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John G. Ruggie

*The United States,
the United Nations
and the Transatlantic Rift*

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European University Institute
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**Annual Lecture of the
Transatlantic Programme**

The United States, the United Nations and the Transatlantic Rift

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PREFACE

The transatlantic relationship is in a critical phase. The basic premises and reciprocity that once embedded it in a strong political consensus no longer carry much weight on either side of the Atlantic. Yet the further deterioration of the Atlantic framework would serve only to reinforce American impulses towards unilateralism, to fuel existing European distrust of the US, and to weaken the multilateral framework for international relations that has served both Europe and America so well for the past half century.

During the 2002-3 academic year, the European University Institute hosted a series of seminars to address the profound questions associated with the recent deterioration of US-European relations. These seminars were organised by the Transatlantic Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, with generous funding for the series provided by BP. The seminars addressed the political, economic, cultural and ideological dimensions of the current crisis, with distinguished participants from both sides of the Atlantic participating in the debate. These interlocutors included Robert Keohane, Dominique Moisi, Elizabeth Pond, Barry Posen, William Wallace, and Kenneth Waltz. The views expressed were sometimes controversial, and the ensuing discussions were often vigorous. Always, however, the seminars were marked by a seriousness of purpose, an attention to intellectual rigour, and a generosity of spirit that were in the best tradition of the EUI.

Certainly a highlight of the series was the Annual Lecture of the Transatlantic Programme delivered by John Ruggie of Harvard University. Professor Ruggie's career has straddled the world of political ideas and policy action like few others. His work at the United Nations, where he served as Assistant Secretary-General and Senior Adviser for Strategic Planning to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, provided an opportunity for him to act in accordance with the vision that has long animated his contributions to the scholarship on international relations. He has been both an analyst and an advocate of a principled multilateralism. I am delighted to have his remarks before the EUI reproduced as part of our Distinguished Lecture Series.

The transatlantic seminar series of the EUI will continue in 2004-5, providing a forum for leading intellectuals to share their perspectives on, and their hopes for, the relationship between Europe and the United States. It is my hope that they will continue to provide the combination of constructive criticism and practical prescription represented by this lecture.

Helen Wallace, Director
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

LECTURE

by

John G. Ruggie

Director of the Center for Business and Government,
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The United States, the United Nations and the Transatlantic Rift

I have spent much of my professional life thinking, teaching, writing about, and more recently working within the world of multilateralism.

In the mid 1970s and early 1980s, I helped introduce the concept of international regimes into the study of international relations – referring to clusters of principles, norms, rules and institutional means states use to manage interdependencies.¹

In the early 1990s I published a book called *Multilateralism Matters*.² Among other things, I argued that multilateral principles and institutions contributed to the relatively smooth international transition to the post-cold war order by reducing the unpredictability and fears that typically accompany major international power shifts – the knowledge that a reunited Germany, for example, would remain firmly embedded in NATO and the European Union.

In 1996 I followed up with a book entitled *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era*.³ It likened the challenge confronting U.S. leaders in the post-cold war era to that Franklin Roosevelt faced before the cold war began: how to animate a secure and largely self-sufficient nation to promote and sustain a viable global order in the absence of a systemic adversary. I sketched out a neo-Rooseveltian strategy: framing U.S. international engagement within universal values and aspirations that also draw upon Americans' own national sense of self. And I found evidence of the strategy at work in the foreign policies of Bush I and Bill Clinton.

¹ The relevant papers are included as chapters 1 and 2 in John Gerard Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (London: Routledge, 1998).

² John Gerard Ruggie, ed., *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Practice of an Institutional Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

³ (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

Then, from 1997 to 2001 I served as Kofi Annan's chief advisor for strategic planning at the United Nations. My job was to support the Secretary-General's efforts to reposition the United Nations vis-à-vis key global challenges and constituencies, including UN reforms and priorities, UN-US relations, and UN relations with the global business community.

So is it any wonder that I've been having a recurring nightmare lately, in which I see a poster that first caught my eye as a graduate student in the tumultuous '60s, saying: "God is dead, Marx is dead, and I'm not feeling too good myself." My professional world, it seems, has collapsed in shambles: open any newspaper or journal of opinion, and you'll find obituaries. According to the lead article in the most recent issue of the journal *Foreign Affairs*, on the UN and the management of force, a grand experiment has come to an end.

