

## Introduction

# Labors of Hercules Without End in Sight

During the Cold War, the US and Soviet Union had tacitly collaborated in restraining, or “double containing,” the power potential and capabilities of both major and minor powers, including Germany/Europe, Japan, China, the two Koreas, India and Pakistan—as well as many other lesser states throughout the developing world.<sup>1</sup> US-Soviet collaboration in this “double containment” was partly a result of the formation of opposing “spheres of influence and security” and through the partition of Germany/Europe. In addition, the US and Soviet Union often kept strategically positioned states in the developing world as “weak” as possible by playing the differing sides against each other in violent wars.

In the aftermath of Soviet collapse, the US has become the world’s lonely hyper-puissance (in the critical French coinage). The US is the only state capable of “restraining” many of the emerging powers, but not without increasing difficulties. Washington has thus continued efforts to “mono-contain” Japan by tightening its alliance in defense of Taiwan; it has also attempted to channel or restrain, as much as possible, an enlarging European Union (EU) by means of expanding NATO membership into former Soviet space. At the same time, however, the US has had troubles restraining China, among other states. It is not entirely ironic that China, following Soviet collapse, would begin to strengthen its military and nuclear capabilities. It is also not entirely ironic that both India and Pakistan would almost simultaneously explode nuclear weapons in 1998 or that both North Korea and Iran would threaten to obtain nuclear capabilities.<sup>2</sup> It likewise should not have been entirely unexpected that the collapse of Soviet controls over Afghanistan and central Asia, not to overlook the loss of Soviet (and Iraqi) influence throughout the “Greater Middle East” would have permitted the emergence of pan-Islamic movements. The latter have not surprisingly sought to destabilize as many “corrupt” Arab-Islamic regimes as possible—in addition to attacking Russian, European, Chinese and Indian interests—as well as American.

The US, by itself, did not “cause” the new global disorder. Yet, the roots of the present crisis to a large extent lie in the general failure of US diplomacy to establish new and more concerted norms for international action in the post-Cold War era. Most crucially, after Soviet withdrawal, the US refused to engage in multilateral diplomacy, involving Moscow, Tehran, Islamabad and other regional powers, in an effort to work toward a resolution of the vicious Afghan conflict—a “sin of omission” that, in many ways, opened the door to pan-Islamic insurgency, once the Taliban came to power, then joined by *al-Qaida*. (See Chapter 5.)

Moreover, in placing emphasis upon NATO enlargement to the exclusion of a more concerted US-Russian-European approach to European and global security, Washington missed opportunities to develop a far-reaching, multilateral approach that could have dealt more effectively with actual and potential crises. The Clinton Administration did engage in informal "Contact Group" formulas to handle the complexities of the Bosnian crisis. (See Chapter 7.) Yet the Yeltsin administration proposal in 1992 to meet more formally with NATO in a "16 plus 1" framework to deal with overall strategic questions affecting all of Europe and the world was only accepted a decade later (then "19 plus 1") by the Bush administration in May 2002—after the 11 September attacks.<sup>3</sup> Concurrently, while the US did pressure the UN to streamline its operations and cut costs in the 1990s, proposals to reform the UN Security Council (UNSC), and to "strengthen" the organization in the face of multiplying peacekeeping operations throughout the world, stalled miserably.

Once the Bush administration arrived in power, it appeared that American policy was beginning to retrogress to a Cold War stance as US relations with both Russia and China plummeted.<sup>4</sup> The attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon ironically gave the Bush administration a new lease on life, but it is still not clear that a real "global strategy" capable of dealing with the full extent of the crisis has yet to evolve. The US military intervention against al-Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan obtained UN, NATO, EU and Russian backing—in what appeared to represent a new US-led "multilateralism." Yet positive worldwide sympathy for the US after the 11 September attacks rapidly faded as a result of its essentially unilateral intervention in Iraq—an action taken against the counsel of the UNSC and key NATO allies, France, Germany, as well as Turkey.

