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The Unipolar Illusion

Christopher Layne

Why New Great Powers Will Rise

The Soviet Union's collapse transformed the international system from bipolarity to unipolarity. To be sure, the United States has not imposed a "universal monarchy" on the international system. There are other states that are formidable militarily (Russia) or economically (Japan and Germany).¹ However, because only the United States possesses imposing strength in all categories of great power capability, it enjoys a preeminent role in international politics.² Following the Gulf War and the Soviet Union's collapse, many commentators suggested that America should adopt a new grand strategy that would aim at perpetuating unipolarity.³ Belief that unipolarity favors the United States, and hence should be maintained, resonated in official Washington as well. This became apparent in March 1992, when the initial draft of the Pentagon's Defense

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1. Germany, Japan and Russia certainly have the potential to be great powers. Germany and Japan cannot today be considered great powers, however, because they lack the requisite military capabilities, especially strategic nuclear arsenals that would give them deterrence self-sufficiency. Notwithstanding Russia's still formidable nuclear and conventional military capabilities, economic difficulties and domestic political uncertainties have undercut its great power status. China will be a strong contender for great power status if it can maintain its internal cohesion. Buoyed by its vibrant economy, China has embarked on a major modernization and expansion of its air, naval, and ground forces, including its power-projection capabilities. Nicholas D. Kristof, "China Builds Its Military Muscle, Making Some Neighbors Nervous," *New York Times*, January 11, 1993, p. A1.

2. I define a unipolar system as one in which a single power is geopolitically preponderant because its capabilities are formidable enough to preclude the formation of an overwhelming balancing coalition against it.

3. Analysts of such diverse views as the liberal internationalist Joseph S. Nye, Jr., and neoconservatives Charles Krauthammer and Joshua Muravchick agree that a unipolar world is highly conducive to American interests. See Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs: America and the World*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (1990/91) and "What's Wrong With The 'Pentagon Paper'?" *Washington Post*, March 13, 1992; Joshua Muravchick, "At Last, Pax Americana," *New York Times*, January 24, 1991, p. A19.

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Planning Guidance (DPG) for Fiscal Years 1994–99 was leaked to the *New York Times*.⁴ Specifically, the document stated that, “We must account sufficiently for the interests of the large industrial nations to discourage them from challenging our leadership or seeking to overturn the established political or economic order” and that “we must maintain the mechanisms for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role.”⁵

The initial draft of the DPG was controversial, and a subsequent draft deleted the language referring to the goal of preserving unipolarity.⁶ Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests that the DPG accurately reflected official views about unipolarity. For example, the 1991 Summer Study organized by the Pentagon’s Director of Net Assessment defined a “manageable” world as one in which there is no threat to America’s superpower role.⁷ The main risk to American security, the study argued, is that of “Germany and/or Japan disconnecting from multilateral security and economic arrangements and pursuing an independent course.”⁸ During late 1992 and early 1993, the Pentagon’s Joint Staff was preparing a “new NSC 68” intended to establish an intellectual framework for America’s post-Cold War grand strategy. One of this document’s key themes is that a multipolar world is, by definition, dangerously unstable. There is as yet no evidence that the Clinton administration’s view of unipolarity will differ from the Bush administration’s.⁹

Although there are shadings of difference among the various proposals for perpetuating unipolarity, it is fair to speak of a single strategy of predomi-

4. Patrick E. Tyler, “U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop,” *New York Times*, March 8, 1992, p. A1.

5. “Excerpts From Pentagon’s Plan: ‘Prevent the Re-emergence of a New Rival,’” *New York Times*, March 8, 1992, p. A14 (emphasis added).

6. See Leslie H. Gelb, “They’re Kidding,” *New York Times*, March 9, 1992, p. A15; William Pfaff, “Does America Want to Lead Through Intimidation?” *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 1992, p. B7; and the comments of Senator Joseph Biden (D-Del.) and the Brookings Institution’s John D. Steinbruner quoted in Melissa Healy, “Pentagon Cool to Sharing Its Power,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1992, p. A8; Patrick E. Tyler, “Pentagon Drops Goal of Blocking New Superpowers,” *New York Times*, May 24, 1992, p. A1; Melissa Healy, “Pentagon Maps Post-Cold War Defense Plans,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1992, p. A1; Barton Gellman, “On Second Thought, We Don’t Want to Rule the World,” *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, June 1–7, 1992, p. 31.

7. Undersecretary of Defense (Policy), *1991 Summer Study*, Organized by the Director, Net Assessment, held at Newport, R.I., August 5–13, 1991, p. 17.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

9. Post-election analyses stressed the likelihood of substantial continuity between the Clinton and Bush foreign policies. At his first post-election news conference, President-elect Clinton referred to the responsibilities imposed on the United States by virtue of its position as the “sole superpower.” “Excerpts from President-Elect’s News Conference in Arkansas,” *New York Times*, November 13, 1992, p. A8.

nance. This strategy is not overtly aggressive; the use of preventive measures to suppress the emergence of new great powers is not contemplated. It is not, in other words, a strategy of heavy-handed American dominance. Rather the strategy of preponderance seeks to preserve unipolarity by persuading Japan and Germany that they are better off remaining within the orbit of an American-led security and economic system than they would be if they became great powers. The strategy of preponderance assumes that rather than balancing against the United States, other states will bandwagon with it. Important benefits are thought to flow from the perpetuation of unipolarity. In a unipolar system, it is argued, the United States could avoid the unpredictable geopolitical consequences that would attend the emergence of new great powers. Unipolarity would, it is said, minimize the risks of both strategic uncertainty and instability. In effect, the strategy of preponderance aims at preserving the Cold War status quo, even though the Cold War is over.

In this article, I use neorealist theory to analyze the implications of unipolarity. I argue that the “unipolar moment” is just that, a geopolitical interlude that will give way to multipolarity between 2000–2010. I start with a very simple premise: states balance against hegemon, even those like the United States that seek to maintain their preeminence by employing strategies based more on benevolence than coercion. As Kenneth N. Waltz says, “In international politics, overwhelming power repels and leads other states to balance against it.”¹⁰ In a unipolar world, systemic constraints—balancing, uneven growth rates, and the sameness effect—impel eligible states (i.e., those with the capability to do so) to become great powers. I use neorealist theory to explain the process of great power emergence.

My theoretical argument is supported by an extensive historical discussion. A unipolar world is not *terra incognita*. There have been two other comparable unipolar moments in modern international history. The evidence from those two eras confirms the expectations derived from structural realism: (1) unipolar systems contain the seeds of their own demise because the hegemon’s unbalanced power creates an environment conducive to the emergence of new great powers; and (2) the entry of new great powers into the international system erodes the hegemon’s relative power and, ultimately, its preeminence. In the final section of this article, I consider the policy implications,

10. Kenneth N. Waltz, “America as a Model for the World? A Foreign Policy Perspective,” *PS*, December 1991, p. 669.

and I argue that the strategy of preponderance is unlikely to be successful.¹¹ It will be difficult for the United States to maintain the Cold War status quo because structural change has destroyed the bipolar foundation of the post-1945 international system. I conclude by outlining a new grand strategy that could accomplish the two main geopolitical tasks facing the United States in the years ahead: (1) managing the potentially difficult transition from unipolarity to multipolarity; and (2) advancing American interests in the multipolar world that inevitably will emerge.

Why Great Powers Rise—The Role of Systemic Constraints

Whether the United States can maintain its standing as the sole great power depends largely on whether new great powers will rise. To answer that question, we need to understand why states become great powers.¹² This is

11. In a sense, this article extends Mearsheimer's examination of post-Cold War Europe's geopolitical future to the global level. See John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer 1990), pp. 5–56. It should be noted that Mearsheimer and I come to very different policy conclusions regarding the American military commitment to Europe (and no doubt we would not agree on some of the other policy recommendations made in this article), notwithstanding the similarity of our analyses.

12. As Kenneth Waltz writes, great powers are defined by capabilities: "States, because they are in a self-help system, have to use their combined capabilities in order to serve their interests. The economic, military, and other capabilities of nations cannot be sectored and separately weighed. States are not placed in the top rank because they excel in one way or another. Their rank depends on how they score on all of the following items: size of population and territory; resource endowment; military strength; political stability; and competence." Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p. 131. Because of their capabilities, great powers tend to behave differently than other states. Jack Levy writes that great powers are distinguished from others by: 1) a high level of military capability that makes them relatively self-sufficient strategically and capable of projecting power beyond their borders; 2) a broad concept of security that embraces a concern with regional and/or global power balances; and 3) a greater assertiveness than lesser powers in defining and defending their interests. Jack Levy, *War and the Modern Great Power System, 1495–1975* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), pp. 11–19.

Recently there have been several questionable attempts to redefine great power status. For example, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., and Samuel P. Huntington argue that only the United States has the "soft" power resources (socio-cultural and ideological attractiveness to other states) that Nye and Huntington claim are a prerequisite of great power status. Nye, *Bound to Lead*; Huntington, "The U.S.—Decline or Renewal?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Winter 1988/89), pp. 90–93. This argument has three weaknesses. First, it is far from clear that others view U.S. culture and ideology in the same positive light that Nye and Huntington do. America's racial, economic, educational, and social problems have eroded others' admiration for the United States. Second, it is not unusual for great powers to see themselves as cultural or ideological role models; examples include nineteenth-century Britain and France, pre-1914 Germany and, of course, the Soviet Union. Finally, when it comes to setting great powers apart from others, soft power may

a critical issue because the emergence (or disappearance) of great powers can have a decisive effect on international politics; a consequential shift in the number of great powers changes the international system's structure. Waltz defines a "consequential" shift as "variations in number that lead to different expectations about the effect of structure on units."¹³ Examples are shifts from: bipolarity to either unipolarity or multipolarity; unipolarity to bipolarity or multipolarity; multipolarity to bipolarity or unipolarity; from a multipolar system with three great powers to one of four or more (or vice versa).¹⁴

Throughout modern international history, there has been an observable pattern of great power emergence. Although neorealism does not, and cannot, purport to predict the foreign policies of specific states, it can account for outcomes and patterns of behavior that happen recurrently in international politics. Great power emergence is a structurally driven phenomenon. Specifically, it results from the interaction of two factors: (1) differential growth rates and (2) anarchy.

Although great power emergence is shaped by structural factors, and can cause structural effects, it results from unit-level actions. In other words, a feedback loop of sorts is at work: (1) structural constraints press eligible states to become great powers; (2) such states make unit-level decisions whether to pursue great power status in response to these structural constraints; (3) if a unit-level decision to seek great power status produces a consequential shift in polarity, it has a structural impact. Rising states have choices about whether to become great powers. However, a state's freedom to choose whether to seek great power status is in reality tightly constrained by structural factors. Eligible states that fail to attain great power status are predictably punished. If policymakers of eligible states are socialized to the inter-

be a helpful supplement to the other instruments of statecraft, but states with the requisite hard power capabilities (per Waltz's definition) are great powers regardless of whether they "stand for an idea with appeal beyond [their] borders."

Another popular intellectual fashion holds that Japan and Germany will carve out niches in international politics as the first "global civilian powers." Hanns Maull, "Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 5 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 91-106. As civilian powers, it is argued, they will eschew military strength in favor of economic power, work through international institutions to promote global cooperation, and "furnish international public goods, such as refugee resettlement, national disaster relief, development of economic infrastructure, and human resources improvements." Yoichi Funabashi, "Japan and America: Global Partners," *Foreign Policy*, No. 86 (Spring 1992), p. 37. In the real world, however, one does not find traditional great powers and "civilian" great powers. One finds only states that are great powers and those that are not.

13. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 162.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-170.

national system's constraints, they understand that attaining great power status is a prerequisite if their states are to be secure and autonomous.¹⁵ The fate that befell nineteenth-century China illustrates what can happen to an eligible state when its leaders ignore structural imperatives. But nineteenth-century China is a rather singular exception to the pattern of great power emergence. Far more typical is post-1860 Italy, a state that tried hard to attain great power status notwithstanding that it "had more in common with . . . a small Balkan state or a colony than a Great Power" in that it was economically backward, financially weak, and resource-poor.¹⁶

DIFFERENTIAL GROWTH RATES

The process of great power emergence is underpinned by the fact that the economic (and technological and military) power of states grows at differential, not parallel rates. That is, in relative terms, some states are gaining power while others are losing it. As Robert Gilpin notes, over time, "the differential growth in the power of various states in the system causes a fundamental redistribution of power in the system."¹⁷ The result, as Paul Kennedy has shown, is that time and again relative "economic shifts heralded the rise of new Great Powers which one day would have a decisive impact on the military/territorial order."¹⁸ The link between differential growth rates

15. Kenneth N. Waltz, "A Reply to My Critics" in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 343.

16. R.J.B. Bosworth, *Italy, the Least of the Great Powers: Italian Foreign Policy before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 2. In mid to late nineteenth-century China, some attempts were made at "self-strengthening"—adoption of Western industrial, technological, and military innovations. However, the initiative for such efforts came more from regional strongmen like Li Hongzang than from the central government in Peking. Economic problems resulting from unfavorable demographics, and social and cultural factors, especially Peking's inability to mobilize the elite for a centrally-directed reform program, undercut the modernization effort. "Late imperial China experienced a profound structural breakdown brought on by traditional forces that propelled dynastic cycles. At this unfortunate juncture between dynastic breakdown and foreign intrusion, the leadership simply lacked the internal resources to protect China from other expansive nations in search of wealth and glory." June Grasso, Jay Corrin, and Michael Kort, *Modernization and Revolution in China* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), p. 69.

17. Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 13. The role of uneven growth rates in the rise of great powers is closely connected to long cycle explanations. See Joshua S. Goldstein, *Long Cycles: Prosperity and War in the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); George Modelski, *Long Cycles in World Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987); and William R. Thompson, "Dehio, Long Cycles, and the Geohistorical Context of Structural Transition," *World Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (October 1992), pp. 127–152.

18. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987), p. xxii.

and great power emergence has important implications for unipolarity. Unipolarity is likely to be short-lived because new great powers will emerge as the uneven growth process narrows the gap between the hegemon and the eligible states that are positioned to emerge as its competitors.

There are at least three other respects in which great power emergence is affected by differential growth rates. First, as eligible states gain relative power, they are more likely to attempt to advance their standing in the international system. As Gilpin points out, "The critical significance of the differential growth of power among states is that it alters the cost of changing the international system and therefore the incentives for changing the international system."¹⁹ Second, Gilpin observes, rising power leads to increasing ambition. Rising powers seek to enhance their security by increasing their capabilities and their control over the external environment.²⁰ Third, as Kennedy explains, rising power leads also to increased international interests and commitments. Oftentimes for great powers, geopolitical and military capabilities are the consequence of a process that begins with economic expansion. Economic expansion leads to new overseas obligations (access to markets and raw materials, alliances, bases), which then must be defended.²¹

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANARCHY: BALANCING AND SAMENESS

Because it is anarchic, the international political system is a self-help system in which states' foremost concern must be with survival.²² In an anarchic system, states must provide for their own security and they face many real or apparent threats.²³ International politics thus is a competitive realm, a fact that in itself constrains eligible states to attain great power status. Specifically, there are two manifestations of this competitiveness that shape great power emergence: balancing and the "sameness effect."²⁴

BALANCING. The competitiveness of international politics is manifested in the tendency of states to balance.²⁵ Balancing has especially strong explana-

19. Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 95.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95. As Gilpin notes, rising power can tempt a state to seek change in the international system, which can trigger "hegemonic war." This problem is discussed in more detail in the conclusion.

21. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, p. xxiii.

22. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 107, 127.

23. Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory," in Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb, eds., *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 43.

24. The phrase "sameness effect" is from Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 128.

25. For discussion of the differences between bandwagoning and balancing behavior, see Waltz,

tory power in accounting for the facts that unipolarity tends to be short-lived and that would-be hegemonies invariably fail to achieve lasting dominance. Structural realism leads to the expectation that hegemony should generate the rise of countervailing power in the form of new great powers.

The reason states balance is to correct a skewed distribution of relative power in the international system. States are highly attentive to changes in their relative power position because relative power shifts have crucial security implications.²⁶ It is the interaction of differential growth rates—the main cause of changes in the relative distribution of power among states—and anarchy that produces important effects. In an anarchic, self-help system, states must always be concerned that others will use increased relative capabilities against them. By enhancing their own relative capabilities or diminishing those of an adversary, states get a double payoff: greater security and a wider range of strategic options.²⁷ The reverse is true for states that remain indifferent to relative power relationships. Thus, as Gilpin says, the international system's competitiveness "stimulates, and may compel, a state to increase its power; at the least, it necessitates that the prudent state prevent relative increase in the powers of competitor states."²⁸ By definition, the distribution of relative power in a unipolar system is extremely unbalanced. Consequently, in a unipolar system, the structural pressures on eligible states to increase their relative capabilities and become great powers should be overwhelming. If they do not acquire great power capabilities, they may be exploited by the hegemon. Of course, an eligible state's quest for security may give rise to the security dilemma because actions intended to bolster its own security may have the unintended consequence of threatening others.²⁹

It can be argued on the basis of hegemonic stability theory and balance of threat theory that a "benign" hegemon might be able to prevent new great powers from emerging and balancing against it.³⁰ These arguments are unpersuasive. Although hegemonic stability theory is usually employed in the

Theory of International Politics, pp. 125–126; Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 17–33.

26. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 126.

27. Gilpin, *War and Change*, pp. 86–87.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 87–88.

29. John Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (January 1950), pp. 157–180.

30. On balance of threat theory, see Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, pp. 17–26. For an overview of the benevolent and coercive strands of hegemonic stability theory, see Duncan Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," *International Organization*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Autumn 1985), pp. 579–614.

context of international political economy, it can be extended to other aspects of international politics. The logic of collective goods underlying the notion of a benign hegemon assumes that all states will cooperate because they derive absolute benefit from the collective goods the hegemon provides. Because they are better off, the argument goes, others should willingly accept a benign hegemon and even help to prop it up if it is declining. However, as Michael C. Webb and Stephen D. Krasner point out, the benign version of hegemonic stability theory assumes that states are indifferent to the distribution of relative gains.³¹ This is, as noted, a dubious assumption. As Joseph Grieco points out, because states worry that today's ally could become tomorrow's rival, "they pay close attention to how cooperation might affect relative *capabilities* in the future."³² Moreover, if stability is equated with the dominant state's continuing preeminence, the stability of hegemonic systems is questionable once the hegemon's power begins to erode noticeably. As Gilpin points out, over time a hegemon declines from its dominant position because: (1) the costs of sustaining its preeminence begin to erode the hegemon's economic strength, thereby diminishing its military and economic capabilities; and (2) the hegemonic paradox results in the diffusion of economic, technological, and organizational skills to other states, thereby causing the hegemon to lose its "comparative advantage" over them.³³ Frequently, these others are eligible states that will rise to great power status and challenge the hegemon's predominance.

This last point suggests that in unipolar systems, states do indeed balance against the hegemon's unchecked power. This reflects the fact that in unipolar systems there is no clear-cut distinction between balancing against threat and balancing against power. This is because the threat inheres in the hegemon's power.³⁴ In a unipolar world, others must worry about the he-

31. Michael C. Webb and Stephen D. Krasner, "Hegemonic Stability Theory: An Empirical Assessment," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (April 1989), pp. 184–185.

32. Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism," *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988), p. 500 (emphasis in original).

33. Gilpin, *War and Change*, pp. 156–210.

34. Traditional balance-of-power theory postulates that states align against others that are excessively powerful. Stephen Walt refined balance of power theory by arguing that states actually balance against threats rather than against power *per se*. However, Walt's balance-of-threat analysis is more ambiguous than it might seem at first glance. For example, he admits that every post-1648 bid for European hegemony was repulsed by a balancing coalition. *Origins of Alliances*, pp. 28–29. Why? Because would-be hegemonies were powerful or because they were threatening? He does not say directly but one suspects that his answer would be "both." Walt

gemon's capabilities, not its intentions. The preeminent power's intentions may be benign today but may not be tomorrow. Robert Jervis cuts to the heart of the matter when he notes, "Minds can be changed, new leaders can come to power, values can shift, new opportunities and dangers can arise."³⁵ Unless they are prepared to run the risk of being vulnerable to a change in the hegemon's intentions, other states must be prepared to counter its capabilities. Moreover, even a hegemon animated by benign motives may pursue policies that run counter to others' interests. Thus, as Waltz says, "Balance-of-power theory leads one to expect that states, if they are free to do so, will flock to the weaker side. The stronger, not the weaker side, threatens them if only by pressing its preferred policies on other states."³⁶

Invariably, the very fact that others believe a state is excessively powerful redounds to its disadvantage by provoking others to balance against it. It was precisely for this reason that, responding to Sir Eyre Crowe's 1907 "German danger" memorandum, Lord Thomas Sanderson counseled that London should try hard to accommodate rising great powers while simultaneously moderating its own geopolitical demands. Showing commendable empathy for other states' views of Britain's policies and its power, he observed that it would be unwise for Britain to act as if every change in international politics menaced its interests. "It has sometimes seemed to me that to a foreigner . . . the British Empire must appear in the light of some huge giant sprawling over the globe, with gouty fingers and toes stretching in every direction, which cannot be approached without eliciting a scream."³⁷

does not downplay the importance of power as a factor in inducing balancing behavior; he simply says it is not the *only* factor (p. 21). Indeed, power and threat blend together almost imperceptibly. Note that two of his threat variables, geographic proximity and offensive capabilities, correlate closely with military *power*. When Walt says that states do not necessarily balance against the most powerful actor in the system he essentially is equating power with GNP. When he says that states balance against threat he is saying that they balance against military power (coupled with aggressive intentions). Obviously, power is more than just GNP. What states appear to balance against in reality is actual or latent military capabilities. In a unipolar world, the hegemon's possession of actual or latent military capabilities will result in balancing regardless of its intentions. If, in a unipolar world, capabilities matter more than intentions, the U.S. monopoly on long-range power-projection capabilities—that is, its preponderance of military power—probably will be viewed by others as threatening.

35. Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978), p. 105.

36. Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, California, August 1990, p. 32.

37. "Memorandum by Lord Sanderson," in G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, eds., *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898–1914*, Volume III (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office [HMSO], 1928), p. 430.

It is unsurprising that counter-hegemonic balancing has occurred even during periods of *perceived* unipolarity. After the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, for instance, French policy was driven by the belief that the scales of power in the U.S.-Soviet competition were weighted too heavily in America's favor. French President DeGaulle said that the United States had become the greatest power and that it was driven "automatically" to extend its influence and "to exercise a preponderant weight, that is to say, a hegemony over others."³⁸ DeGaulle's policy was animated by the need to redress this perceived imbalance. As Edward Kolodziej observes, "In the closing years of Gaullist rule, the possible development of a unipolar system became one of the major concerns of the French government."³⁹ One of the most important questions concerning international politics today is whether this pattern of balancing against the dominant power in a unipolar system (actual or perceived) will recur in the post-Cold War world.

SAMENESS. As Waltz points out, "competition produces a tendency toward sameness of the competitors"; that is, toward imitating their rivals' successful characteristics.⁴⁰ Such characteristics include not only military strategies, tactics, weaponry, and technology, but also administrative and organizational techniques. If others do well in developing effective instruments of competition, a state must emulate its rivals or face the consequences of falling behind. Fear drives states to duplicate others' successful policies because policymakers know that, as Arthur Stein observes, "failure in the anarchic international system can mean the disappearance of their states."⁴¹ From this standpoint, it is to be expected that in crucial respects, great powers will look and act very much alike. It is also to be expected that sameness-effect imperatives will impel eligible states to become great powers and to acquire all the capabilities attendant to that status. As Waltz observes, "In a self-help system, the possession of most but not all of the capabilities of a great power leaves a state vulnerable to others who have the instruments that the lesser state lacks."⁴²

Additional light is shed on the sameness effect by the "second image reversed" perspective, which posits a linkage between the international sys-

38. Quoted in Edward A. Kolodziej, *French International Policy Under DeGaulle and Pompidou: The Politics of Grandeur* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 91.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91 (emphasis added).

40. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 127.

41. Arthur Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate: Circumstance and Choice in International Relations* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 115–116.

42. Waltz, "Emerging Structure," p. 21.

tem's structural constraints and a state's domestic structure. Charles Tilly's famous aphorism, "War made the state, and the state made war" neatly captures the concept.⁴³ Tilly shows how the need to protect against external danger compelled states in early modern Europe to develop administrative and bureaucratic structures to maintain, supply, and finance permanent military establishments. But there is more to it than that. As is discussed below, the evidence from 1660–1713 and 1860–1910 suggests that great power emergence reflects an eligible state's adjustment to the international system's structural constraints. Otto Hinze observed that the way in which states are organized internally reflects "their position relative to each other and their overall position in the world" and that "throughout the ages pressure from without has been a determining influence on internal structure."⁴⁴

Great powers are similar because they are not, and cannot be, functionally differentiated. This is not to say that great powers are identical. They may adopt different strategies and approaches; however, ultimately they all must be able to perform satisfactorily the same security-related tasks necessary to survive and succeed in the competitive realm of international politics. The sameness effect reflects the enormous pressure that the international system places on great powers to imitate the successful policies of others. Hinze's discussion of Prussia-Germany and England is illustrative. Their respective domestic, political and economic systems developed dissimilarly, in large part because each was affected differently by international pressures. (Maritime England was far more secure than continental Germany.) But, as is true for all great powers, in other crucial respects Prussia-Germany and England were very much alike. That is, both were organized for war and trade in order to maximize their security in a competitive international environment.

Response to Unipolarity: 1660–1714

In this and the following section, I use historical evidence to test my hypotheses about great power emergence. Such a test should be especially useful because there have been two prior occasions in history similar to

43. Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State Making," in Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 42.

44. Otto Hinze, "Military Organization and the Organization of the State," in Felix Gilbert, ed., *The Historical Essays of Otto Hinze* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 183.

today's unipolar moment. France in 1660 and Great Britain in 1860 were as dominant in the international system as the United States is today. In neither case, however, did unipolarity last beyond fifty years. France's unipolar moment ended when Britain and Austria emerged as great powers; Britain's when Germany, Japan and the United States ascended to great power status. If the emergence of those great powers correlates strongly with uneven growth rates, the sameness effect, and balancing against hegemonic power, it can be expected that the present unipolar moment will be displaced by multipolarity within a reasonably short time.