How deep is the current rift in U.S.-UN relations – and between the United States and its continental allies? How serious is the blow to three of the great institutional hopes for peace since 1945: the UN, NATO and the EU? And where do we go from here?

We cannot yet answer these questions with any finality. But as a way to deepen our understanding of the current crisis, I propose to review briefly some of the prominent perspectives on both sides of the Atlantic that frame the crisis in terms of a finality – as a decisive rupture with the past. I conclude with some preliminary thoughts about the challenges ahead.

1. ASYMMETRIES OF POWER

The most popular opinion among American commentators today, one that cuts across traditional ideological and theoretical divides, is that we are witnessing the emergence of two genuinely different world views based on the deep and growing transatlantic power gap. Americans are from Mars, Europeans from Venus, in Robert Kagan's evocative phrase.⁴ The United States is militarily powerful; Europe, in relative terms, weak. So it is axiomatic that America would use force to protect and pursue its interests, while Europe stresses diplomacy and writes checks. America is unilateral because it can be; Europe favors multilateralism because it must. This state of affairs is not transitory; nothing in the foreseeable future is expected to change it.

About the power asymmetry there can be no dispute. The U.S. now spends nearly as much on its military as the rest of the world combined – and yet that still consumes less than *four* percent of its GDP. The gap in technology and

⁴ Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review*, 113 (June 2002).

combat experience is even greater. There is no conceivable way for Europe to rival that might.

But there is one central flaw in Kagan's argument that critically limits its utility for policy analysis and prescription: the presumption that permissive conditions constitute causal factors. Yes, the United States *can* do many of the things he ascribes to it, but it follows neither that it must nor will.

For all practical purposes, the transatlantic power gap was no smaller in the 1990s. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright ceaselessly hectored our allies and the United Nations that America was "the world's indispensable nation." The American neoconservative commentator Charles Krauthammer proclaimed the advent of "the unipolar moment," and Hubert Védrine, French Foreign Minister at the time, coined the term *hyperpuissance* to characterize the extent of American hegemony. And yet transatlantic grumbling was not appreciably worse than it had been in earlier times, and everyone – including the German Red-Green coalition government – was on board for the U.S.-led Kosovo intervention, which had considerably less legal justification going for it than the campaign against Iraq.

One significant difference between the two decades lies in the politics of legitimization. When the Clinton administration reminded the world of America's indispensability, it invariably did so in the context of values and policy objectives that were broadly shared, but which could not be achieved without active U.S. involvement – be they opening global markets, promoting nuclear threat reduction, fielding peacekeeping missions or sustaining the Middle East peace process. Even American triumphalism in the 1990s – and there was plenty of it – celebrated a *shared* achievement: the victory of free markets and democratic governance over an adversary the West, collectively, had combated for much of the 20th century.

In contrast, the current administration rarely misses a chance to tell others that they're not needed even when they could be helpful – as in Afghanistan and postwar Iraq. Today's triumphalism is largely military, from which, of course, Europe and multilateral institutions are excluded. And the view has taken hold among U.S. leaders that the use of American power is entirely self-legitimizing – determined by U.S. interests alone, and judged not by rules but results.

In short, the transatlantic power gap by itself does not explain the crash of 2003. Opportunities do not establish necessities; they offer a menu of choices. So we need to look further at what other factors have shaped the chosen course of action.

2. THE NEW THREATS

For the American people, none looms larger than 9/11. Europeans may underestimate the trauma, vulnerability and anger those horrific attacks triggered. President Bush captured the nation's mood well when he said of September 11, "night fell on a different world." More lives were lost that day than at Pearl Harbor. The last time an enemy attacked the American mainland was in 1812. Think of it: Metternich and Talleyrand were sparring back here in "old" Europe, and Beethoven's Emperor Concerto had only just recently premiered.

