undermining of executive authority during the Nixon-Ford years. As a consequence, there never was a major modification of Soviet behavior. Without domestic authority, as Henry Kissinger well realized, the delicate job of enlisting Soviet support for a strategic vision directed at altering Soviet foreign policy could not be accomplished.

The last two presidencies of the Cold War broke the traditional political associations with the patterns for implementing the strategic vision. President Carter, a Democrat, decided at the outset of his Administration to maintain the cost-minimizing strategy inherited from his Republican predecessors because he believed that containment was based on an "inordinate fear of communism."¹⁷ That view shifted during 1979, however, causing a return to the more traditional risk-minimizing, Democratic approach. The fall of the Shah of Iran, a showpiece for the Nixon Doctrine, certainly played a part in the conversion, particularly when the Shah was replaced by a xenophobic, anti-American, fundamentalist Moslem regime. But it was the December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that was decisive. A month later, in one of the great ironies of the Cold War, the most dovish of all American Presidents since the beginning of that war outlined in his State of the Union Address the most far-reaching and unequivocal doctrine pertaining to the enduring vision of containment since President Truman's official adoption of that vision in 1947.

President Reagan, a Republican, also broke the traditional pattern by adopting the risk-minimizing approach to containment. This was reflected in one of the greatest defense buildups in American history—all without benefit

of tax increases. During the same period, however, the United States made the transformation from the world's greatest creditor to the greatest debtor nation. To the concomitant fiscal strains from this development were added the debilitating residue from the Vietnam years, the social, economic, and political problems that only heightened the tensions between foreign and domestic policy. As a result, the Reagan Administration shifted, however reluctantly, toward a cost-minimizing approach that moved the national military strategy from one based on a willingness to undertake concurrent global operational commitments to one more modest in its ambitions and tempered by fiscal realities. "Should aggression occur in several regions simultaneously," the Secretary of Defense reported to Congress in 1988, "US military responses would be governed by existing commitments, general strategic priorities, the specific circumstances at hand, and the availability of forces."¹⁸ By that time, however, Mikhail Gorbachev was in power, and the risks were declining along with the costs. The successful denouement of the dominant American strategic vision for over four decades had already begun.

The Post-Cold War Era

Sometime in the penultimate decade of this century, America and its allies won the Cold War. As a result, the United States has enormous leverage in international affairs. On the one hand, it must be careful not to dissipate that leverage. The figure of Nemesis, after all, always hovers near, ready to bring man down by either answering his prayers too completely or fulfilling his wishes in a different form. Consequently, history is replete with examples in which great powers lost their leverage in the wake of great victories, such as that of Athens over Persia in the fifth century B.C. "Such was the effect on the Athenians of their apparent good fortune," Thucydides wrote of that victory, "that they thought nothing could go wrong with them." The result was national hubris feeding into the ambition and arrogance that ultimately led the Athenians to defeat themselves.¹⁹

On the other hand, the United States must be prepared to take a leadership role in using its new-found leverage. In the game of cricket, after a successful "at bat," a team with good defensive capabilities can voluntarily relinquish its bat to the opposing side with the expectation of winning the game. International relations will not likely provide such an option for America during the transition from a bipolar to a multipolar world in the post-Cold War era. That transition will not occur overnight. In the meantime, with the United States now the only complete superpower, it is primarily a unipolar world. The game will thus continue without relief against a new succession of opponents, each with bowlers and batsmen never encountered before.²⁰

The new game will not be one in which a strategic vision that would balance foreign with domestic policy can easily play a major role. This is one

of the ironic legacies of the Cold War. For in the successful pursuit of the overall strategic vision in that twilight conflict, successive administrations, as we have seen, set in motion military, social, and economic forces that increased the tension between these contradictory elements of US national security policy. To that misfortune, largely in reaction to this tension, were added the political effects of a resurgent Congress. There is, of course, a natural adversarial process between the congressional and executive branches implicit in the US Constitution. But that process was largely dormant between Pearl Harbor and Tet 68. The massive congressional reentry into foreign affairs since Vietnam has hindered and will continue to hinder the confluence of a balanced vision with authority in the executive branch.