FRENCH HEGEMONY IN A UNIPOLAR WORLD

It is generally agreed that in 1660, when Louis XIV ascended the French throne, France was Europe's sole great power, "the strongest and richest state in the world"; it was "a rare situation of preeminence."⁴⁵ France's dominant position reflected her own strength and the relative weakness of Europe's other states. In 1660, France was Europe's most populous state, had Europe's most efficient centralized administration, was (by the standards of the age) rich agriculturally, and had the potential to develop a dynamic industrial base.⁴⁶ In contrast, France's rivals were declining powers (Spain), or beset by internal troubles (England), or lacked France's capabilities or the means to mobilize them (Habsburg Austria).⁴⁷

France achieved hegemonic standing by developing the means to mobilize its assets and convert them into effective diplomatic, military, and economic power.⁴⁸ France under Louis XIV was responsible for what G.R.R. Treasure calls the "*étatistation*" of war: "the mobilization of the total resources of the state, of the economy, as well as of manpower."⁴⁹ Under War Minister Michel Le Tellier, and his son and successor Louvois, the army was brought under the administrative control of the central government and a standing professional military force was created. The Military Revolution was completed and the French army was drastically altered and improved in such areas as

45. G.R.R. Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France* (London: Rivingtons, 1966), pp. 257–258. Agreeing that France was Europe's only great power in 1660 are Derek McKay and H.M. Scott, *The Rise of the Great Powers, 1648–1815* (London: Longman, 1983); John B. Wolf, *Toward a European Balance of Power, 1620–1715* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970), p. 1.

46. McKay and Scott, *Rise of the Great Powers*, pp. 14–15.

47. Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France*, pp. 210–215, surveys the relative weakness of France's European rivals.

48. McKay and Scott, *Rise of the Great Powers*, pp. 14–15.

49. Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France*, pp. 219–220.

selection of officers, recruitment, weapons, tactics, training and logistics. Finance Minister Colbert labored to strengthen France's financial and economic base to provide the wherewithal to support its enhanced military capabilities. These military, economic, and financial initiatives were made possible by the administrative reforms that strengthened the central government's power and made it more efficient.⁵⁰

Although France was Europe's only great power in 1660, by 1713 England and Habsburg Austria, as well as Russia, had emerged as great powers. The rise of England and Habsburg Austria—that is, the international system's transformation from unipolarity to multipolarity—is directly traceable to anarchy and its consequences: the sameness effect and balancing. Because French dominance threatened their security and autonomy, England and Austria responded by: (1) organizing the Grand Alliances that, in the Nine Years' War and War of the Spanish Succession, sought to contain France and counter its power; and (2) reorganizing themselves administratively, military, and economically to acquire great power capabilities comparable to France's. Treasure observes that, "France's example forced change on other states"; Derek McKay and H.M. Scott point out that, to compete with France, France's opponents "had begun to copy the French model."⁵¹ The increasing power of governments was a response to external danger: "International competition and war," says William Doyle, "were the main spur to domestic innovation."⁵² The danger to their security posed by French hegemony forced England and Austria to emulate France and to develop the capabilities that would enable them to stand on an equal geopolitical footing with France.

England's rise to great power status was a direct response to France's preeminent position in international politics. The English King William III was concerned with maintaining England's security by establishing a balance of power to preserve "the peace, liberties, and well-being of Europe, which happened in his lifetime to be threatened by overgrown French power."⁵³ In

50. For brief discussions of the administrative, military, and economic bases of French power, see John B. Wolf, *The Emergence of the Great Powers, 1685–1715* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), pp. 97–103, pp. 181–187; Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France*, pp. 231–244, 288–320; and William Doyle, *The Old European Order, 1660–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 244–245. Ultimately, of course, fiscal reforms were only partially successful and France was unable to bear the huge financial costs of the Nine Years' War and War of the Spanish Succession. 51. Treasure, *Seventeenth Century France*, p. 241; McKay and Scott, *Rise of the Great Powers*, pp. 41–42.

52. Doyle, *The Old Order*, p. 265.

53. G.C. Gibbs, "The Revolution in Foreign Policy," in Geoffrey Holmes, ed., *Britain After the Glorious Revolution, 1689–1714* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 61.

rising to great power status, England was balancing at least as much against France's hegemonic power as against the French threat. Indeed, the distinction between power and threat was blurred.⁵⁴ After 1688, England was at war with France almost continuously for twenty-five years and the extent of its military involvement on the continent increased dramatically. England maintained a sizeable standing army and the largest and most powerful navy in the world. The imperatives of war meant that the state had to improve its ability to extract and mobilize the nation's wealth and, as in France, England's administrative capabilities were greatly expanded for this purpose between 1688 and 1713. France's hegemonic challenge was the most powerful stimulus to the growth of power of the English state: England "became, like her main rivals, a fiscal-military state, one dominated by the task of waging war."⁵⁵

Habsburg Austria, too, emerged as a great power in response to France's hegemonic power, and also the Ottoman threat to Austria's eastern interests. The goals of Austria's western policy were "establishment of a recognized great power position and the fight against the supremacy of France."⁵⁶ In this context, for Austria, the stakes in the War of the Spanish Succession were survival and emergence as a great power.⁵⁷ Like Britain and France, Austria undertook administrative reforms aimed at increasing the state's warmaking capabilities. "The centralizing drive of the Habsburg government, latent in the sixteenth and conscious in the seventeenth centuries, was based upon a desire to consolidate power for the purpose of state security."⁵⁸

54. Secretary of State Charles Hedges said, "We are awake and sensible to the too great growth of our dangerous neighbor, and are taking vigorous measures for the preservation of ourselves, and the peace of Europe." And in June 1701, King William III instructed the Duke of Marlborough to commence negotiations for an anti-French coalition "for the Preservation of the Liberties of Europe, the Property and Peace of England, and for reducing the Exorbitant Power of France." Quoted in John B. Hattendorf, "Alliance, Encirclement, and Attrition: British Grand Strategy in the War of the Spanish Succession," in Paul Kennedy, ed., *Grand Strategy in War and Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 16.

55. John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 27.

56. Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 77-78.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

58. Thomas M. Barker, *Double Eagle and Crescent: Vienna's Second Turkish Siege and Its Historical Setting* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1967), p. 19. In the administrative sphere, efforts were stepped up to subject Hungary (the bulk of which only came under firm Austrian control after the Ottomans were defeated in 1683) to Vienna's control so that Austria could draw upon its resources; a central organ, the *Hofkanzlei*, was established to conduct foreign and domestic affairs; the *Hofkammer* was established to exert central control over the finances of Habsburg Austria's possessions; and the *Hofkreigsrat* was created to administer Austria's army centrally and remodel it as a standing professional army on French lines. See Wolf, *Emergence*

Austria was considerably less successful than France and England in creating administrative mechanisms for the efficient mobilization of national resources. Nevertheless, it remains the case that the need for security in the face of French hegemony forced Austria (like England) both to emulate France and to balance against it in order to attain great power status.⁵⁹

Response to Unipolarity: 1860–1910

In 1860, Britain was in a position of apparently unequaled dominance in an international system that has been characterized as unipolar.⁶⁰ Because it was Europe's arbiter and possessor of a worldwide and unchallenged colonial empire, "Britain could not have been met with an overwhelming balancing coalition."⁶¹ Indeed, Britain's dominance was so pronounced that it was able in the early 1860s largely to turn its back on European security affairs and withdraw into a "splendid isolation" that lasted until the turn of the century. Britain's hegemony was a function of its naval power, its colonial empire, and its overwhelming economic and financial strength.⁶² The Royal Navy was as strong as those of the next three or four naval powers combined. Britain's level of per capita industrialization was more than twice that of the

of the Great Powers, pp. 126–137; R.J.W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 148–150.

59. Although Russia's rise to great power status paralleled England's and Austria's, I do not discuss it at length because it was unconnected to the wars against French hegemony.

60. The phrase "unequaled dominance" is from Paul Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, p. 152. Michael Doyle describes the international system in 1860 as "unipolar-peripheral"; that is, in the extra-European world, Britain's power was unchallenged. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 236. Building on Doyle, Fareed Zakaria drops the qualifier and describes the mid-nineteenth century international system as unipolar. Zakaria, "Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay," *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Summer 1992), pp. 186–187.

61. Zakaria, "Realism and Domestic Politics," p. 187. There is empirical support for Zakaria's statement. William B. Moul's measurement of the power capability shares of Europe's great powers confirms Britain's hegemonic standing. In 1860, Britain's share was 43.8 percent, while the combined shares of Prussia, France, Austria, Russia and Italy was 56.2 percent. France was the second-ranked power at 19.7 percent. Moul, "Measuring the 'Balances of Power': A Look at Some Numbers," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (April 1989), p. 120.

62. This discussion, and the figures cited, are based on Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pp. 152–157. In the United States there is a spirited debate about the contemporary implications of Britain's decline. For contrasting views in a policy context, see Nye, *Bound to Lead*, pp. 49–68, which rejects the British analogy's relevance; and David P. Calleo, *Beyond American Hegemony: The Future of the Western Alliance* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), pp. 129–149, which sees a strong parallel between the *Pax Britannica's* demise and the likely demise of the post-1945 *Pax Americana*.

next ranking power (France), and Britain in 1860 accounted for 53.2 percent of world manufacturing output (a bit more than America's share in 1945).

In the following discussion, I look at the great power emergence of Germany, the United States, and Japan (but not Italy's attempted rise to great power status), and analyze how each was affected by relative power shifts and the consequences of anarchy. Germany's rise to world power status was most obviously a direct response to Britain's hegemony, while in the American and Japanese cases the connection between unipolarity and great power emergence, though less direct, is still discernible.

BRITISH HEGEMONY IN A UNIPOLAR WORLD

Britain's preeminence cast a shadow over the international system. By 1880, it was widely (and correctly) perceived that the European great power system was evolving into a system of three or four "world" powers (what today are called superpowers).⁶³ International politics was profoundly affected by this trend, which alerted policymakers to the security and economic consequences of the relative distribution of power in the international system. After 1880, there was among statesmen "a prevailing view of the world order which stressed struggle, change, competition, the use of force and the organization of national resources to enhance state power."⁶⁴ Britain was the first world power and it was the model that other rising powers sought to imitate as they climbed to great power status. In other words, the sameness effect was very much in evidence. Speaking of Germany, Japan, and Italy, Paul Kennedy says:

In all three societies there were impulses to emulate the established powers. By the 1880s and 1890s each was acquiring overseas territories; each, too, began to build a modern fleet to complement its standing army. Each was a significant element in the diplomatic calculus of the age and, at the least by 1902, had become an alliance partner of an older power.⁶⁵

63. See Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pp. 194–202. This transformation is illustrated by the great powers' respective shares of total industrial potential and world manufacturing output. In 1880 Germany, France, and Russia were tightly bunched and well behind both Britain and the United States in terms of both total industrial potential and shares of world manufacturing output. However, by 1913 Britain, the United States, and Germany had widely distanced themselves from the rest of the great power pack. In terms of total industrial potential and share of world manufacturing output, third-place Germany held nearly a 2:1 advantage over Russia, the next ranking power.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 202–203.

Kennedy does not mention the United States in this passage but he could have. Although the United States did not need a large army and was able to refrain from joining a great power alliance, it followed the same pattern of building a powerful modern navy, acquiring overseas colonies, and becoming a major factor in great power diplomacy.

GERMANY'S RISE TO WORLD POWER

The effect of differential growth rates was an important factor in Germany's rise to great power status. As Paul Kennedy has pointed out, Germany's economic growth after 1860 was "explosive."⁶⁶ Between 1860 and 1913, Germany's share of world manufacturing output rose from 4.9 percent to 14.8 percent and its share of world trade from 9.7 percent to 13 percent.⁶⁷ In 1913, Germany's share of world exports was 13 percent (compared to Britain's 14 percent).⁶⁸ Germany's rising power facilitated Berlin's decision to seek change in the international system. As Kennedy observes, Germany "either already possessed the instruments of power to alter the status quo or had the material resources to create such instruments."⁶⁹ As Kurt Reiszler, political confidant of pre-World War I Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, observed, *Weltpolitik* was tightly linked to the dynamic growth of Germany's export-driven economy.⁷⁰ Reiszler also noted how Germany's demands for power and prestige increased in proportion to its rising strength.⁷¹ Predictably, Germany's increasing ambition reflected Berlin's concern with protecting its deepening stakes in the international system. For a rising power such behavior is typical: "In order to increase its own security, it will try to expand its political, economic and territorial control; it will try to change the international system in accordance with its particular interests."⁷²

Germany's rise to world power status was a direct response to Britain's preeminence in international politics. "The Germans came to resent British power and even British efforts to maintain their position unimpaired."⁷³ *Weltpolitik*—Germany's push for a big navy, colonies, and equality with Brit-

66. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 202; Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860–1914* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), pp. 44, 292.

68. Kennedy, *Anglo-German Antagonism*, p. 292.

69. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, p. 211.