If power creates the permissive condition for a radical shift in U.S. policy, 9/11 provides a popular justification. In fact, the rest of the world agreed, and gave the United States not only expressions of deep sympathy but also wholehearted support for its ouster of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which was clearly and closely linked to al Qaeda.

However, the administration's first full doctrinal statement of its new policy – the President's National Security Strategy document issued in September 2002 – caused great consternation in Europe, and among many U.S. observers as well.⁵ Chapter 5, entitled "Prevent Our Enemies from Threatening Us, Our Allies, and Our Friends with Weapons of Mass Destruction," has attracted the most attention.

The right of preemptive war is well established in customary international law and the UN Charter: permitting the potential target of an unprovoked attack to strike first in self-defense – as Israel did in the 1967 six-day war. But it is required that the threat be imminent, and the response proportionate to it.

Preventive strikes have no such legal pedigree or standing. In 1981 Israel claimed that it was acting preemptively in self-defense when it bombed Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactors. But the UN Security Council, including Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick representing the Reagan administration, censured Israel on the grounds that it faced no imminent threat. In other words, preventing a potential future threat from ever materializing did not qualify as self-defense.

NSS 2002 warns that the combination of global terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and rogue states has profoundly transformed America's security environment. Neither deterrence by threat of retaliation nor traditional nonproliferation efforts suffices in this context, it

⁵ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002).

states, while the imminence of threats has become incalculable. “When were the attacks of September 11 imminent?” Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz asked in a speech to the International Institute for Strategic Studies. “Certainly they were imminent on September 10, although we didn’t know it.”⁶

Accordingly, NSS 2002 declares, prevention and proactive counterproliferation must become part of America’s overall security strategy. Although the Bush administration justified the campaign against Iraq on several – often shifting – grounds, history may record it as the first preventive war under the meaning of the new doctrine.

Not surprisingly, the European left took great exception to NSS 2002 – London’s *Guardian* calling it “by turns arrogant, patronizing, complacent, amazingly presumptuous – but above all, aggressive.”⁷ But establishment strategic analysts on both sides of the Atlantic also expressed serious reservations. Henry Kissinger, for one, called the new doctrine “revolutionary,” and raised the concern that it not become “a universal principle available to every nation.”⁸ François Heisbourg – admittedly of the French persuasion – noted that the doctrine’s scope and limits were so ill defined, and were left entirely to U.S. discretion, that it invited friends and foes alike to draw worst-case inferences and act accordingly.⁹ When Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld briefed NATO on it he was coolly received.

Let me linger for a moment on this last point. Consider the following remarks by another American Secretary of Defense: “The national security requirements of the United States have undergone fundamental change...The new nuclear danger we face is perhaps a handful of nuclear devices in the hands of rogue states or even terrorist groups...It isn’t just nuclear weapons [but also] biological and chemical agents...At the heart of [our] initiative...is a drive to develop new military capabilities to deal with this new threat.”¹⁰

The speaker was Les Aspin, the date December 1993, and President Clinton had just issued Presidential Decision Directive PDD/NSC 18, entitled the Defense Counterproliferation Initiative. The Clinton administration, too, took its initiative to NATO. The outcome? NATO adopted it in 1994, and

⁶ Quoted in Francois Heisbourg, “A Work in Progress: The Bush Doctrine and Its Consequences,” *Washington Quarterly*, 26 (Spring 2003), p. 76.

⁷ “America’s way: Bush’s new doctrine is deaf to history” (editorial), *The Guardian*, 24 September 2002.

⁸ Henry Kissinger, “The War Option,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 11 August 2002.

⁹ Heisbourg, op.cit.

¹⁰ Remarks by Secretary of Defense Les Aspin at the National Academy of Sciences, Washington, 7 December 1993.

established a Defense Group on Proliferation co-chaired by the United States – and, yes, France.

Of course, the parallel is not precise. Comparable urgency was lacking in the 1990s, and President Clinton’s own focus soon shifted to the Balkans and elsewhere. Nevertheless, the contrast is striking. What accounts for it? The Clinton administration was clearly committed to strengthening the multilateral nonproliferation regime; senior officials in the Bush administration, like John Bolton, Under Secretary of State for International Security and Arms Control, have spent years trashing it and virtually all other arms control treaties.