Further complicating the problem is the changing nature of the threat. In recent years, the American people have become increasingly aware of the domestic threats to their national security, whether in the form of illicit drugs, inner city rot, the savings and loan fiasco, or the national debt. At the same time, the successful realization of the strategic vision that animated Western strategy throughout the Cold War has also diminished a public perception of the traditional Soviet menace. In foreign affairs, the threat now seems more speculative, certainly less urgent, whether it be the fragmentation of Yugoslavia or the prospect of the USSR metamorphosing into another Weimar, sullenly nursing its grudge in the wake of its Cold War defeat.²¹

Nevertheless, there are potential threats in the international arena that should be addressed along with domestic threats in any new strategic vision if that vision is to achieve the credibility that will eventually result in decisive authority. To begin with, there is the proliferation of mass destruction weapons. "By the year 2000," the Secretary of Defense has noted, "it is estimated that at least 15 developing nations will have the ability to build ballistic missiles—eight of which either have or are near to acquiring nuclear capabilities. Thirty countries will have chemical weapons, and ten will be able to deploy biological weapons as well."²² Added to this concern are what Charles Krauthammer has labeled "Weapon States," those nations marked by resentment against the West and the status quo with the capability and the inclination to use these weapons of mass destruction.²³

Equally important in this regard are threats posed by an increasingly interdependent world. There is, for example, the growing recognition that planet Earth is a very fragile ship hurtling through space—that separate events ranging from the destruction of rain forests to depletion of the ozone layer may be the ultimate threats to national security. Or, as another example, there is the growing disparity between the North and the South, the developed and developing countries of the world. The South has watched the North fight three great internecine wars in this century: the two world wars and the Cold War. Now, fueled not only by latent industrial revolutions but those of transportation,

technology, and communications-information as well, the Southern nations are ready to take their place in the sun. An American strategic vision in the new era must acknowledge these rising expectations, since a vision of a brave new world that does not take into account the human condition worldwide is fundamentally at odds with American values. In the long run, such a vision will stand no more chance of garnering decisive authority than will a vision that ignores the human condition on the domestic front.

In all this, a new strategic vision must ultimately come to grips with the management of power, particularly in terms of the nation-state system that has dominated international relations since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. That system, as the tragedy of Woodrow Wilson demonstrated, has never been able to resolve the tension between the desire by national actors to maintain sovereignty and their urge for a dependable system of international order. Any move toward centralization in the management of power sufficient to improve that international order means a concomitant loss of national sovereignty, the basic element of the nation-state system. The solution in its most idealistic form is the complete centralization of power management advocated by world government theorists and best expressed by Alfred Lord Tennyson's vision of the results of that centralization in his poem "Locksley Hall" (1842):

Till the war-drums throb'd no longer,
and the battle flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the
Federation of the world.
There the common sense of most shall
hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber,
lapt in universal law.²⁴

The reality, of course, is that any such vision for the management of power will fall short of the necessary authority to implement it. And yet, in an increasingly dangerous, interdependent world, it is incumbent on American statesmen to incorporate some aspects of this vision in their own picture of desired change—to balance, not disregard, this idealism with realism. For in that future, as we have seen, the United States will be faced with opponents, many armed with weapons of mass destruction, whose principal issue will not be adjustments within the international system, but the system itself. These are revolutionary powers which not only feel threatened, a regular feature of the nation-state system, but which can never be reassured short of absolute security, a precondition for the absolute insecurity of their opponents.

In such an environment, containment is no longer the visionary answer since it is based on the assumption that if foreign policy successes are denied aggressive regimes for a long enough period, domestic pressures for

change will eventually moderate expansionist tendencies. That "cure" appears to have worked after 45 years in the case of the Soviet Union. But in dealing with the new threats such as "Weapon States," time will become a luxury that the world can no longer afford. Instead, it may take a centralized collective security organization with provisions for the immediate application of preponderant power to deter or to disarm such national actors.