70. Quoted in Imanuel Geiss, *German Foreign Policy, 1871–1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), p. 9.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

72. Gilpin, *War and Change*, pp. 94–95.

73. William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890–1902*, 2d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 416.

ain in political influence and prestige—was driven by security concerns and was a clear manifestation of the sameness effect. German leaders were concerned that unless Germany developed countervailing naval power, its independence and interests in international politics would be circumscribed by Britain.⁷⁴ Chancellor Chlodwig Hohenlohe-Schillingfurst said in 1896: “Unless we are prepared to yield at all times and to give up the role of world power, then we must be respected. Even the most friendly word makes no impression in international relations if it is not supported by adequate material strength. Therefore, a fleet is necessary in the face of other naval powers.” Notwithstanding the consequences, in an anarchic world Germany had little choice but to emulate Britain by building a powerful navy.⁷⁵

Germany’s rise to world power status and the resulting Anglo-German antagonism were structurally determined. Unless Germany acquired world power capabilities, it would have been vulnerable to states like Britain that did have them.⁷⁶ William L. Langer points out that Germany’s increasing international interests and the need to defend them in the face of Britain’s

74. Grand Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz believed Germany could not remain a great power unless it developed into a first-rank maritime power. Volker R. Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914* (London: MacMillan, 1973), p. 29. “Naval power,” Tirpitz said, “is essential if Germany does not want to go under”; Ivor Lambi, *The Navy and German Power Politics, 1862–1914* (Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), p. 139.

75. Quotation from Lambi, *The Navy and German Power Politics*, p. 114. Even Sir Eyre Crowe, the British Foreign Office’s leading anti-German hardliner, recognized this in his famous 1907 memorandum. Crowe conceded that it was for Berlin, not London, to determine the size of the navy necessary to defend German interests. Crowe also understood that British opposition to Germany’s naval buildup would serve only to accentuate Berlin’s security dilemma: “Apart from the question of right and wrong, it may also be urged that nothing would be more likely than an attempt at such dictation, to impel Germany to persevere with her shipbuilding programs.” “Memorandum by Mr. [Sir] Eyre Crowe,” in Gooch and Temperley, *Documents on the Origins of the War*, p. 418.

76. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Germany’s international behavior differed little from Britain’s or America’s. But unlike Britain, Germany’s outward thrust did not go into a geopolitical vacuum, and unlike the United States, Germany lacked a secure strategic and economic base of continental dimension. Germany was hemmed in and its rise to great power status was too rapid, and too freighted with implications for others’ interests, to be accommodated. David Calleo, *The German Problem Reconsidered: Germany and the World Order, 1870 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 83–84. As W.E. Mosse observes, Germany’s rise to great power status “could not but affect the interests and policies of all others. It was bound to frustrate and arouse the opposition of some at least of the older powers.” W.E. Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question, 1848–1871: With Special Reference to England and Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 2. In a real sense, therefore, Germany was born encircled. Merely by existing, it posed a threat to others. There is an important lesson here. A state must decide for itself whether to strive for great power status, but success hinges on how others react. Some states (such as pre-1914 Germany) may face a difficult path to great power status, while for others (e.g., the United States) the going is relatively easy. Environmental factors, such as geographic positioning, have a lot to do with the difficulties that may confront an eligible state as it attempts to rise to great power status.

preeminence meant that Berlin was “virtually driven” into imitating London by pursuing a policy of naval and colonial expansion. Given these circumstances, “it is hard to see how Germany could have avoided colliding with England.”⁷⁷ The Anglo-German rivalry was a textbook example of the security dilemma. Because Germany’s rise to world power status challenged a *status quo* that primarily reflected Britain’s predominance and interests, *Weltpolitik* made Britain less secure and prompted London to take counteraction. Thus, the Anglo-German rivalry illustrates that the process of great power emergence can trigger a Hertz/Avis dynamic if a rising great power emerges as the clear challenger to a preeminent state’s position.⁷⁸

Such states are fated to engage in intense competition. The effect of Germany’s emergence to great power status on Anglo-German relations is suggestive. In 1880, for example, Germany’s power position (measured by share of world manufacturing output and total industrial potential) was similar to that of France and Russia.⁷⁹ While London and Berlin were on close terms during the 1880s (which at times verged on *de facto* alliance), France and Russia were Britain’s main rivals.⁸⁰ By 1900, however, the Anglo-German rivalry had heated up and Germany had by a decisive margin established

77. Langer, *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, p. 794.

78. The competition between the largest and second-largest U.S. automobile rental companies (Hertz and Avis, respectively) became famous when Avis ran an advertising campaign with the slogan, “We’re number two; we try harder.” The analogy of the Anglo-German rivalry to commercial competition was apparent to Tirpitz, who wrote, “the older and stronger firm inevitably seeks to strangle the new and rising one before it is too late.” Paul Kennedy, “The Kaiser and German *Weltpolitik*: Reflexions on Wilhelm II’s Place in the Making of German Foreign Policy,” in John C.G. Röhl and Nicolaus Sombart, *Kaiser Wilhelm II: New Interpretations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 149.

79. In 1880, the total industrial potential of the four powers was: Britain (73.3, where Britain in 1900 is the index benchmark of 100), Germany (27.4), France (25.1), Russia (24.5). The four powers’ shares of world manufacturing output were: Britain (22.9 percent), Germany (8.5 percent), France (7.8 percent), Russian (7.6 percent). Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pp. 201–202.

80. This does not contradict my argument that Germany’s rise to world power status was a balancing response to Britain’s hegemony. On the contrary: during the 1880s, Berlin and London were able to maintain a cordial relationship because Germany’s relative power had not risen to a point that thrust Germany into the challenger’s role. It should also be noted that during the 1880s the Anglo-German relationship was indirect. London was aligned not with Berlin itself but with Germany’s allies, Austria-Hungary and Italy. This alignment was part of Bismarck’s intricate alliance scheme and was meant to counter Russian ambitions in the Near East and Mediterranean, an objective that overlapped Britain’s interests. Bismarck’s system also was intended to isolate France while simultaneously keeping Berlin on friendly terms with Europe’s other great powers. After 1890, the stunning rise in Germany’s relative power became manifest. Inexorably, Germany was pushed down the path to world power status, and to confrontation with Britain.

itself as Europe's second-ranking power. Indeed, Germany was closing in on Britain in terms of share of world manufacturing output and total industrial potential, and by 1913, Germany would pass Britain in these two categories.⁸¹ The dramatic change in the two states' relative power positions fueled the deterioration in Anglo-German relations, and led to a shift in European geopolitical alignments as London sought ententes with its erstwhile rivals, France and Russia, as counterweights to German power.

EMBRYONIC SUPERPOWER: AMERICA'S RISE TO WORLD POWER

It has been argued that the United States did not seek to become a great power but rather had that status thrust upon it.⁸² This view does not hold up, however. By the mid-1870s, the United States was contemplating a new role in world affairs, however tentatively.⁸³ This outward thrust was underpinned by the effect of differential growth rates. In the decades after the War Between the States, the United States acquired enormous economic capabilities including a rapidly expanding manufacturing and industrial base, leadership in advanced technology, a highly productive agricultural sector, abundant raw materials, ample foreign (and later internally generated) capital.⁸⁴ In 1880, the United States (at 14.7 percent) ranked second behind Great Britain (at 22.9 percent) in world manufacturing output. By 1913, the United States (at 32 percent) held a commanding advantage in share of world manufacturing production over Germany (14.8 percent) and Britain (13.6 percent).⁸⁵ As Kennedy has observed, given the economic, technological, and

81. In 1900, the total industrial potential of the four powers was: Britain, 100; Germany, 71.3; Russia, 47.6; France, 36.8. The four powers' shares of world manufacturing output were: Britain, 18.5 percent, Germany, 13.2 percent, Russia, 8.8 percent, France, 6.8 percent. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pp. 201–202.

82. Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961), pp. 269–270.

83. Milton Plesur, *America's Outward Thrust: Approaches to Foreign Affairs, 1865–1890* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971). "Whether great power status came in the 1890s or earlier, it is certain that the United States did not make the decision for colonialism and world involvement in a sudden movement which caught the national psyche offguard. The new departure had its roots in the quiet years of the Gilded Age." *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10. Edward P. Crapol has recently surveyed the state of the historiography of late nineteenth-century American foreign policy. Many recent works take the view that the United States consciously sought world power status. Crapol, "Coming to Terms with Empire: The Historiography of Late Nineteenth Century American Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Fall 1992), pp. 573–597.

84. See Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pp. 178–182, 242–249.

85. *Ibid.*, pp. 201–202.

resource advantages the United States enjoyed, there “was a virtual inevitability to the whole process” of its rise to great power status.⁸⁶

In the late nineteenth century, the historian Frederick Jackson Turner noted that because states develop significant international political interests as their international economic interests deepen, the United States was already on the way to becoming a great power.⁸⁷ During the Benjamin Harrison administration, the United States began engaging in what Secretary of State James G. Blaine (echoing William Pitt the younger) called “the annexation of trade.”⁸⁸ Focusing first on Latin America, U.S. overseas economic interests expanded later to encompass Asia and Europe as well. Like Germany, as America’s overseas economic stakes grew (or were perceived to grow), its international political interests also increased.⁸⁹ Paul Kennedy observes that the “growth of American industrial power and overseas trade was accompanied, perhaps inevitably, by a more assertive diplomacy and by an American-style rhetoric of *Weltpolitik*.”⁹⁰

Again like Germany, as America’s stakes in the international system deepened, Washington began acquiring the capabilities to defend its interests. As early as the 1870s, proponents of naval expansion argued that, lacking an enlarged and modernized fleet, the United States would be vulnerable and powerless to defend its interests.⁹¹ In the 1880s, Alfred Thayer Mahan argued that attainment of world power status was the key to America’s security. His arguments about the “influence of sea power upon history” displayed an intuitive understanding of the sameness effect and he presciently argued that, to become a world power, the United States would have to emulate Britain’s naval, colonial, and trade policies.⁹² America’s naval buildup began during the Harrison administration (1889–93) when Navy Secretary Tracy

86. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, p. 242.

87. Quoted in Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860–1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), pp. 69–70.

88. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 106.

89. American policymakers believed that overseas markets were more crucial to the nation’s economic health than in fact was true. By 1913, foreign trade accounted for only 8 percent of GNP, compared with 26 percent for Britain. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, p. 244.

90. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, p. 246.

91. J.A.S. Grenville and George B. Young, *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy: Studies in American Foreign Policy, 1873–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 5–6.

92. On Mahan’s views, see Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776–1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), pp. 202–222; LaFeber, *The New Empire*, pp. 80–95.

persuaded Congress to authorize construction of a modern battleship fleet.⁹³ This building program signalled a break with the navy's traditional strategy of protecting American commerce, in favor of one challenging rivals for command of the sea. Responding to an increasingly competitive international environment, the navy chose "to make itself into a European-style force ready for combat with the navies of the other major powers."⁹⁴ America's naval buildup was underpinned by its rising economic power. Naval expenditures as a percentage of federal spending rose from 6.9 percent in 1890 to 19 percent in 1914 and Kennedy recounts the shock of a famous British warship designer when he discovered during a 1904 visit that America's industrial capabilities were such that the United States was simultaneously building 14 battleships and 13 armored cruisers.⁹⁵

The extent to which America's great power emergence was a direct response to unipolarity is unclear. It is apparent, however, that Britain's preeminence was at least an important factor. The impetus for America's naval buildup and growing geopolitical assertiveness was deepening apprehension about the Western hemisphere's vulnerability to European encroachment, especially if the European great powers shifted the focus of their colonial rivalries from Asia to the Americas.⁹⁶ Policymakers became convinced that "American claims in Latin America would only be as strong as the military force behind them. Consequently, as American stakes in Central and South America increased, so did American military [i.e., naval] strength."⁹⁷ Thus, America's rise to great power status was a defensive reaction to the threat posed by others to its expanding overseas interests. Until 1898, the United States regarded Britain as the main danger to its strategic and commercial interests in the Western hemisphere.⁹⁸ No doubt, American feelings toward

93. For a brief discussion, see Kenneth J. Hagan, *This People's Navy: The Making of American Sea Power* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), pp. 194–197.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

95. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pp. 243, 247.

96. The relationship between security worries and American foreign and strategic policy is explored in Richard D. Challener, *Admirals, Generals and Foreign Policy, 1898–1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973); and Grenville and Young, *Politics, Strategy and American Diplomacy*.

97. LaFeber, *New Empire*, p. 229.

98. Kinley J. Brauer has argued that between 1815 and 1860, American leaders were concerned about the implications of Britain's expanding global interests, and various strategies were contemplated to counter the threat posed by Britain's naval and economic power and its formal and informal empire. Although these proposed strategic responses to British power did not

Britain were ambivalent because not only was the United States threatened by Britain's hegemony but simultaneously it was also a major beneficiary of London's preeminence. Nevertheless, Britain's predominance was tolerated only until the United States was strong enough to challenge it. Backed by growing naval power and unlimited industrial potential, in the mid-1890s the United States launched a diplomatic offensive against Britain. In 1895–96, the United States provoked a crisis with Britain over the seemingly obscure boundary dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana.⁹⁹ London was compelled to back down and to acknowledge America's hemispheric primacy. By 1903, Britain had given in completely to American demands concerning control over the proposed isthmian canal and the boundary between Alaska and Canada. Shortly thereafter, Britain bowed to the reality of America's overwhelming regional power and withdrew its naval and military forces from North America.