In short, America’s response to the new threats could have been managed differently. NSS 2002 assigns no role to multilateralism and, indeed, acknowledges no need for international support. The result, Heisbourg observes, has been a “hardening of the multilateralist impulse among U.S. allies.” In the case of Iraq, he suggests, “it is precisely because the United States has been asserting a unilateralist posture that the international community has pressed the Bush administration to operate with the constraints of a Security Council compromise.”¹¹

But did not the U.S. take its case against Iraq to the United Nations, and did not the Security Council fail to act? That question brings us to our third story, often told by the administration itself and repeated by many in the media: the growing irrelevance of the United Nations, and its possible passing into history like the League of Nations before it.

3. THE UNITED NATIONS

There are two distinct though related stories here, one concerning the specifics of the Iraq case, the other the larger issue of the UN’s role in maintaining international peace and security.

The Iraq story reflects well on no one. The Security Council adopted sixteen disarmament related resolutions over the course of a dozen years. But France and Russia repeatedly blocked any move toward robust enforcement. Had they had their way, in fact, most sanctions would have been lifted long ago and UN arms inspections replaced by even looser long term monitoring. Only the credible threat of U.S. unilateral action jolted them into supporting resolution 1441.

¹¹ Heisbourg, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

For its part, the Bush administration was disingenuous. From what we now know, the decision to go to war was made sometime in the spring of 2002. So what the U.S. sought when it turned to the Council in the autumn was an endorsement of that course of action, not the enforcement of the Council's resolutions on disarmament.

Still, at the time of Secretary of State Colin Powell's testimony to the Council on February 5 of this year, the prevailing assumption among Council members and senior UN officials was that the U.S. would get nine votes, and that France in all probability would not cast a veto but abstain. The wheels came off shortly thereafter.

We don't yet fully know why. Part of the reason had to do with doubts cast by the chief UN weapons inspectors on some of Secretary Powell's evidence. For example, key documents concerning Iraq's alleged nuclear program presented to the inspectors by the U.S. – and even referred to by President Bush in his State of the Union address – turned out to have been forgeries.

But an even bigger battle emerged. Suddenly, the focus of debate in the Council shifted away from Iraqi disarmament to the administration's determination to go to war, largely because senior officials, including the President, were simultaneously describing to the American public the positive effects of regime change in Iraq not only for the war on terrorism, but also for transforming the Middle East. The Council simply was not prepared to sign on to that grander mission.

France did not cause this shift. But it effectively killed any prospects of compromise, including Britain's last minute proposal to add benchmarks for Iraqi compliance to the draft resolution and modestly extend the inspectors' remit. France's rejectionist posture made it unnecessary for the U.S. to commit to the British amendment. Thus, the Council's undecided members found themselves trapped between the certainty of a French veto and studied ambiguity on the part of the United States, leaving them with no option but to remain united in their paralysis.

How or why this episode proves the UN's irrelevance is unclear to me, however. We will never know what might have happened had the British compromise prevailed. But it is also worth asking why the richest and most powerful country in the history of the world was unable to persuade – or bribe – some of the world's poorest and weakest states to support its position. The same question can also be asked about the refusal of Turkey, a newly invigorated democracy and NATO ally that has fought at America's side in every major war

since Korea, to permit the U.S. to open a northern front in Iraq from its soil. If post mortems are to be written, they will have to be cast more broadly than merely the Security Council.

This raises the much larger question of the UN's international security role. "With the dramatic rupture of the UN Security Council," Professor Michael Glennon has written in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, "it became clear that the grand attempt to subject the use of force to the rule of law had failed." So it's back to the drawing board, he contends, because from now on "no rational state will be deluded into believing that the UN Charter protects its security."¹²

But posed in those stark terms, no rational state ever has. Inis Claude, an early and astute student of the United Nations, wrote as long ago as 1967: "no one who had consulted the Charter and the expectations of its framers...could ever have believed that the United Nations promised to be a dependable agency for enforcing peace and suppressing aggression in an era of great power division."¹³

The problem of the veto is not news to anyone. By 1948, the Congressional hopper was crammed with proposals for amending the Charter to remove the veto, then wielded vigorously by the Soviet Union. Senator Homer Ferguson, Republican of Michigan, had bipartisan support for one such a bill, which went on to stipulate that if countries did not agree, the U.S. should take the lead in creating a new international organization from which the recalcitrants would be excluded. Sound familiar? The State Department sidetracked those proposals with the argument that the Charter already provided for collective defense organizations. NATO was established not long thereafter.