President George Bush, the father, was often criticized for his apparent lack of foresight ("the vision thing"), and particularly for not "going to Baghdad" at the end of the 1990–91 Persian Gulf War. President George W. Bush's efforts to make up for his father's ostensible inadequacies, however, have taken the US and the "Greater Middle East" to the brink of disaster. The belief that the Americans would be treated as "liberators" revealed the self-inflated nature of the George Bush, Jr.'s "vision thing" which, by contrast with the father, has come to haunt the son. Whereas the father's "vision thing" may have erred on the side of the prudence of the traditional realism, the son's "vision" has been blurred by the arrogance of neo-conservatism. Following the November 2006 US mid-term elections, it is the father's more realist advisors, James Baker and Robert Gates, who are now trying to save the son. Yet even if George W. Bush does not fully accept their specific policy advice, the public debate set off by the Iraq Study Group Report in particular has helped to crack the predominant neo-conservative discourse and open a wider space for *alternative realism*. (See Chapters 1 and 2.)

In May 2003, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was purported to have counseled President Bush to "punish France, ignore Germany and forgive Russia." This strategy appeared to represent an attempt to drive a wedge between France and Germany, as the two major US Allies that had opposed "pre-emptive" war with Iraq, while mollifying Russia, whose opposition to the Iraq war was less noisy—in an attempt to gain European concessions in respect to Iraq's post-war reconstruction and peacekeeping. In general, the US could play the UK and Germany against France (always the "reluctant ally") during the Cold War. Yet, in the post-Cold War period, it is clear that not only do France and Germany need to work together, but the US also needs to work with

the Europeans—if the EU is not to disintegrate into disaccord and rivalry. European disaccord has been further accentuated by the failure of France and Holland to ratify the EU Constitution in 2005, in part due to fears of American style “liberalization,” delocalization of industry, increased immigration, opposition to further EU enlargement, as well as continuing disputes between the core powers of France and Germany and the lesser EU states (particularly new members from eastern Europe). (See Chapter 7.)

Recognizing the fact that its first term “strategy” tended to alienate the key allies of the Cold War, Germany and Turkey, as well as France, the second term Bush administration then promised to engage in a new multilateral approach, with strong US support for the European project. This appeared true despite the fact that the principal “multilateralist” of the first term Bush administration, Colin Powell, decided to step down. Here, the US appeared to realize that it needed to work in as concerted a fashion with its Allies and the UN, as much as is possible, in dealing with Iraq, the war on terrorism, plus the Iranian and North Korean threats to develop nuclear weaponry. Now that roughly 3,000 US servicemen have thus far lost their lives in Iraq (with some 21,000 wounded) for a very uncertain cause, and at astronomical direct and indirect costs (potentially \$700bn to \$2 trillion), it appears that the Bush administration has learned far too little and far too late.

On the one hand, Washington expressed a questionably sincere *mea culpa* for not having previously engaged more consistently in a “multilateral” fashion with its friends and Allies. On the other hand, the second term Bush administration continued to assert the necessity to engage in the essentially neo-conservative (and neo-liberal) goal of “democratic globalization.” Expanding the geographic scope of the former “axis of evil,” Washington intended to confront the “outposts of tyranny” in which “America stands with oppressed people on every continent ... in Cuba, and Burma, and North Korea, and Iran, and Belarus, and Zimbabwe”—in the words of now US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice.

The question now is whether Washington will truly build upon its promises for a “new” multilateralism—which theoretically should involve norms of non-aggression, rules for the use and application of sanctions and/or incentives, and collective security assurances or guarantees.<sup>5</sup> Here, a distinction must be made between “behind the scenes” multilateralism—which can work in those few areas where the US does not have substantial interests at stake—versus “up front” multilateralism which requires more direct US engagement. It appears dubious that “behind the scenes” multilateralism will succeed in areas where the US has substantial interests, or where the problematic states involved regard present US policy as the main source of the problem—unless Washington ultimately “bites the bullet” and negotiates directly and “up front” (in coordination with its partners) with some of the very regimes that it has denounced as “axis of evil” or “outposts of tyranny.” Here, for example, the Bush Administration has missed major opportunities to deal diplomatically with both Iran and North Korea—despite very visible openings that could have at least tested the waters.<sup>6</sup> (See Chapter 4.)