In a similar manner, the growing threat to the earth's environment may add impetus to fundamental changes in the nation-state system. It may not be too far-fetched, for example, to visualize a centralized supra-national environmental organization dispatching its own constabulary force in a decade or so to prevent further damage to the rain forests in the Amazon River basin. The difficulty of transferring national sovereignty to such an organization can be seen, for example, in a future scenario in which that organization calls for the United States, with only five percent of the world's population, to cease using over 25 percent of the world's energy.

Conclusions

Any success in creating and realizing a strategic vision for the management of power will rest primarily on the ability of the statesman to paint a credible picture of desired change using strategic ends, ways, and means. At stake is the middle ground between isolationism and global activism. Isolationism runs deep in the American tradition, not just because of the geographical imperatives that include the protection afforded by two immense oceans and the stability of borders with two friendly neighbors. America, after all, was founded on the proposition that it would cleanse itself of the impurities of the old world, that it would be separate from the intrigues and wars across the ocean. Global activism, on the other hand, is a relatively new experience for the American people, a product, as we have seen, of a threat-driven, historically anomalous confluence of vision and authority. The major task of any new vision, in this regard, will be to convince the public that minimizing cost in foreign policy still maximizes real risk to American national security interests as it did for 45 years. At the same time, the statesmen will have to demonstrate that the United States can differentiate between vital and peripheral interests in the international arena, without succumbing to psychological insecurities that create a perception of threats to American credibility in every international incident.

Oddly enough, future statesmen can take heart in this difficult endeavor from the experience of the Viscount Castlereagh who, in the wake of the Vienna Congress, lost the authority to implement his strategic vision. The British statesman is proof nonetheless that men become myths not because of what they know, not even because of what they do, but because of the tasks they set out for themselves. For Castlereagh, that task was to bring insular Great Britain into the peacetime Continental political dialogue in order to preserve a

European equilibrium of force. To this end, between 1815 and 1820 Castlereagh was instrumental in inaugurating a series of congresses at which all the Great Powers assembled to discuss ways to maintain the European balance. Toward the end of that period, however, the conservative eastern powers began to use these forums to legitimize interference in newly emerging liberal regimes in Europe. As a consequence, there was a public outcry in England against Castlereagh and his policy so strong that he was driven from office. Shortly thereafter he committed suicide. But his strategic vision lived on. For the Great Powers, including Great Britain, had become accustomed through the congress system to periodic meetings for resolving differences. The eventual result was the Concert of Europe, which produced, with the exception of the 1854-56 Crimean War, a century of peace among the Great Powers of Europe.²⁵

For American statesmen, a similar success in achieving the implementation of a strategic vision to guide the United States deep into the new era will require that they successfully issue a new call to greatness to the American people. This time, however, there will be no clarion calls for stirring crusades against fascism and communism. Instead, the call should be a less confrontational but no less impassioned plea focused on creating stability in the international order, on averting chaos. The problem is that while equilibrium is a necessity for that stability, it does not constitute a sufficient purpose for the American people, with their historic sense of mission. Peace must be presented as more than the absence of conflict. Stability must be perceived as a bridge to the realization of human aspirations, not an end in itself.

In the final analysis, American statesmen must create an image of desired change that inspires their citizens to efforts at least as great and for goals at least as grand as those that marked the twilight war that has just ended. It is a picture that the great Ulysses could paint to his comrades, even at the end of ten years of warfare followed by a decade spent in fruitless efforts to return home to his beloved Ithaca:

Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world. . . .
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

NOTES

1. Quoted by Colonel Bruce B. G. Clarke in his unpublished study, "Strategic Vision." Colonel Clarke prepared this invaluable work in 1991 for the faculty members in the Department of National Security and Strategy, US Army War College.