Nor is the lack of predictable UN military enforcement capacity news. That, too, was sealed by 1948, when it became abundantly clear that no country was willing to provide troops on standby under UN command. The far less robust practice of peacekeeping, nowhere mentioned in the Charter, evolved as a means to manage lesser conflicts – invented during the 1956 Suez crisis, when the United States supported a UN deployment of peacekeepers to serve as a fig leaf behind which British, French, and Israeli forces could "gracefully" withdraw after their ill-considered invasion of Egypt.

It was also known from the very beginning that the nuclear nonproliferation regime would never fully prevent these weapons from

¹² Michael J. Glennon, "Why the Security Council Failed," *Foreign Affairs*, 82 (May/June 2003), pp. 16, 23.

¹³ Inis L. Claude, Jr., *The Changing United Nations* (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 89.

spreading. President Eisenhower's hard nosed Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, was explicit on that point at a 1957 Senate hearing in which he nevertheless urged ratification of the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency because it would help prevent nuclear weapons "ultimately becoming quite general, the byproduct of nuclear power plants."¹⁴

The Clinton administration tried to expand and support UN peacekeeping – with mixed results, to be sure. And they added inducements to the tool kit of nonproliferation policy in response to the North Korean nuclear threat, which helped contain that problem for several years.

In contrast, the current administration believes that peacekeeping is flawed at its core and needs to be severely curtailed. It prevented the expansion of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan beyond Kabul, as a result of which the rest of the country once again belongs to the warlords; and it substantially reduced the Pentagon's Office of Peacekeeping, while closing down altogether the U.S. military's only peacekeeping institute at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. It also threatened to veto any and all UN peacekeeping mandates unless the U.S. military received a blanket exemption from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. A one-year exemption was granted, giving the U.S. time to negotiate bilateral agreements with individual countries, of which some thirty have been concluded. I have already noted the lack of confidence by senior Bush officials in past nonproliferation efforts, yet apart from the doctrine of "preventive war" they have proposed no specific new policy tools. The North Korean situation changes by the day, but it seems that we may be back to trying inducements.

No government has been willing to tackle some of the most fundamental UN challenges. They include institutional issues like Security Council reform, and finding ways to prevent having the "normal" UN political process yield such perversities as Libya chairing the UN human rights commission and Saddam's Iraq its counterpart in disarmament. Even more important, they include such substantive failures as the international community's unwillingness to stop genocide and other egregious violations of human rights that pose no traditional threat to interstate peace and security.

My point is simply this: intrinsically the UN was no more irrelevant the morning after the U.S. and U.K. withdrew their so-called second resolution than it had been the day before. The UN is not an autonomous entity that somehow sits apart from its members. Its weaknesses reflect their interests and

¹⁴ Quoted in Robert E. Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 220.

preferences, especially the most powerful among them. And credit for its successes lies with them as well, with their efforts to strengthen its capacity and reform its practices. As Claude wrote a generation ago, the appropriate question is not what the United Nations can *do*, but how it can be *used*. It follows that nothing would more decisively render the UN irrelevant than for the United States to treat it that way.

But that, of course, is precisely the agenda of America's recently ascendant neoconservative movement.

4. THE ASCENDANCY OF NEOCONSERVATISM

The most popular view of the transatlantic rift here in Europe, one shared by many Americans, is that a cabal of neoconservatives has hijacked U.S. foreign policy. Lord Joplin, himself a Conservative peer, told the British Upper House in March: "neoconservatives... now have a stranglehold on the Pentagon and seem, as well, to have a compliant arm lock on the president himself."¹⁵

Neocons have a visceral aversion to things multilateral, from treaties to institutions; they believe fervently in the utility of American power to reorder the world in its own interest – some happily describe themselves as liberal or democratic imperialists; they exhibit disdain if not contempt for EU-topians; and they argue bitterly with Europe over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on which their views tend to be closely aligned with the Israeli right.