JAPAN: EXTERNAL THREAT, INTERNAL RESPONSE

Japan's great power emergence differed from Germany's and America's. The effect of differential growth rates was not a factor. Between 1860 and 1938, comparative measures of great power capabilities put Japan at or near the bottom of the list. For example, between 1860 and 1938, Japan's share of world manufacturing output rose only from 2.6 percent to 3.8 percent.¹⁰⁰ Japan's great power emergence was, rather, driven by its extreme vulnerability. Indeed, in the 1860s, Japan's very existence as a nation-state was at risk.

Although Japan's security-driven great power emergence was not a direct response to unipolarity, here too Britain's preeminence had its effect. Specifically, it was Britain's defeat of China in the Opium Wars, and China's consequent loss of independence, that provided an object lesson for the

come to fruition before the War Between the States, they nevertheless laid the groundwork for America's subsequent rise to world power status. Kinley J. Brauer, "The United States and British Imperial Expansion," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Winter 1988), pp. 19–38.

99. For brief discussions of the Venezuela crisis, see J.A.S. Grenville, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Athlone Press, 1964), pp. 54–73; May, *Imperial Democracy*, pp. 35–55; LaFeber, *The New Empire*, pp. 242–283; and "The Background of Cleveland's Venezuelan Policy: A Reconsideration," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (July 1961), pp. 947–967.

100. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, pp. 198–209.

reformers who led the Meiji Restoration.¹⁰¹ They were determined that Japan would not suffer China's fate. As Shumpei Okamoto notes, the Meiji reformers shared a common purpose: "Throughout the Meiji period, the aspiration and resolve shared by all those concerned with the fate of the nation were that Japan strive to maintain its independence in a world dominated by the Western powers."¹⁰² The reformers' aim was neatly expressed in the slogan *fukoku kyohei*—"enrich the country, strengthen the army"—which "became the official program of the Meiji government, geared to achieving the strength with which Japan could resist the West."¹⁰³

Driven by security concerns, Japan's great power emergence reflected the sameness effect. To be secure Japan needed to develop the kind of military and economic capabilities that would enable it to compete with the West. In Meiji Japan, therefore, domestic politics was shaped by foreign policy concerns.¹⁰⁴ The era's governmental and administrative reforms, for example, were intended to reorganize Japan's central governmental structure along Western lines; centralized government was seen to be necessary if Japan were to organize itself to defend its interests from foreign encroachment.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, the Imperial Edict abolishing the feudal domains (1871) justified the action by observing that Japan needed a strong central government if it was "to stand on an equal footing with countries abroad."¹⁰⁶

Recognizing the link between economics and national power, the Meiji era reformers worked hard to expand Japan's industrial and commercial strength. Toshimichi Okubo said in 1874:

A country's strength depends on the prosperity of its people . . . [which] in turn depends upon their productive capacity. And although the amount of production is determined in large measure by the diligence of the people

101. The intellectual background of the Meiji Restoration is discussed in W.G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp. 74–139.

102. Shumpei Okamoto, *The Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 43.

103. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 379.

104. See James B. Crowley, "Japan's Military Foreign Policies," in James W. Morley, ed., *Japan's Foreign Policy, 1868–1941: A Research Guide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974). Also see W.G. Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), p. 21, where it is similarly pointed out that the Meiji Restoration, and its consequent reforms, were based on the assumption that a causal relationship existed between modernization at home and success in foreign policy.

105. See Beasley, *Rise of Modern Japan*, pp. 68–69; and *The Meiji Restoration*, pp. 303–304.

106. Quoted in Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, p. 347.

engaged in manufacturing industries, a deeper probe for the ultimate determinate reveals no instance when a country's productive power was increased without the patronage and encouragement of the government and its officials.¹⁰⁷

Okubo, a key figure in the early Restoration governments, had visited Europe, including Bismarckian Germany. His travels underscored for Okubo the competitive nature of international politics and "convinced him that he must establish for Japan the same bases upon which the world powers of the day had founded their wealth and strength."¹⁰⁸ Under his direction, the government supported the expansion of manufacturing, trade, and shipping. At all times, there was a sense of urgency about Japan's internal efforts to enhance its national security by becoming a great power. Field Marshal Aritomo Yamagata, one of the Meiji era's towering political and military figures, said in 1898 that if Japan wanted to avoid lagging behind the West, "we cannot relax for even a day from encouraging education, greater production, communications and trade."¹⁰⁹

From the beginning, almost every aspect of Meiji policy was directed toward safeguarding Japan's security and to vindicating its claim to equal status with the Western powers. To this end, Field Marshal Yamagata stressed, no effort must be spared to expand Japan's army and navy and to revise the post-1853 unequal treaties that the Western powers had forced upon Tokyo. These goals had largely been accomplished by 1890. A rising Japan then began to project its power outwards. The fear that the European powers would try to deny Japan economic access to China led the Japanese leadership to conclude that Japan must establish its own sphere of influence on the mainland.¹¹⁰ Japan "found that a concern with defense led easily to arguments for expansion."¹¹¹ Japan's policy led to the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 and eventually to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05. Japan's mili-

107. Quoted in Masakazu Iwata, *Okubo Toshimichi: The Bismarck of Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), p. 236.

108. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

109. Quoted in Roger F. Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo and the Rise of Modern Japan, 1838–1922* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 195.

110. Crowley, "Japan's Military Foreign Policies," p. 14.

111. Beasley, *Rise of Modern Japan*, p. 140. Beasley's observation seems entirely correct. Fear begets expansion. And expansion has its own consequences. As John Lewis Gaddis comments, "the principal occupational hazard as a general rule of being a great power is paranoia . . . and the exhaustion it ultimately produces." "Toward the Post-Cold War World," in John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 215.

tary successes in these conflicts established it as the leading power in North-east Asia, and Japan's victory over Russia "secured her recognition as a major world power."¹¹²

HISTORY, UNIPOLARITY AND GREAT POWER EMERGENCE

There is a strong correlation between unipolarity and great power emergence. Late seventeenth-century England and Austria and late nineteenth-century Germany balanced against the dominant pole in the system. Moreover, even when great power emergence was not driven primarily by the need to counterbalance the hegemon's power, the shadow of preeminence was an important factor.¹¹³ This is illustrated by the rise of the United States and Japan to great power status in the late nineteenth century. It is, therefore, apparent that a general tendency exists during unipolar moments: several new great powers simultaneously enter the international system. The events of the late nineteenth century also illustrate how competition from established great powers combined with challenges from rising great powers to diminish Britain's relative power and erode its primacy. During the last years of the nineteenth century, Britain, the most powerful state in the system, was the target of others' balancing policies. "The story of European international relations in the 1890s is the story of the assault of Russia and France upon the territorial position of Britain in Asia and Africa, and the story of the great economic duel between England and her all-too-efficient German rival."¹¹⁴

In the late nineteenth century, the growth of American, German, and Japanese naval power compelled Britain to forgo its policy of maintaining global naval supremacy.¹¹⁵ Indeed, Britain was pressed hard by its rivals on all fronts. By 1900, it was apparent that London could not simultaneously meet the German challenge across the North Sea, defend its imperial and colonial interests from French and Russian pressure, and preserve its position in the Western hemisphere. Britain withdrew from the Western hemisphere

112. Ian Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy, 1869–1942* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 78.

113. The shadow effect is a consequence of anarchy. The unbalanced distribution of power in the hegemon's favor implicitly threatens others' security. This is because states must react to the hegemon's capabilities rather than to its intentions. In a unipolar system, concern with security is a compelling reason for eligible states to acquire great power capabilities, even if they are not immediately menaced by the hegemon.

114. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, p. 415.

115. See Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895–1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 135–208.

because London realized it lacked the resources to compete successfully against the United States and that the naval forces deployed in North American waters could better be used elsewhere.¹¹⁶ The Anglo-Japanese alliance was driven, from London's standpoint, by the need to use Japanese naval power to protect Britain's East Asian interests and thereby allow the Royal Navy units in the Far East to be redeployed to home waters. Like the rapprochement with Washington and the alliance with Tokyo, the ententes with France and Russia also evidenced Britain's declining relative power. By 1907, Britain's geopolitical position "depended upon the kindness of strangers." Over the longer term, the great power emergence of the United States and Japan paved the way for Britain's eclipse, first as hegemon and then as a great power. In the 1930s, Japanese power cost Britain its Far Eastern position, and America's relative power ultimately rose to a point where it could displace Britain as hegemon. Such was the result of Britain's policy of benign hegemony, a policy that did not merely abstain from opposing, but actually had the effect of facilitating the emergence of new great powers.

After the Cold War: America in a Unipolar World?

The historical evidence from 1660–1714 and 1860–1914 strongly supports the hypothesis derived from neorealist theory: unipolar moments cause geopolitical backlashes that lead to multipolarity. Nevertheless, in principle, a declining hegemon does have an alternative to a policy of tolerating the rise of new great powers: it can actively attempt to suppress their emergence. Thus, if Washington were prepared to contemplate preventive measures (including the use of force), it might be able to beat back rising challengers.¹¹⁷ But, although prevention may seem attractive at first blush, it is a stop-gap measure. It may work once, but over time the effect of differential growth rates ensures that other challengers will subsequently appear. Given its probable costs and risks, prevention is not a strategy that would lend itself to repetition.

116. See C.J. Lowe and M.L. Dockrill, *The Mirage of Power*, Vol. I: *British Foreign Policy, 1902–14* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 96–106.

117. When a hegemon finds its primacy threatened, the best strategy is "to eliminate the source of the problem." Gilpin, *War and Change*, p. 191.

THE STRATEGY OF PREPONDERANCE

In any event, the United States has chosen a somewhat different strategy to maintain its primacy. Essentially the United States is trying to maintain intact the international order it constructed in World War II's aftermath. As Melvyn Leffler points out, after 1945 American strategy aimed at achieving a "preponderance of power" in the international system.¹¹⁸ Washington sought to incorporate Western Europe, West Germany, and Japan into an American-led alliance; create an open global economy that would permit the unfettered movement of goods, capital and technology; and create an international environment conducive to America's democratic values. While committed to reviving Western Europe, Germany, and Japan economically and politically, Washington also believed that "neither an integrated Europe nor a united Germany nor an independent Japan must be permitted to emerge as a third force or a neutral bloc."¹¹⁹ To maintain its preeminence in the non-Soviet world, American strategy used both benevolent and coercive incentives.

In attempting to perpetuate unipolarity, the United States is pursuing essentially the same goals, and using the same means to achieve them, that it pursued in its postwar quest for preponderance.¹²⁰ The "new NSC 68" argues that American grand strategy should actively attempt to mold the international environment by creating a secure world in which American interests are protected. American alliances with Japan and Germany are viewed as an integral part of a strategy that seeks: (1) to prevent multipolar rivalries; (2) to discourage the rise of global hegemony; and (3) to preserve a cooperative and healthy world economy. The forward deployment of U.S. military forces abroad is now viewed primarily as a means of preserving unipolarity. If the United States continues to extend security guarantees to Japan and Germany, it is reasoned, they will have no incentive to develop great power capabilities. Indeed, fear that Japan and Germany will acquire independent capabilities—that is, that they will become great powers—per-

118. Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

119. *Ibid.*, p. 17. For second-image theorists, America's rejection of a preventive war strategy is unsurprising. It has been argued that in addition to not fighting other democracies, declining democratic powers also do not engage in preventive war against rising challengers. Randall Schweller, "Domestic Structure and Preventive War: Are Democracies More Pacific?" *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (January 1992), pp. 235–269.

120. As I discuss below, it was the bipolar structure of the postwar system that allowed Washington to pursue a strategy of preponderance successfully and thereby smother the re-emergence of Japan and Germany as great powers.

vades the thinking of American strategists. For example, a recent RAND study of American strategy in the Pacific says that Washington must manage relations with Tokyo to maintain “the current alliance and reduce Japanese incentives for major rearmament.”¹²¹ A RAND study of the future of U.S. forces in Europe suggests that American withdrawal from Europe could result in Germany reemerging as “a heavy handed rogue elephant in Central Europe” because it would drive Germany in the “direction of militarization, nuclearization, and chronically insecure policies.”¹²²

Inevitably, a strategy of preponderance will fail. A strategy of more or less benign hegemony does not prevent the emergence of new great powers. The fate of nineteenth-century Britain, which followed such a strategy, is illustrative. A strategy of benign hegemony allows others to free-ride militarily and economically. Over time, the effect is to erode the hegemon’s preeminence. A hegemon tends to overpay for security, which eventually weakens the internal foundation of its external position. Other states underpay for security, which allows them to shift additional resources into economically productive investments. Moreover, benign hegemony facilitates the diffusion of wealth and technology to potential rivals. As a consequence, differential growth rates trigger shifts in relative economic power that ultimately result in the emergence of new great powers. No doubt, the strategy of preponderance could prolong unipolarity somewhat, as long as eligible states calculate that the benefits of free riding outweigh the constraints imposed on them by American hegemony. Over time, however, such a policy will accelerate the hegemon’s relative decline.

There is another reason why a strategy of preponderance will not work. Such a strategy articulates a vision of an American-led international order. George Bush’s New World Order and Bill Clinton’s apparent commitment to assertive projection of America’s democratic and human rights values reflect America’s desire to “press its preferred policies” on others.¹²³ But there is more to it than that. Other states can justifiably infer that Washington’s

121. James A. Winnefeld, et al., *A New Strategy and Fewer Forces: The Pacific Dimension*, R-4089/1-USDP (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND 1992), p. 111.