2. Henry Kissinger, *The Troubled Partnership: A Reappraisal of the Atlantic Alliance* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 251. See also Henry Kissinger, "The White Revolutionary: Reflections on Bismarck," *Daedalus*, 97 (Summer 1968), 909-10. "It can never be the task of leadership to solicit a consensus, but to create the conditions which will make a consensus possible. A leader, if he performs his true function, must resign himself to being alone part of the time, at least while he charts the road." Henry Kissinger, "American Policy and Preventive War," *Yale Review*, 44 (April 1955), 336.
3. Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973), p. 329.
4. On the basic ends-ways-means strategic paradigm, see Arthur F. Lykke, "Defining Military Strategy," *Military Review*, 69 (May 1989), 2-8. Colonel Lykke has schooled an entire generation of US Army War College students on this paradigm for analyzing strategy at any level.
5. All quotations are from Ray S. Baker and William E. Dodd, eds., *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, War and Peace* (New York: Harper, 1927), I, 342, and II, 234-35. In his later attempts to sell his vision to the American people, Wilson pointed out that collective security "is the only conceivable system that you can substitute for the old order of things which brought the calamity of this war upon us and would assuredly bring the calamity of another war upon us." *Ibid.*, II, 51.
6. James Brown Scott, ed., *President Wilson's Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1918), p. 248; Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 96-97.
7. Claude, p. 140.
8. Herbert Hoover, *The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958), p. 184.
9. Baker and Dodd, II, 351. See also Hoover, pp. 256-57, and Baker and Dodd, I, 555 and 611-13.
10. *Ibid.*, II, 392.
11. *Documents of the United Nations Conference in International Organization* (New York: United Nations, 1945), XI, 474. The majority at the conference recognized that the veto provision "meant that if a major power became the aggressor the Council had no power to prevent war. In such case the inherent right of self-defense applied, and the nations of the world must decide whether or not they would go to war." *Ibid.*, p. 514. Article 51 of the UN Charter, which provided for "individual or collective self-defense," was an admission that the vision of collective security as a means for managing power in international relations was not to be realized fully, that the UN was in effect postponing the issue of dealing with the threat of great power aggression. Claude, pp. 158, 165.
12. "X" [George F. Kennan], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, 25 (July 1947), 582.
13. For the cost-risk patterns throughout the Cold War, see John Lewis Gaddis, "Containment and the Logic of Strategy," *The National Interest*, No. 10 (Winter 1987/1988), 27-38.
14. For the patterns in much of the Cold War, see John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), particularly pp. 352-53.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.
16. "NSC-68: A Report to the National Security Council," *Naval War College Review*, 27 (May-June 1975), 68.
17. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 345.
18. Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to the Congress, Fiscal Year 1988* (Washington: GPO, 1987), p. 47.
19. John Lewis Gaddis, "Coping with Victory," *The Atlantic*, May 1990, pp. 2, 50.
20. Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, 70 (America and the World edition, 1991), 23; Graham Allison, "National Security Strategy for the 1990s," in *America's Global Interests, A New Agenda*, ed. Edward K. Hamilton (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), p. 211.
21. Henry Kissinger long ago pointed out that "political multipolarity does not necessarily guarantee stability. Rigidity is diminished, but so is manageability." Henry Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy: Three Essays* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), pp. 55-57. On the integrative aspects of the familiar threat, see John J. Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," *The Atlantic*, August 1990, p. 35, who points out that the world may "wake up one day lamenting the loss of the order that the Cold War gave to the anarchy of international relations."
22. Secretary Cheney's Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee in Connection with the FY 1992-93 Budget for the Department of Defense, Washington, 21 February 1991.
23. Krauthammer, pp. 23, 30-31.
24. Tennyson's visionary future as expressed in this poem was a favorite of Winston Churchill, who liked to recite the more bloodthirsty predictions of future warfare, and of President Truman, who wrote these lines on a scrap of paper he carried with him for over 50 years. Martin Gilbert, *Winston Churchill*, Vol. VI: *Finest Hour, 1939-1941* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), p. 1038; and John Hersey, *Life Sketches* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), pp. 245-46.
25. Kissinger, *A World Restored*, pp. 322-23.