While the US will need to engage in special force operations against groups such as *al-Qaida*, it will also need to engage in a more clever global strategy involving *multilateral dissuasion* and *persuasion*—if it is to ever wind down the “global war on terror.” As a key diplomatic step toward this end, the US should work more resolutely with the Quartet grouping of the UN, EU, and Russia, in order to bring a fair resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—a task made even more arduous following Israel’s

unilateral pull-out from Gaza, the electoral victory of Hamas in 2006, and deep divisions within the Palestinian community. Washington will need to engage in "up front" multilateral efforts (with both Iran and Syria) to put an end to civil warfare in Iraq and to achieve "good governance" in the "Greater Middle East"—through *real dialogue*. Likewise, the US must endeavor both "up front" and "behind the scenes" to ameliorate geopolitical and nuclear tensions between India and Pakistan, and to stabilize Afghanistan. Washington will need to engage with a highly instable Russia, as the latter seeks to expand its interests while confronting its own version of the "war on terrorism." In reducing its own armaments through international negotiations, the US must strive more effectively to check closer Russian (and EU) military ties with China, plus prevent conflict over Taiwan—while averting war with North Korea.

Much like the ancient half-man half-god, Hercules, but in a flashier, high tech, cinematographic form, the US has been confronted by a number of new "threats" and challenges to itself and world stability; it has thus begun to engage in a number of dangerous and potentially unending "Labors"—which involve both sub-adventures and misadventures, resulting in significant errors of judgment and considerable "collateral damage." Having defeated the Lion of Nemea (the Taliban), at least in appearance, the war with the multi-headed Lernean Hydra of global terrorism continues, but thus far failing to capture the Ceryneian Hind (bin Laden). The US did capture the Erymanthean Boar (Saddam Hussein) alive—although the resistance to the American "occupation" has not yet subsided. Likewise, Washington has not yet been able to manage the Stymphalian Birds that plague the Middle East—along the long Road to Peace.

The new American Hercules has additionally not yet figured out a more clever stratagem to flush the nuclear waste from the stables of the North Korean Augeias, nor capture Iran, become the three headed dog, Cerberus—so as to fling its nuclear capabilities back into the pits of Hades. Other crises may soon confront the US in dealing with Europa and a Turkish Minos. What adventures or misadventures may await the US and Russia as they seek to tame the man-eating Horses of Diomedes? Will India and Pakistan be able to capture Geryon's cattle, as the latter seek to destabilize peace negotiations between New Delhi and Islamabad? In what adventures or misadventures will the new American Hercules engage in the conflict zone surrounding the belt of Hippolyte and the Amazons? Will the US and China go to battle over Taiwan and the oil-coated apples of the South China sea, guarded not only by a hundred-headed dragon, but also by the Hesperides, the nymphs, with strings of pearls, who were daughters of Atlas?

The American cinematographic version may attempt to cover up many of his errors through the flashy manipulation of the global media, but he cannot altogether escape those errors of judgment and his culpability. Even that all-powerful mythological figure did not "succeed" in his labors—without seeking the advice of the gods (to obtain legitimacy) and, at least sometimes, without the help of his friends. It appears, however, that the American version may require a significant re-working of the script: Many of these issues (which originated both before and after Soviet collapse) need to be addressed as rapidly as possible—before a number of grievances result in "blowback" in contemporary slang—or explode to the surface in Clausewitzian terms.

In this regard, the American Hercules may need even greater assistance than did the ancient one—in the assumption that his present friends and Allies will not, in the

very near future, decide to part company altogether. Alternatively, it is also possible that the American version could abandon his tasks, and withdraw back into his more traditional pre-World War II isolationist shell due to an unwillingness to bear the burdens of empire and military intervention.