As for the UN, the title of a recent paper by the Heritage Foundation speaks volumes about the neoconservatives' antipathy: "Blueprint for Freedom: Limiting the Role of the United Nations in Post-War Iraq."¹⁶ Freedom and marginalizing the world organization has become one and the same mission. The UN is singled out for almost obsessive attention because neocons know that, as the world's only truly universal political body, it plays a role in legitimizing – and delegitimizing – international norms and practices. As such, it is seen to pose a potential threat to the neocons' vision of unfettered U.S. supremacy, generating an avalanche of criticism over the years that purports to show that the UN does nothing right.

The neocon movement is unquestionably more influential than ever before, with some twenty or so of its adherents now occupying senior defense

¹⁵ Quoted in "The shadow men," *The Economist*, 26 April 2003, p. 21.

¹⁶ Nile Gardiner and David B. Rivkin, Jr., "Blueprint for Freedom: Limiting the Role of the United Nations in Postwar Iraq," *The Heritage Foundation*, Backgrounder # 1646, 21 April 2003.

and foreign policy posts. But Lord Joplin's cabalist view, in my judgment, both overstates and underestimates their influence in shaping U.S. foreign policy.

It is overstated because President Bush's foreign policy appears to be driven by personal instinct and political calculation more than systematic ideological precepts; other senior administration officials, drawn from the world of business, may be small "c" conservatives without necessarily adhering to the full range of neocon doctrine; and with some exceptions, the State Department continues to reflect more traditional transatlantic and multilateral inclinations. As if to prove that point, Secretary Powell was recently subjected to a savage attack on just those grounds by former House Speaker Newt Gingrich in the temple of neocon triumphalism, the American Enterprise Institute.

Likewise, the U.S. Congress has advocated and enacted similar positions for many years – most often, but not entirely, when under Republican control. Congress began to withhold U.S. payments for the UN's Balkan peacekeeping operations in the mid 1990s; the Senate rejected the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and a straw poll in that chamber made it abundantly clear that Kyoto was dead on arrival. President Clinton did not dare submit the ICC statute for ratification. And Congress itself initiated the "American Service-Members' Protection Act," which among other things authorizes the President "to use all necessary and appropriate means" to free any member of the U.S. armed services detained by or in connection with the International Criminal Court – in principle, including invading the Netherlands to achieve that purpose.

At the same time, the cabalist view also understates neocon influence. The success of their think tanks, advocacy groups and media outlets to shape Beltway debates has grown enormously since the 1980s, so much so that on many issues theirs has become the conventional wisdom. They've succeeded because they had a better business plan and more money than their centrist and left-of-center counterparts. But they could not have done it without a message that resonated and had bite where it mattered, or without positions that sometimes spanned partisan lines.

If I am correct in this assessment, then we've seen mere skirmishes to date in the war against multilateralism; the titanic battles have yet to be fully engaged. For neocons have their sights fixed on the very idea of international governance, in some respects including even the European Union. I can do no better than to quote John Bolton, the State Department's number three, and a vigorous neocon advocate: "the harm and costs to the United States of [globalists] belittling our popular sovereignty and constitutionalism, and

restricting both our domestic and our international policy flexibility and power are finally receiving attention.”¹⁷

Very briefly, the issues at stake concern various forms of what I would call “soft governance” that have emerged on the global stage as an inherent byproduct of globalization itself: the steady accretion of norms and standards in human rights, humanitarian law, labor practices and environmental sustainability; the growing involvement of civil society in the global political arena; and the advent of the idea of universal jurisdiction, as witnessed dramatically in the Pinochet case, and embodied more fully in the International Criminal Court.