122. Richard L. Kugler, *The Future U.S. Military Presence in Europe: Forces and Requirements for the Post-Cold War Era*, R-4194-EUCOM/NA (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1992), pp. 11, 16.

123. As Waltz points out, other states cannot trust an excessively powerful state to behave with moderation. The United States may believe it is acting for the noblest of reasons. But, he notes, America’s definition of peace, justice, and world order reflects American interests and may conflict with the interests of other states. “With benign intent, the United States has behaved, and until its power is brought into some semblance of balance, will continue to behave in ways that frighten and annoy others.” Waltz, “America as a Model?” p. 669.

unipolar aspirations will result in the deliberate application of American power to compel them to adhere to the United States' policy preferences. For example, in a February 1991 address to the New York Economic Club, Bush said that because the United States had taken the leader's role in the Gulf militarily, America's renewed credibility would cause Germany and Japan to be more forthcoming in their economic relations with Washington.¹²⁴ Several weeks later, Harvard professor Joseph S. Nye, Jr. suggested that the deployment of United States forces in Europe and Japan could be used as a bargaining chip in trade negotiations with those countries.¹²⁵ Such a "leverage strategy" is no mere abstraction. In February 1992, then-Vice President Dan Quayle linked the continuance of America's security commitment to NATO with West European concessions in the GATT negotiations.¹²⁶

The leverage strategy is the hegemonic stability theory's dark side. It calls for the United States to use its military power to compel other states to give in on issue areas where America has less power. It is a coercive strategy that attempts to take advantage of the asymmetries in great power capabilities that favor the United States. The leverage strategy is not new. Washington employed it from time to time in intra-alliance relations during the Cold War. However, American policies that others found merely irritating in a bipolar world may seem quite threatening in a unipolar world. For example, Japan almost certainly must realize that its lack of power projection capability renders it potentially vulnerable to leverage policies based on America's present ability to control the flow of Persian Gulf oil. Proponents of America's preponderance have missed a fundamental point: other states react to the threat of hegemony, not to the hegemon's identity. American leaders may regard the United States as a benevolent hegemon, but others cannot afford to take such a relaxed view.

REACTION TO UNIPOLARITY: TOWARDS A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

There is ample evidence that widespread concern exists today about America's currently unchallenged dominance in international politics.¹²⁷ In Sep-

124. Quoted in Norman Kempster, "U.S., Allies Might Help Iraq Rebuild After War, Baker Says," *Los Angeles Times*, February 17, 1991, p. A1.

125. William J. Eaton, "Democrats Groping For Image Building Issues," *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1991, p. A14.

126. William Tuohy, "Quayle Remarks Spark European Alarm on Trade vs. Security," *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 1992, p. A4; Craig R. Whitney, "Quayle, Ending European Trip, Lobbies for New Trade Accord," *New York Times*, February 12, 1992, p. A4.

127. It has been suggested that the Persian Gulf War demonstrates that other states welcome, rather than fear, America's post-Cold War preeminence. However, this simply is not the case.

tember 1991, French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas warned that American “might reigns without balancing weight” and he and European Community Commission President Jacques Delors called for the EC to counterbalance the United States.¹²⁸ Some European policy analysts have said that the Soviet Union’s collapse means that Europe is now threatened mainly by unchallenged American ascendancy in world politics.¹²⁹ This viewpoint was echoed in Japan in the Gulf War’s aftermath. A number of commentators worried that the United States—a “fearsome” country—would impose a Pax Americana in which other states would be compelled to accept roles “as America’s underlings.”¹³⁰ China, too, has reacted adversely to America’s post-Cold War preeminence. “Chinese analysts reacted with great alarm to President George Bush’s ‘New World Order’ proclamations, and maintained that this was a ruse for extending U.S. hegemony throughout the globe. From China’s perspective, unipolarity was a far worse state of affairs than bipolarity.”¹³¹ Similar sentiments have been echoed in the Third World. Although the reactions of these smaller states are not as significant as those of potential new great powers, they confirm that unipolarity has engendered general unease throughout the international system. At the September 1992 Nonaligned Movement Meeting, Indonesian President Suharto warned that the New World Order cannot be allowed to become “a new version of the same old

First, it was *after* the Persian Gulf crisis began that others began voicing their concerns about unipolarity. Second, to the extent that the Gulf War is an example of states bandwagoning with the United States, it is easily explainable. As Walt points out, weak powers threatened by a powerful neighbor will often turn to an outside great power for defensive support. Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 266. Third, as Jean Edward Smith points out, the United States had to exert considerable pressure on both Egypt and Saudi Arabia to get these nations to accept the Bush administration’s decision to confront Iraq militarily after the invasion of Kuwait. Jean Edward Smith, *George Bush’s War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992), pp. 63–95. Finally, it should be remembered that during the war, the Arab coalition partners restrained the United States from overthrowing Saddam Hussein and that, in July and August 1992, Egypt, Turkey and Syria restrained the United States when it appeared that the Bush administration was going to provoke a military showdown over the issue of UN weapons inspectors’ access to Iraq’s Agricultural Ministry.

128. Quoted in “France to U.S.: Don’t Rule,” *New York Times*, September 3, 1991, p. A8.

129. Rone Tempest, “French Revive Pastime Fretting About U.S. ‘Imperialism,’” *Los Angeles Times*, February 15, 1989, p. A9.

130. See the views of Waseda University Professor Sakuji Yoshimura, quoted in Paul Blustein, “In Japan, Seeing The War On A Five-Inch Screen,” *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, February 25–March 3, 1991, and of Tokyo University Professor Yasusuke Murakami and Opposition Diet Member Masao Kunihiro, in Urban C. Lehner, “Japanese See A More ‘Fearsome’ U.S. Following American Success in the Gulf,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 1991.

131. David Shambaugh, “China’s Security Policy in the Post-Cold War Era,” *Survival*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Summer 1992), p. 92.

patterns of domination of the strong over the weak and the rich over the poor." At this same meeting, UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali warned that "the temptation to dominate, whether worldwide or regionally, remains"; Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed pointedly stated that a "unipolar world is every bit as threatening as a bipolar world."¹³²

As has been shown, the post-Cold War world's geopolitical constellation is not unique. Twice before in international history there have been "unipolar moments." Both were fleeting. On both occasions, the effect of the entry of new great powers in the international system was to redress the one-sided distribution of power in the international system. There is every reason to expect that the pattern of the late seventeenth and nineteenth centuries will recur. The impact of differential growth rates has increased the relative power of Japan and Germany in a way that clearly marks them as eligible states. As their stakes in the international system deepen, so will their ambitions and interests. Security considerations will cause Japan and Germany to emulate the United States and acquire the full spectrum of great power capabilities, including nuclear weapons.¹³³ It can be expected that both will seek recognition by others of their great power status. Evidence confirming the expectation of Japan's and Germany's great power emergence already exists.

Germany is beginning to exert its leadership in European security affairs. It has assumed primary responsibility for providing economic assistance to the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and took the lead in securing EC recognition of the breakaway Yugoslav republics of Croatia and Slovenia. In a sure sign that the scope of German geopolitical interests is expanding, Defense Minister Volker R uhe is advocating acquisition of large military transport aircraft.¹³⁴ Chancellor Kohl's decision to meet with outgoing Austrian President Kurt Waldheim suggests that Germany is rejecting the external constraints heretofore imposed on its behavior. Germany is also insisting that henceforth its diplomats (who had previously spoken in French or

132. Quoted in Charles B. Wallace, "Nonaligned Nations Question New World Order," *Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 1992, p. A4.

133. The nuclear issue is being debated, albeit gingerly, in Japan but not in Germany (or at least not openly). Nevertheless it seems to be widely understood, in the United States and in Germany and Japan, that their accession to the nuclear club is only a matter of time. See Doyle McManus, "Thinking the Once Unthinkable: Japan, Germany With A-Bombs," *Los Angeles Times* (Washington D.C. ed.), June 10, 1992, p. A8. For a discussion of a nuclear Germany's strategic implications, see Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future."

134. Terrence Roth, "New German Defense Chief Is Redefining Agency's Role," *Wall Street Journal*, August 14, 1992, p. A10.

English) will use only German when addressing international conferences.¹³⁵ Finally, Germany's open expression of interest in permanent membership on the UN Security Council is another indication that Berlin is moving toward great power status. In making Germany's position known, Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel pointedly noted that the Security Council should be restructured because as now constituted it reflects, not the present distribution of power, but the international order that existed at the end of World War II.¹³⁶

Notwithstanding legal and historical inhibitions, Japan is beginning to seek strategic autonomy. An important step is the decision to develop the capability to gather and analyze politico-military and economic intelligence independently of the United States.¹³⁷ Japan has also begun importing huge amounts of plutonium from Europe. The plutonium is to be used by Japan's fast breeder reactors, thereby enabling Tokyo to free itself of dependence on Persian Gulf oil and American uranium. Plutonium imports plus the acquisition of other materials in recent years mean that Japan has the capability of moving quickly to become a nuclear power.¹³⁸ After prolonged debate, Japan has finally authorized unarmed Japanese military personnel to participate in UN peacekeeping operations. This may well be the opening wedge for Japan to develop military capabilities commensurate with great power status. As a special panel of the Liberal Democratic Party argued in February 1992, "Now that we have become one of the very few economic powerhouses, it would fly in the face of the world's common sense if we did not play a military role for the maintenance and restoration of global peace."¹³⁹ As Japan becomes more active on the international stage, military power will be needed to support its policies and ensure it is not at a bargaining disadvantage in its dealings with others. Unsurprisingly, Japan has plans to build a full-spectrum

135. Stephen Kinzer, "Thus Sprake Helmut Kohl Auf Deutsch," *New York Times*, February 23, 1992, p. A4.

136. "Germany Seeks a Permanent Council Seat," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1992, p. A9; Paul Lewis, "Germany Seeks Permanent UN Council Seat," *New York Times*, September 24, 1992, p. A1.

137. David E. Sanger, "Tired of Relying on U.S., Japan Seeks to Expand Its Own Intelligence Efforts," *New York Times*, January 1, 1992, p. A6.

138. Jim Mann, "Japan's Energy Future Linked to Risky Cargo," *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 1992, p. A1. The initial plutonium shipment left for Japan from Cherbourg, France, in early November 1992 and arrived in Japan in early January 1993. There has been speculation that the mere fact that Japan will possess a substantial plutonium stockpile may serve as a deterrent even if Tokyo does not acquire nuclear weapons. See David Sanger, "Japan's Atom Fuel Shipment Is Worrying Asians," *New York Times*, November 9, 1992, p. A3.

139. Quoted in Teresa Watanabe, "Shift Urged on Sending Japan's Troops Abroad," *Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 1992, p. A10.

navy (including aircraft carriers) capable of operating independently of the American Seventh Fleet.¹⁴⁰ In January 1993, Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe openly called for Japan to acquire long-range air and naval power-projection capabilities. Japan is also showing signs of diplomatic assertiveness, and its leading role in the UN effort to rebuild Cambodia is viewed by Tokyo as the beginning of a more forceful and independent foreign policy course now that Japan no longer is constrained to “obey U.S. demands.”¹⁴¹ Japan’s policies toward Russia, China, and Iran demonstrate a growing willingness to follow an independent course, even if doing so leads to open friction with Washington. It is suggestive of Japan’s view of the evolving international system that its recently appointed ambassador to the United States has spoken of the emergence of a “multipolar world in which the United States could no longer play the kind of dominant role it used to play.”¹⁴² That Japan is measuring itself for a great power role is reflected in its expressed desire for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.¹⁴³

Back to the Future: The Political Consequences of Structural Change

Since 1945, the West has enjoyed a Long Peace.¹⁴⁴ During the post-World War II era, American leadership has been maintained, Germany and Japan have been prevented from becoming great powers, a cooperative economic order has been established, and the spread of democratic values has been

140. This information provided by John Arquilla based on his discussions with Japanese defense analysts. See also David E. Sanger, “Japanese Discuss an Expanded Peacekeeping Role for the Military,” *New York Times*, January 10, 1993, p. A9. The issue of constitutional reform and elimination of the “peace clause” has been raised again recently; Jacob M. Schlesinger, “Japan’s Ruling Party Will Seek a Review of 1946 Constitution,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 14, 1993, p. A13; David E. Sanger, “Japanese Debate Taboo Topic of Military’s Role,” *New York Times*, January 17, 1993, p. A7.

141. Quoted in Teresa Watanabe, “Putting Cambodia Together Again,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1992, p. H1.

142. Quoted in Sam Jameson, “Japan’s New Envoy to U.S. Sees ‘Crucial Period’ Ahead,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1992, p. A4.

143. Sam Jameson, “Japan to Seek U.N. Security Council Seat,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1992, p. A1.