## Chapter Outline

Chapter 1, *Reflections upon the 11 September Attacks and “Pre-emptive” War in Iraq* critically examines the post-11 September decision to expand the “war on terrorism” beyond the immediate threat of *al-Qaida* to a war against “every terrorist group of global reach.” The Bush administration then expanded that conflict to an additional dimension that included a war against “rogue states,” which not only involved so-called “pre-emptive” war with Iraq, but also political military pressures upon the two other “axis of evil” states, North Korea and Iran. The US tendency to “demonize” various regimes as members of the “axis of evil,” or as “outposts of tyranny,” risks a further widening of the conflict without a clear goal or end in sight. The chapter additionally questions whether Bush administration policy will be able to achieve its goals of liberal “democratic federalism” in Iraq after having attempted to *impose* its will by force—following in the footsteps of Great Britain and previous empires in history.

Chapter 2, *The Roots of American Neo-Conservatism: Neo-Timocrats or Moralizing Politicians?*, traces the historical and ideological roots of the new American interventionism, and the rise of the “neo-conservatives,” who have taken the helm in the formulation of policy in respect to both the “war on terrorism” and war on “rogue states.” It is argued that although many, but not all, neoconservatives identify themselves with the Republican Party, the phenomena transcends the considerations of political parties—in that the neo-conservative urge for unilateral American initiatives has its roots in the political and social history of US continental, and then overseas, expansionism (going back to security concerns raised by Alexander Hamilton). Despite the deeper historical nature of the phenomena, the contemporary form of neo-conservative ideology has its roots in the 1970s in that it represented a reaction to particularly American versions of liberal and radical thought. Instead of viewing American “imperialism” in a *negative* light as was common during the Vietnam war era and after, neoconservatives argued with great conviction, that American imperialism (or what they prefer to call “leadership”) has its *positive* “virtues” in bringing “democracy,” capitalist development, and “rule of law” to tyrannical regimes. The chapter critically examines neo-conservative policies in respect to Soviet collapse, opposition to “balance of power” politics and to “appeasement,” and the relationship between democracy and “regime change”—a term coined under the influence of political philosopher, Leo Strauss. The chapter argues that one can depict neo-conservatives in Socratic terms as “neo-Timocrats”—but that they rightfully fit the category of “moralizing politicians” in Kantian terms as well.

Chapter 3, *The Question of State versus Anti-State “Terrorism”*: *Who is Terrorizing Whom?* identifies the political-ethical dilemmas involved in the expanding “war on terrorism” which has been aimed against “every terrorist group of global reach,” in President Bush’s words. The chapter attempts to clarify the concept (there are over

one hundred definitions) by identifying four differing forms of "terrorism": *anti-state terrorism*, *state-supported terrorism*, *totalitarian terrorism* and *street terrorism*. The chapter furthermore reviews the "clash of civilizations" thesis, particularly the view of history as a "progression" from the "wars of princes" to the "wars of religions/civilizations," as developed by Samuel Huntington (and as adopted by bin Laden, among others). The chapter argues that while the number of "terrorist" organizations with religious ideologies do appear to be on the upswing, there are still more secular-type organizations than religious ones, in quantitative terms. Moreover, both religious and secular organizations have more in common than might first meet the eye. In developing concepts from Thomas Hobbes and Edmund Burke, the chapter argues for an approach that seeks to *reconcile* the "dialectical" interaction between conflicting anti-state and state "terrorisms"—a policy option, which, in some cases, may prove more plausible in the long term than one that seeks either "eradication" or "regime change."