Neoconservatives contend that these developments infringe upon U.S. sovereignty and usurp American constitutional processes and protections. They aim particular ire at the EU. Writes Bolton: “Not content alone with transferring their own national sovereignty to Brussels, [the EU has] also decided, in effect, to transfer some of ours to worldwide institutions and norms.”¹⁸ Jeremy Rabkin, a leading figure in the neocon sub-movement dubbed “the new sovereigntists,” considers the EU to be problematic not only because, and I quote, it has “many practical ramifications for U.S. policy. But it also presents a clear ideological alternative...”¹⁹

There is a certain irony in the fact that the very sense of American exceptionalism that animated Woodrow Wilson’s quest to reform international politics nearly a century ago is now invoked as a shield to protect the United States from its own historic success.

5. CONCLUSION

I hate to sound like a typical academic and say there’s truth in all of these views, but there is. A chance confluence among power asymmetries, new threats, institutional weaknesses and ideological preferences has produced the current state of affairs. I will try to redeem myself, however, by suggesting more pointed conclusions about the UN, NATO, the EU and the evolving global order itself.

In the short run, the UN is under greatest stress. Not its technical agencies or humanitarian work, but its core function of collective legitimation. The current U.S. administration sees no need for that. And having France and Russia

¹⁷ John R. Bolton, “Should We Take Global Governance Seriously?” *Chicago Journal of International Law*, 1 (Fall 2000), p. 206.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

¹⁹ Jeremy Rabkin, “Is EU Policy Eroding the Sovereignty of Non-Member States?” *Chicago Journal of International Law*, 1 (Fall 2000), p. 273.

as its chief advocates, in light of their own past role as Saddam's proxies on the Security Council, is a hindrance, not a help. All the while, the mindless deference by developing countries to the principle of sovereign equality when it comes to choosing their representatives to international governing bodies continues to degrade the organization's moral authority. My advice to Kofi Annan would be to keep his head low; avoid getting drawn into debates about abstract principles; continue to push the reform agenda, above all of the UN's intergovernmental bodies; think creatively about how to adapt existing regimes, as in the area of nonproliferation, to new realities; and hope that when this storm passes, as it will, the UN is well positioned. Alas, this may not happen during Annan's term in office.

The challenge for NATO is both simple and yet difficult: out of area, or out of business. The U.S. will probably turn to NATO to provide long-term peacekeeping forces in Iraq. Chancellor Schroeder will have the opportunity to demonstrate that he really didn't mean what he said during his re-election campaign, and is back on board. And President Chirac will have to decide how much international institutional infrastructure he wants to put at risk for the sake of futile balancing against the United States.

Relations with the EU, I believe, will become more strained as time goes on, not so much on trade issues, where conflicting interests are pursued in a relatively well choreographed manner, but on the broader stage of governance and sovereignty that so agitates the neocons. No effective counter-argument is yet on offer in the United States because, until recently, no one else, me included, took their extremist defense of U.S. constitutional exceptionalism seriously. It's high time we did. As is true of many neocon positions, it not only contains core elements of truth but is also easier to explain to the American public, making the job of dealing with it that much harder.

And so, what does it all mean in the end? My best guess is that there will continue to be a significant measure of international adjustment to the new posture of the United States. Power does have its privileges, and in countless respects the agenda advocated by the United States is right and resonates with others. But the specifics of the U.S. posture, in turn, are bound also to experience adjustment. The new National Security Strategy is too crude in its analysis and too unlimited in scope to serve the U.S. well. Revisions inevitably will include multilateral instruments, such as more robust nonproliferation and anti-terrorism regimes.

NSS 2002 essentially recognizes only the great powers as relevant actors, but there are 185 other states in the international system; they have needs; and

those needs will find institutional expression the strategy does not now contemplate.

Some of the neocon's more excessive plans for global regime change, as it were – rolling back instruments of global governance, including the role of transnational civil society – will be opposed not only by those immediately targeted, but also by America's global business community, which requires rules and seeks legitimacy from this new global public domain.

Finally, apart from all the other obstacles it might encounter, the neocons' enthusiastic embrace of an imperial mission for the United States faces the American people's reluctance to pay the price, shoulder the burden, and suffer the international censure that mission would entail.

Bismarck was right about sausage: if you like to eat it, don't watch how it's made. We're watching the international order being remade. Let us hope the product is less messy, and meets with greater approval, than the process.

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