144. See John Lewis Gaddis, “The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System,” *International Security*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Spring 1986), pp. 99–142, where Gaddis probed for an explanation of the absence of great power war during the Cold War rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States. Gaddis has revisited the issue and asked whether certain factors (nuclear weapons, polarity, hegemonic stability, “triumphant” liberalism, and long cycles) have implications for the possible prolongation of the Long Peace into the post-Cold War era. Gaddis, “Great Illusions, the Long Peace, and the Future of the International System,” in *The United States and the End of the Cold War*.

promoted. The strategy of preponderance seeks to maintain the geopolitical status quo that the Long Peace reflects. American strategic planners and scholars alike believe the United States can successfully perpetuate this status quo. This sanguine outlook is predicated on the belief that second-image factors (economic interdependence, common democratic institutions) militate against the reappearance of traditional forms of great power competition while promoting new forms of international cooperation.¹⁴⁵ Neorealists, however, believe that the Long Peace was rooted primarily in the bipolar structure of the international system, although the unit-level factor of nuclear deterrence also played a role.¹⁴⁶ Because they expect structural change to lead to changed international political outcomes, neorealists are not sanguine that the Long Peace can endure in the coming era of systemic change. Neorealist theory leads to the expectation that the world beyond unipolarity will be one of great power rivalry in a multipolar setting.

During the Cold War era, international politics was profoundly shaped by the bipolar competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷ The Soviet threat to their common security caused the United States, Western Europe, and Japan to form an anti-Soviet coalition. Because of America's military preeminence in a bipolar system, Western Europe and Japan did not have to internalize their security costs because they benefited from the protective mantle of Washington's containment policy. At the same time, because Western Europe's and Japan's political and economic stability were critical to containment's success, the United States resolved the "hegemon's dilemma"

145. For scholarly elaborations of this viewpoint, see John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989); Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Robert Jervis, "The Future of World Politics: Will It Resemble the Past?" *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Winter 1991/92), pp. 39–73; Carl Kaysen, "Is War Obsolete?" *International Security*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Spring 1990), pp. 42–64; Charles Kupchan and Clifford Kupchan, "Concerts, Collective Security and the Future of Europe," *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Summer 1991), pp. 114–161; Richard Rosecrance, "A New Concert of Powers," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 64–82; James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, "A Tale of Two Worlds: Core and Periphery in the Post-Cold War Era," *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Spring 1992), pp. 467–491. The Defense Planning Guidance and similar documents also stress that the spread of democracy and economic interdependence are crucial to the success of the strategy of preponderance. The classic discussion of the second and third images of international politics is Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

146. This argument is presented in the European context in Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future."
147. For a different view, see Ted Hopf, "Polarity, the Offense-Defense Balance, and War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (June 1991), pp. 475–494. Hopf argues that the international system's stability during the Cold War era was attributable to nuclear deterrence and that bipolarity was an irrelevant factor.

by forgoing maximization of its relative gains and pursuing instead a policy of promoting absolute gains for all members of the anti-Soviet coalition.¹⁴⁸ For strategic reasons, the United States encouraged Western Europe's economic integration and Japan's discriminatory trade and foreign investment policies, even though the inevitable consequence of these policies was to enhance Western Europe's and Japan's relative power at America's expense.

Bipolarity was the decisive variable in the West's Long Peace because it removed the security dilemma and the relative gains problem from the agenda of relations among the Western powers. Even non-neorealists implicitly acknowledge the salience of structural factors in securing the postwar "liberal peace." Michael Doyle, for example, admits that American military leadership was crucial because it dampened the need for Western Europe and Japan to become strategically independent (which would rekindle the security dilemma) and reinforced the bonds of economic interdependence (thereby alleviating the relative gains problem). Doyle says the erosion of American preeminence could imperil the liberal peace "if independent and substantial military forces were established" by Western Europe and Japan.¹⁴⁹ In other words, if liberated from the bipolar structural constraints that, with Washington's help, smothered their great power emergence, states like Germany and Japan might respond to new international systemic constraints by becoming—and acting like—great powers. Here, Doyle is correct and that is precisely the point: structure affects outcomes.

AMERICA IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cold War structure has been swept away. American policymakers must now think about international politics from a wholly new analytical framework. This will not be easy. Richard Rosecrance observed in 1976, when it was already apparent that the bipolar system was beginning to erode, that

148. Arthur A. Stein, "The Hegemon's Dilemma: Great Britain, the United States, and the International Economic Order," *International Organization*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring 1984), pp. 355–386. Stein delineates the hegemon's dilemma as follows:

A hegemonic power's decision to enrich itself is also a decision to enrich others more than itself. Over time, such policies will come at the expense of the hegemon's relative standing and will bring forth challengers. Yet choosing to sustain its relative standing . . . is a choice to keep others impoverished at the cost of increasing its own wealth. Maintaining its relative position has obvious costs not only to others but to itself. Alternatively, maximizing its absolute wealth has obvious benefits but brings even greater ones to others.

Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate*, p. 139.

149. Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs," Part 1, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer 1983), p. 233.

Washington has, since 1945, always had difficulty in understanding how Western Europe and Japan could have different interests than the United States.¹⁵⁰ More recently, Stephen Krasner has observed that "U.S. policy-makers have paid little attention to the possibility that a loss of power *vis-à-vis* friends could present serious and unforeseen difficulties, either because friends can become enemies or because managing the international system may be more difficult in a world in which power is more evenly distributed."¹⁵¹ The impending structural shift from unipolarity to multipolarity means that the security dilemma and the relative gains problem will again dominate policymakers' concerns. As Japan and Germany become great powers, the quality of their relations with the United States will be profoundly altered.¹⁵² Relations will become significantly more competitive, great power security rivalries and even war will be likely, and cooperation will correspondingly become more difficult.

The implications of multipolarity will be especially evident in the United States-Japan relationship.¹⁵³ Summarizing his incisive analysis of the pre-1914 Anglo-German antagonism, Paul Kennedy states that the "most profound cause, surely, was *economic*."¹⁵⁴ By this, Kennedy does not mean the commercial competition between British and German firms, but rather that economic shifts had radically transformed the relative power relationship between Britain and Germany. Kennedy asks if the relative power relationship of two great powers has ever changed so remarkably with the span of a single lifetime. The answer may now be "yes."

There is a very good chance that early in the next decade Japan's GNP may equal or surpass America's.¹⁵⁵ Such an economic change would be a fact

150. Richard Rosecrance, "Introduction," in Rosecrance, ed., *America as an Ordinary Country* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 12.

151. Stephen Krasner, "Trade Conflicts and the Common Defense: The United States and Japan," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 101, No. 5 (1986), pp. 787-806.

152. Others have argued that America's relations with Japan and Germany will become more competitive in the post-Cold War era. A notable example is Jeffrey E. Garten, *A Cold Peace: America, Japan, Germany and the Struggle for Supremacy* (New York: Times Books, 1992). Garten's argument differs from mine in two critical respects. First, Garten pinpoints the locus of rivalry in second-image factors; specifically the different cultural, political, and economic traditions of the three countries. Second, he discounts the possibility of war or of security competitions and argues that the rivalry will be primarily economic.

153. An interesting albeit flawed attempt to consider the geopolitical consequences of the altered relative power relationship of Japan and the United States is George Friedman and Meredith Lebard, *The Coming War With Japan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).

154. Kennedy, *Anglo-German Antagonism*, p. 464.

155. This is C. Fred Bergsten's projection based on the following assumptions: Japan's annual

of enormous geopolitical significance. Should this relative power shift occur, no doubt Japan would demand that power and prestige in the international system be redistributed to reflect its new status. Besides demands for UN Security Council membership, Tokyo might: (1) insist on the decisive vote in international economic institutions; (2) demand that the yen become the international economy's primary reserve currency; (3) exploit advantageous technological, economic, and fiscal asymmetries to advance its strategic interests; and (4) become a much more assertive actor geopolitically.

Whether the United States could comfortably accommodate a Japan of equal or greater power is an open question. The answer would depend on the moderation, and the moderate tone, of Japan's *desiderata* and on the willingness of the United States to make reasonable concessions gracefully. But even skillful and patient diplomacy on both sides could fail to avert conflict. In that case, the question is not so much who as *what* would be responsible for conflict between the United States and Japan: I argue that it would be the international political system's structure and the constraints it exerts on great power behavior.

Again, history may provide insight. At the turn of the century, Great Britain was able to reach an accommodation with the United States because America's ambitions did not immediately seem to threaten London's most vital security concerns.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, Germany's rising power did appear to present such a threat. It is worrisome that the changing relative power relationship between the United States and Japan contains the same Hertz/Avis dynamic that fueled the Anglo-German antagonism. Thus once again, the prospect of hegemonic war, thought to have been banished from international politics, must be reckoned with even as we hope to avoid it. Indeed, it must be reckoned with *especially* if we hope to avoid it. The main point of the hegemonic war theory is that:

there is incompatibility between crucial elements of the existing international system and the changing distribution of power among the states within the system. . . . The resolution of the disequilibrium between the superstructure of the system and the underlying distribution of power is

growth is about 4 percent, the United States' is 2 to 2½ percent, and the yen appreciates to 100 to 1 against the dollar. Bergsten, "Primacy of Economics," *Foreign Policy*, No. 87 (Summer 1992), p. 6.

156. See Charles S. Campbell, *Anglo-American Understanding, 1898–1903* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957); Dexter Perkins, *The Great Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1895–1914* (New York: Atheneum, 1968).

found in the outbreak and intensification of what becomes a hegemonic war.¹⁵⁷

Great power war is not a certainty, because some factors could reduce the war-proneness of the coming multipolar system. At the unit level, nuclear deterrence could maintain the peace among the great powers in a multipolar system where each has nuclear weapons.¹⁵⁸ In such a system, great power conflict might be played out in the economic, rather than the military, arena.¹⁵⁹ Still, the shadow of war will loom over a multipolar system. Consequently, the United States will have to rethink the answer it gave in the late 1940s to “the hegemon’s dilemma.” Put another way, Washington will have to come to grips with the *declining* hegemon’s dilemma. Precisely because major shifts in relative economic power presage change in the relative distribution of power geopolitically, the United States must begin to concern itself with maintaining its relative power rather than pursuing absolute gains for itself and those who are its partners today but may become its rivals tomorrow. Although states can cooperate readily to promote absolute gains

157. Robert Gilpin, “The Theory of Hegemonic War,” in Rotberg and Rabb, *Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, pp. 25–26.

158. Kenneth N. Waltz, “Nuclear Myths and Political Realities,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (September 1991), pp. 731–746; *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better*, Adelphi Paper No. 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981). For a more pessimistic view of the possible consequences of the spread of nuclear weapons, see Barry R. Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation: Conventional War and Nuclear Weapons* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

159. If deterrence holds among the great powers in a multipolar world, the prevailing conventional wisdom is that economic competitions would replace security competitions as the primary means of great power rivalry. Under the shadow of war, trade wars that improve a state’s relative position by inflicting more pain on a rival could become a rational strategy. States in a position to do so could also use their financial power or control over access to key technologies to advance their interests relative to rivals. For a suggestive first cut at the possible role of “economic statecraft” in great power relations in the emerging multipolar system, see Aaron L. Friedberg, “The Changing Relationship Between Economics and National Security,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 106, No. 2 (1991), pp. 272–274.

One should be careful about assuming that economics will entirely displace military power. Deterrence rests on military strength. Moreover, it could be expected that arms races and tests of resolve would be employed by the great powers as substitutes for actual fighting. A great power nuclear stalemate could have two other important military effects. Just as the Cold War superpowers did in Korea, Vietnam, Angola and Afghanistan, the great powers in a multipolar system could wage war through proxies. Also, deterrence at the nuclear level could, notwithstanding the risk of escalation, cause the great powers to fight (or attempt to fight) limited conventional wars. Here, it may be useful to revisit the early Cold War literature on limited war. See Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957); Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

for all when the shadow of war is absent from their relations, the barriers to cooperation become formidable when the shadow of war is present.¹⁶⁰

STRATEGIC INDEPENDENCE IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

Because multipolarity is inevitable, it is pointless to debate the comparative merits of unipolar, bipolar, and multipolar systems. Rather than vainly and counterproductively pursuing a strategy of preponderance, the United States needs to design a strategy that will (1) safeguard its interests during the difficult transition from unipolarity to multipolarity; and (2) enable the United States to do as well as possible in a multipolar world. America's optimal strategy is to make its power position similar to Goldilocks' porridge: not too strong, which would frighten others into balancing against the United States; not too weak, which would invite others to exploit American vulnerabilities; but just right—strong enough to defend American interests, without provoking others.

The transition from unipolarity to multipolarity will challenge the United States to devise a policy that will arrest its relative decline while minimizing the chances that other states will be provoked into balancing against the United States. Relative decline has internal and external causes. Relative decline can be addressed by policies that focus on either or both of these causes. It would be counterproductive for the United States to attempt to maintain its relative power position by attempting to suppress the emergence of new great powers. This approach would heighten others' concerns about the malign effects of unchecked American power, which probably would accelerate the rise of new great powers, and increase the probability that balancing behavior would be directed against the United States. American policymakers need to remember that other states balance against hegemons

160. Robert Powell, "The Problem of Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (December 1991), pp. 1303–1320. Joanne Gowa points out that free trade is more likely to prevail in bipolar international systems than in multipolar ones. Because the risk of exit from a bipolar alliance is less than from an alliance in a multipolar system, bipolar alignments are more stable. Consequently, bipolar alliances are better able to internalize the security externalities of free trade (the members do not need to be concerned with relative gains because today's ally is unlikely to be tomorrow's rival). Moreover, in a bipolar alliance, the dominant partner has incentives to act altruistically towards its allies because it benefits when they do. All of these incentives are reversed in multipolar systems where exit risks (i.e., defection of allies) and buck passing/free rider tendencies force states to ponder the relative gains problem and to think hard about the wisdom of acting unselfishly. Free trade thus is problematic in a multipolar system. Gowa, "Bipolarity, Multipolarity and Free Trade," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (December 1989), pp. 1245–1266.

and they should not want the United States to be seen by others as a “sprawling giant with gouty fingers and toes.” A policy that concentrates U.S. energies on redressing the internal causes of relative decline would be perceived by others as less threatening than a strategy of preponderance. Although vigorous internal renewal might cause frictions with others over economic policy, it is less likely to have negative geopolitical repercussions than a policy that aims at perpetuating unipolarity.