Chapter 4, *The Risks of Nuclear Proliferation*, analyzes the successes and failures of American efforts to stem nuclear proliferation. It looks at the present global and regional crises brought about by Israeli, Indian and Pakistani acquisition of nuclear weapons, with a particular focus on the apparent Iranian and North Korean quests to obtain a nuclear weapons capability. It looks at EU, Russian and US policies in respect to proliferation and then outlines a number of related policy positions: The first is that of strengthened international inspections and reform of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). The second is economic sanctions and "containment." The third is the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). The fourth is to threaten, if not use, force. (The latter option could range from covert actions, to pre-emption and surgical strikes, to direct military intervention.) The fifth option is to try to "manage" the spread of nuclear weaponry. The sixth is a "nuclear free weapons zone" or else mutual declarations of "no first use" of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). The seventh is the implementation of "regional security communities" which would engage in *real dialogue* and multilateral diplomacy. In a critique of both *neo-realist* and *neo-conservative* approaches, the chapter argues that efforts to dissuade both Iran and North Korea from controlling their own nuclear fuel cycles may ultimately mean *regime recognition* as opposed to *regime change* (but without necessarily ruling out far reaching *regime reform*)—given the appropriate negotiated conditions and conditional *security assurances* leading to *security guarantees*.

Chapter 5, *Manipulating US Global Power: Pakistan, "War on Terrorism" and Strategic Leveraging*, explores Pakistani efforts to manipulate US policy both before and after the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. The purpose is to better explain contemporary Pakistani foreign policy in its geo-historical context—in an area in which nuclear weapons, oil, drugs and "terrorism" make a very explosive concoction. The chapter consequently analyses how the deeper roots of the 11 September 2001 attacks stemmed from the conflict in Afghanistan. In that conflict, the US: 1) coaxed Moscow to intervene; 2) totally ignored the domestic Afghan political struggle once the Soviet Union withdrew, thus permitting the Taliban to come to power, to be joined by *al-Qaida*; 3) turned its back as Pakistan (and India) sought to obtain a nuclear weapons capability. Not only was Pakistan able to acquire a nuclear capability, but the A. Q. Kahn nuclear "network" then assisted the efforts of states such as North Korea and Iran, among others, to develop a nuclear capability as well. The chapter consequently looks at how the relatively poor state of Pakistan has been able

to manipulate its geo-strategic position and acquisition of nuclear weapons, to assert its interests in the “war on terrorism” with respect to Kashmir, despite US demands for the “illiberal democracy” to take more decisive steps toward “democratization.” Finally, the chapter advocates the need for Indian-Pakistani “reconciliation”—as a diplomatic step to put an end to nuclear “brinkmanship”—as well as the “war on terrorism.”

Chapter 6, *The Global Ramifications of American Military Expansionism*, outlines geo-strategic and political “hotspots” throughout the globe. The chapter first examines the expanding US military strategy and the Pentagon’s global basing plans. It studies the global ramifications of “pre-emptive” war in Iraq; the effects of NATO and EU enlargement upon Russia, Ukraine and Belarus as the NATO and EU “borderlands”; American and EU ties to China. It looks at conflicts in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Turkey, Iran, and Central Asia, as well as efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East, including the domestic and regional consequences of the Iraq crisis—as affected by pan-Islamic strategy throughout the Arab/Islamic world. The chapter also scrutinizes US relations with the “outposts of tyranny” of Zimbabwe and Cuba; “narco-terrorism” in Columbia, Venezuelan oil diplomacy, as well as rising tensions between Japan, China and the two Koreas. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the potential emergence of new political-economic “blocs,” whose formation largely depends upon the three key “pivot” states, Ukraine, Turkey and China. It is argued that the potential shift in alliances of any one of these three key states could spark major power conflict.

Chapter 7, *“Clash of Democracies” or New Global Concert?*, questions whether the US and EU, despite holding “common” values and norms, may continue to “clash” over foreign policy—and clash over how to best engage in the war/fight against “terrorism.” A clash in perspectives appears to be developing precisely because the US and EU rank their values and interests very differently, and because their governmental structures, processes and goals are very different as well. The chapter argues that contrary to the “end of history” argument, which posited the triumph of the democratic liberal “idea,” the US and EU are in the process of developing very different “ideas” of democracy, which will strongly influence the ways in which they interact. The US possesses a federal model with a very strong executive branch; the EU (despite the French and Dutch vetoes of the proposed European constitution in 2005) is still in the process of adopting an amalgamated and *consensual* model of “social democracy,” which goes beyond a loose confederation, with a much weaker executive than the US model. The differing US and EU “ideas” of “democracy” are intense competition on a global scale with other conceptions that include “sovereign or national democracy,” “illiberal democracy,” “communitarian democracy,” “participatory democracy,” and “world democracy.” The chapter consequently explores the differing nature of EU and US foreign policy formulation, clashing EU and US strategic visions, as well as the dilemmas posed by neo-Wilsonian efforts to “export democracy” linked to “national independence” or “self-determination”—and the general US reluctance or failure to support *confederal* and *consensual* models of governance.

The chapter then examines the question of UN *legitimacy*: By contrast with neo-conservative views, it is argued that the original conception of the 1948 Vandenberg Resolution—that sought to initiate the North Atlantic Treaty and simultaneously “strengthen” the UN—needs to be more fully adopted in post-11 September circumstances. The Vandenberg Resolution had pointed out real weaknesses in the UN

and thus advocated "voluntary agreement to remove the veto"; "progressive development of regional and other collective arrangements for individual and collective self-defense" in accord with the UN Charter; plus "maximum efforts to obtain agreements to provide the UN with armed forces as provided by the Charter and to obtain agreement among member nations upon universal regulation and reduction of armaments under adequate and dependable guaranty against violation." It also proposed "if necessary" a review of the Charter, "after adequate effort toward strengthening the UN." The chapter concludes by proposing a radical restructuration and reinvigoration of the UNSC—and considers the formation of a "World Citizen's Assembly"—as a *legitimizing* step toward the establishment of a "confederal world democracy"—which represents a *consensual* model of democratic *inter-state* and *inter-societal* governance.

Chapter 8, *Transcending the International Disequilibrium*, analyzes American global strategy and proposes policy options intended to transcend the post-Cold War disequilibrium. In arguing for the establishment of a more "equitable" security relationship between the US and EU, it advocates the creation of Euro-Atlantic Euro-Mediterranean "security communities" upon the basis of multilateral NATO-EU-Russian security guarantees under general UN mandates. Concerning North Korea and Iran, the US and its UNSC partners need to engage in *real dialogue* over the questions of nuclear proliferation, WMD, state repression and human rights abuses, and support for "terrorism"; here, the US may need to propose *security guarantees* and engage in *regime recognition*, as opposed to *regime change*, but not excluding far reaching *regime reform*. Efforts to halt nuclear proliferation in the Middle East mean bringing the Israeli nuclear deterrent under international safeguards while simultaneously guaranteeing the security of a new Israeli-Palestinian "confederation". This latter goal can be achieved through overlapping NATO-EU-Russian security guarantees involving the deployment of international peacekeepers in specified areas under a general UN mandate—but only once, and if, Israel and the differing Palestinian factions can reach a political settlement. Concurrently, reaching out to Iran (and Syria) not only represent the major means to establish peace between Israel and Palestine, but in Iraq as well.

The chapter critically scrutinizes US/NATO and EU relations with Russia and China, and asks whether Russia (and ultimately China) can be brought into a larger US/NATO-EU confederation involving power sharing arrangements and regional security accords. It proposes a peaceful settlement of the China-Taiwan dispute through the formation of a loose China-Taiwan "confederation" based upon the principle of "one China with cooperating states and differing systems" (instead of "one China, two systems.") Finally, the chapter argues that the world is entering a *danger zone* that is largely a consequence of the exponential growth of US, Chinese and worldwide energy consumption. This *danger zone* will stretch into the mid-21st century as the US and the other advanced industrial powers attempt to shift from an energy infrastructure based on fossil fuels to one based upon hydrogen fuels, microchips, bio-fuels and other alternative energy resources. During the period of transition, it is possible that a number of significant geostrategic and political economic crises could spark both major and minor power conflicts—much as has already been forewarned by US intervention in Iraq. To prevent the real potential for major power conflicts to erupt in the coming years, it will be necessary for the US to work to formulate a truly concerted global strategy—and as swiftly as possible before America potentially withdraws into plutocratic isolation and socio-economic self-criticism, exhausted with the heavy imperial burdens of its Herculean tasks.