Washington also needs to remember that while the United States may regard its hegemony as benign, others will have different perceptions. The international order objectives embedded in a strategy of preponderance reinforce others’ mistrust of American preeminence. The more the United States attempts to press its preferences and values on others, the more likely it is that they will react against what is, in their view, overweening American power. Moreover, policies that arouse others’ fear of America today could carry over into the emerging multipolar system. It makes no sense to alienate needlessly states (such as China) that could be strategically useful to the United States in a multipolar world. To avoid frightening others, the United States should eschew a value-projection policy and moderate both its rhetoric and its ambitions.¹⁶¹

The United States must adjust to the inevitable emergence of new great powers. The primary role of forward-deployed American forces now is to dissuade Japan and Germany from becoming great powers. There are three reasons why American forward deployments in Europe and Northeast Asia should be phased out soon. First, a policy of forward deployment could unnecessarily entangle the United States in overseas conflicts where the stakes are more important to others than to itself. Second, because the United States faces severe fiscal and economic constraints, the opportunity costs of such a strategy are high. Third, such a policy cannot work. Indeed, the strategy of preponderance is probably the worst option available to the United States because it is not coercive enough to prevent Japan and Germany from becoming great powers, but it is coercive enough to antagonize them and cause them to balance against the United States. If the analysis presented in this article is correct, a policy of attempting to smother Germany’s and Japan’s great power emergence would be unavailing because

161. For a discussion of value projection as a grand strategic option see Terry L. Deibel, “Strategies Before Containment: Patterns for the Future,” *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Spring 1992), pp. 79–108.

structural pressures will impel them to become great powers regardless of what the United States does or does not do. Simply stated, the declining hegemon's dilemma is acute: neither benign nor preventive strategies will prevent the emergence of challengers and the consequent end of the hegemon's predominance in the international system.

American grand strategy must be redesigned for a multipolar world. In a multipolar system, the United States should follow a policy of strategic independence by assuming the posture of an offshore balancer.¹⁶² Traditionally, America's overriding strategic objective has been to ensure that a hegemon does not dominate Eurasia.¹⁶³ That objective would not change under strategic independence, but the means of attaining it would. Rather than assuming primary responsibility for containing the rise of a potential hegemon, the United States would rely on global and regional power balances to attain that goal. Strategic independence is not an isolationist policy that rules out the use of American power abroad.¹⁶⁴ Strategic independence also differs from the selective-commitment variant of offshore balancing articulated by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Van Evera, whereby the United States would be relatively indifferent to Third World events but would remain militarily engaged in Europe and Northeast Asia in order to preserve "stability."¹⁶⁵ Strategic independence is a hedging strategy that would commit the United States militarily if, but only if, other states failed to balance effectively against a rising Eurasian hegemon. The United States would need to remain alert to

162. I first used the term "strategic independence" in 1983 and I elaborated on it in 1989. Christopher Layne, "Ending the Alliance," *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Summer 1983), pp. 5–31; and Layne, "Realism Redux: Strategic Independence in a Multipolar World," *SAIS Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer–Fall 1989), pp. 19–44. Ted Galen Carpenter, who has also embraced a form of strategic independence, has acknowledged that I was the first to articulate the concept and to so name it. Ted Galen Carpenter, "Introduction," in Carpenter, ed., *Collective Defense of Strategic Independence: Alternative Strategies for the Future* (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1989), p. xx, n. 7. The most recent explication of his views on strategic independence is Carpenter, *A Search for Enemies: America's Alliances After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1992).

163. See John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), chap. 2; George F. Kennan, *Realities of American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), pp. 63–65; Hans Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1982, reprint of 1951 edition), pp. 5–7; Nicholas Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1942), part 1.

164. For the isolationist approach to post-Cold War American grand strategy, see Earl C. Ravenal, "The Case For Adjustment," *Foreign Policy*, No. 81 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 3–19.

165. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future"; Stephen Van Evera, "Why Europe Matters, Why the Third World Doesn't: American Grand Strategy After the Cold War," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (June 1990), pp. 1–51.

the events that would require a more engaged policy: (1) the appearance of a “careful” challenger able to cloak its ambitions and ward off external balancing against it; (2) a dramatic narrowing of America’s relative power margin over Japan; or (3) the inability of other states to act as effective counterweights due to internal difficulties.¹⁶⁶

Strategic independence aims to capitalize on America’s inherent geopolitical advantages.¹⁶⁷ First, in a relative sense, the United States is probably the most secure great power in history because of the interlocking effects of geography, nuclear weapons, and capabilities which, although diminished relatively, are still formidable in absolute terms. Such “strategic security enables the balancer to stay outside the central balance until the moment when its intervention can be decisive.”¹⁶⁸ America’s insularity means that it can benefit strategically from geography in another way, as well. Because America is distant from the likely theaters of great power conflict, in a multipolar world others are unlikely to view it as a threat to their security. Indeed distance would enhance America’s attractiveness as an ally. (In a unipolar world the United States loses this advantage because hegemony repel others rather than attracting them). Finally, because of its still considerable great power capabilities, in a multipolar world America’s intervention would decisively tip the scales against an aspiring hegemon.

166. For a discussion of the “careful” challenger, see John Arquilla, “Balances Without Balancing,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, September 1992.

167. It is not neorealist heresy to suggest that the United States can play an offshore balancer’s role. I do not claim that there is a functionally differentiated role for a balancer in the international system. Rather, like Waltz, I am saying that under “narrowly defined and historically unlikely conditions,” certain states can play this role because of their unit-level attributes (especially geography and capabilities). The United States today meets Waltz’s criteria: (1) American strength added to a weaker coalition would redress the balance; (2) America has (or ought to have) no positive ends—its goal is the negative one of thwarting an aspiring hegemon; (3) America’s power for the foreseeable future will be at least the equal of any other state’s. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 163–164. It should also be noted that balancers often are attractive allies precisely because they do not have ambitions that threaten others. As George Liska notes, Britain benefited from its “attractiveness in Europe whenever she was ready to meet an actual or potential hegemonical threat” from Europe. To win allies, “Britain had only to abstain from direct acquisitions on the continent and, when called, limit voluntarily her wartime gains overseas.” George Liska, *The Quest for Equilibrium: America and the Balance of Power on Land and Sea* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 13. For additional discussion of the criteria that a state should meet to be an effective balancer, see Michael Sheehan, “The Place of the Balancer in Balance of Power Theory,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (April 1989), pp. 123–133.

168. Sheehan, “The Place of the Balancer,” p. 128.

An insular great power in a multipolar system enjoys a wider range of strategic options than less fortunately placed states.¹⁶⁹ This would certainly be true for the United States. Because of its relative immunity from external threat, in a multipolar world the United States could stand by and could rationally adopt buck-passing strategies that force others to “go first.”¹⁷⁰ The emerging great powers are located in regions where other potentially powerful actors are present (Ukraine, Russia, China, and Korea, which probably will be reunified in the next decade) and where the potential for intense security competitions also exists. The emerging great powers (and these other actors) are likely to be kept in check by their own rivalries. There are three reasons why this situation could be beneficial to the United States. First, the fact that the emerging great powers are involved in regional rivalries will have the effect of enhancing America’s relative power.¹⁷¹ Second, Japan, America’s most likely future geopolitical rival, could be contained by others without the United States having to risk direct confrontation. Third, if the emerging great powers are compelled to internalize their security costs, they no longer will be free to concentrate primarily on trading-state strategies that give them an advantage in their economic competition with the United States.

Strategic independence is responsive to the constraints of the impending structural changes in the international system. It is a strategy that would serve America’s interests in the emerging multipolar system. It is, admittedly, a competitive strategy. But such a strategy is needed in a world where great power rivalries, with both security and economic dimensions, will be a fact of international life. At the same time, strategic independence is a restrained

169. Liska, *Quest for Equilibrium*, p. 12.

170. For a discussion of the “buck-passing” phenomenon see Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity,” *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 137–168; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 165. John Arquilla defines “bystanding” as a state’s propensity to avoid conflicts, if it can do so, for self-preservation reasons. Arquilla, “Balances Without Balancing.”

171. An offshore balancer can benefit from others’ rivalries: by the mid-1890s, America’s navy was powerful, though still smaller than Britain’s and those of Europe’s lending powers. But “such equality was not necessary. The growing instability of the European political equilibrium seriously tied the hands of the Great Powers of that Continent, and rendered progressively improbable any determined aggression from that quarter against the interests of the United States in the northern part of the Western Hemisphere. European instability, in short, enhanced the relative power and security of the United States.” Harold and Margaret Sprout, *Rise of American Naval Power*, p. 222 (emphasis in original). Similarly, during the nineteenth century, Britain was able to enjoy a relatively high degree of security while spending proportionately less on defense than the European powers, precisely because the European states were preoccupied with security competitions among themselves.

and prudent policy that would (1) avoid provocative actions that would cause others to regard the United States as an overpowerful hegemon; (2) minimize the risks of open confrontation with the emerging great powers; and (3) attempt to enhance America's relative power indirectly through skillful manipulation of the dynamics of multipolarity.

Strategic independence is also a more realistic policy than the strategy of preponderance, which is based on preserving the status quo and on maintaining stability. "Stability" is defined as a world where the United States is unchallenged by rivals and its interests are undisturbed by international political upheaval.¹⁷² The strategy of preponderance aims at attaining a condition that approximates absolute security for the United States. In this respect, it is another form of American exceptionalism. It is a transcendent strategy that seeks nothing less than the end of international politics. However, unwanted and unanticipated events happen all the time in international politics; in this respect, "instability" is normal. War, the security dilemma, the rise and fall of great powers, the formation and dissolution of alliances,

172. For a devastating critique of America's stability obsession, see Benjamin C. Schwarz, "Rights and Foreign Policy: Morality is No Mantra," *New York Times*, November 20, 1992, p. A19. The focus on instability means that the strategy of preponderance leads inexorably to the open-ended proliferation of American commitments, all of which are seen as "interdependent." The United States must, under this strategy, worry about both the rise of new great powers and turmoil in strategically peripheral areas. The latter, it is feared, could set off a cascading series of effects that would spill over and affect important American interests. There is particular concern that American economic interests could be harmed by instability. As Bush's Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney said: "We are a trading nation, and our prosperity is linked to peace and stability in the world. . . . Simply stated, the worldwide market that we're part of cannot thrive where regional violence, instability, and aggression put it at peril." Dick Cheney, "The Military We Need in the Future," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (October 15, 1992), p. 13. For a similar argument see Van Evera, "Why Europe Matters," pp. 10-11.

This line of thinking is an ironic twist on the interdependence/trading state concept, which holds that territorial conquest does not pay because the most effective means of increasing national power is through trade, and that war is too costly to be a viable option for economically powerful states. Rather than being a stimulus for peace, under the strategy of preponderance economic interdependence means that the United States must maintain a forward military presence and be prepared to wage war, in order to ensure that it is not cut off from the markets with which it has become economically interconnected. Here, two flaws of the stability-oriented strategy of preponderance become clear. First, there is a failure to consider whether the benefits of maintaining stability outweigh the costs of attempting to do so. Admittedly, instability abroad conceivably could harm the United States. The issue, however, is whether this harm would exceed the certain costs of maintaining American forward-deployed forces and the possible costs if commitment leads to involvement in a conflict. Second, there is no consideration of alternative strategies. For example, by relying on its large domestic market (which will get bigger if the North American Free Trade Agreement goes into effect) and diversifying its overseas markets, the United States could minimize the economic disruption that could accompany possible geopolitical disturbances in Europe and East Asia.

and great power rivalries are enduring features of international politics. The goal of a unipolar world in which the United States is unthreatened and able to shape the international environment is alluring but it is a chimera. No state can achieve absolute security because no state, not even the United States, can rise above the international political system's structural constraints.

THE COMING TEST

The coming years will be ones of turmoil in international politics. Systemic change occasioned by the rise and fall of great powers has always been traumatic. No doubt neorealism's critics will continue to point to second-image factors as reasons to take an optimistic view of the future. No doubt, too, the debate between neorealists and their critics will continue. But this one is not fated to drag on inconclusively. In coming years, the international system will provide a definitive field test of the contending views of international politics offered by neorealists and their critics. Fifty years from now, and probably much sooner, we will know who was right and who was wrong. Structural realists can be confident that events will vindicate their predictions: (1) Because of structural factors, an American strategy of preponderance or an attempt to perpetuate unipolarity is doomed to failure; (2) unipolarity will stimulate the emergence of eligible states as great powers; (3) unipolarity will cause other states to balance against the United States; (4) in a multipolar system, traditional patterns of great power competition will reemerge notwithstanding the effect of second-image factors; and (5) if differential growth rate effects allow Japan to challenge America's leading position, the United States-Japan relationship will become highly competitive and the possibility of hegemonic war will be present.