Dead Center

The Demise of Liberal Internationalism in the United States

Charles A. Kupchan and Peter L. Trubowitz

Does George W. Bush's presidency mark the demise of the era of liberal internationalism in the United States? According to many analysts, it does not.[1] The prevailing wisdom is that the Bush administration's assertive unilateralism, its aversion to international institutions, and its zealous efforts to spread democracy in the Middle East represent a temporary departure from the United States' traditional foreign policy. Out of step with both public and expert opinion, the Bush revolution was orchestrated by a small group of neoconservative officials who, with the help of the September 11 terrorist attacks, managed to wrest control of the foreign policy apparatus.[2] This account implies that the Bush administration's foreign policy is an aberration and that the United States' commitment to the formula of liberal internationalism—U.S. power plus international cooperation—will be restored after Bush leaves office. Indeed, influential think tanks and foreign policy groups are already churning out action plans for reviving liberal internationalism.[3]

Charles A. Kupchan is Professor of International Affairs at Georgetown University, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, and Henry A. Kissinger Scholar at the Library of Congress. Peter L. Trubowitz is Associate Professor of Government at the University of Texas at Austin and Senior Fellow at the Robert Strauss Center for International Security and Law.

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1. See, for example, Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2003); Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006); Gary Hart, *The Fourth Power: A Grand Strategy for the United States in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Kurt M. Campbell and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Hard Power: The New Politics of National Security* (New York: Basic Books, 2006); G. John Ikenberry, "The End of the Neo-Conservative Moment," *Survival,* Vol. 46, No. 1 (Spring 2004), pp. 7–22; and Joshua Busby and Jonathan Monten, "Without Heirs: The Fall of Establishment Internationalism in U.S. Foreign Policy," paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, San Diego, California, March 22–25, 2006.
2. On the personalities and ideological leanings of Bush's foreign policy advisers, see James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Viking, 2004); and Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound,* pp. 17–34.
3. Lawrence J. Korb and Robert O. Boorstin, *Integrated Power: A National Security Policy for the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, 2005); and G. John Ikenberry and Anne-

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We challenge this view and contend instead that the Bush administration's brand of international engagement, far from being an aberration, represents a turning point in the historical trajectory of U.S. foreign policy. It is a symptom, as much as a cause, of the unraveling of the liberal internationalist compact that guided the United States for much of the second half of the twentieth century. That compact was substantive as well as political. Substantively, it entailed a commitment to both power and cooperation: the United States would project its military strength to preserve stability, but it would seek to exercise its leadership through multilateral partnership rather than unilateral initiative. It was the coupling of U.S. power and international partnership that gave the nation's foreign policy such a distinctive character in the decades following World War II. Politically, liberal internationalism drew broad support from regions of the country that had rarely agreed on matters of either domestic or foreign policy. Working together, Democrats and Republicans fashioned a bipartisan consensus behind a new type of U.S. engagement in world affairs. Bipartisanship was to prove crucial to the emergence and longevity of a U.S. grand strategy that twinned power and international partnership.

Liberal internationalism's rise was the product of both geopolitical and domestic developments. The threat posed by Nazi Germany, imperial Japan, and the Soviet Union combined with the fading of ideological divisions in the United States to enable Democrats and Republicans to coalesce around a common strategy. Abroad, the United States used its superior military power to check potential challenges to stability and an open international economy. But at the same time, it turned to multilateral institutions to attract and reassure the partners it needed to defeat fascism and communism. At home, the political environment was ripe for the emergence of a "centrist" coalition. The formation of a North-South alliance, the easing of class tensions due to economic growth and rising incomes, the onset of political pragmatism and ideological moderation—these were the conditions that led Democrats and Republicans alike to forge what Arthur Schlesinger dubbed the "vital center."[4] Thus began the era of liberal internationalism.

The conditions that sustained liberal internationalism have of late been rapidly disappearing, dramatically weakening its grip on the nation's politics. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, U.S. primacy has reduced the incentives

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Marie Slaughter, *Forging a World of Liberty under Law: U.S. National Security in the 21st Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Project on National Security, Princeton University, 2006).

4. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949).

for Republicans and Democrats alike to adhere to the liberal internationalist compact. Unipolarity has heightened the geopolitical appeal of unilateralism, a trend that even the threat of transnational terrorism has not reversed. Unipolarity has also loosened the political discipline engendered by the Cold War threat, leaving U.S. foreign policy more vulnerable to growing partisanship at home. "Red" and "Blue" America disagree about the nature of U.S. engagement in the world; growing disparities in wealth have reawakened class tensions; and political pragmatism has been losing ground to ideological extremism.

The polarization of the United States has dealt a severe blow to the bipartisan compact between power and cooperation. Instead of adhering to the vital center, the country's elected officials, along with the public, are backing away from the liberal internationalist compact, supporting either U.S. power or international cooperation, but rarely both. President Bush and many Republicans have abandoned one side of the liberal internationalist compact: multilateralism has received little but contempt on their watch. Meanwhile, the Democrats have neglected the other side: many party stalwarts are uneasy with the assertive use of U.S. power. As the partisan gyre in Washington widens, the political center is dying out, and support for liberal internationalism is dying with it. According to Jim Leach, one of the Republican moderates to lose his House seat in the 2006 midterm elections, "[The United States'] middle has virtually collapsed. And how to reconstruct a principled center, a center of gravity in American politics, may be the hardest single thing at this particular time."[5]

Prominent voices from across the political spectrum have called for the restoration of a robust bipartisan center that can put U.S. grand strategy back on track.[6] According to Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton, "For more than a half a century, we know that we prospered because of a bipartisan consensus on defense and foreign policy. We must do more than return to that sensible, cooperative approach." Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney echoes this sentiment: "It seems that concern about Washington's divisiveness and capability to meet today's challenges is the one thing that unites us all. We need

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5. Quoted in Kwame Holman, "Midterm Elections Oust Several Moderate Republicans," Online Newshour, November 24, 2006, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/july-dec06/gop_11-24.html.

6. On the need to restore bipartisanship, see Nancy E. Roman, "Both Sides of the Aisle: A Call for Bipartisan Foreign Policy," Special Report, No. 9 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, September 2005); the website of Partnership for a Secure America, an organization calling for "responsible foreign policy through bipartisan action," http://www.psaonline.org; and the website of Unity08, an organization committed to rebuilding bipartisanship, at http://www.unity08.com/.

new thinking on foreign policy and an overarching strategy that can unite the United States and its allies."[7]

These exhortations are in vain. The halcyon era of liberal internationalism is over; the bipartisan compact between power and partnership has been effectively dismantled. If left unattended, the political foundations of U.S. statecraft will continue to disintegrate, exposing the country to the dangers of an erratic and incoherent foreign policy. To avoid this fate, U.S. leaders will have to fashion a new brand of internationalism—one that will necessarily entail less power and less partnership if it is to have a chance of securing broad domestic support. To find a new equilibrium between the nation's commitments abroad and its polarized politics at home, the United States will need a grand strategy that is as selective and judicious as it is purposeful.

This article is organized into three main sections. We begin by describing the rise of liberal internationalism, exploring how geopolitical and domestic factors worked in unison to fashion a bipartisan consensus behind the United States' postwar grand strategy. We then turn to liberal internationalism's demise, again examining the roles played by both international and domestic forces in eroding the political foundations of the liberal internationalist compact. We conclude by considering the implications of our analysis for U.S. grand strategy.

The Rise of the Liberal Internationalist Compact

Scholars and policymakers alike tend to associate liberal internationalism with multilateralism and international institutions.[8] Liberal internationalism does entail a commitment to multilateralism, but it also involves a commitment to the use of U.S. military force. Indeed, it was the dual commitment to power projection and international cooperation that distinguished liberal internationalism from earlier U.S. strategies.

From the United States' emergence as a great power at the end of the nineteenth century until the 1940s, its political class favored power or cooperation, but not the two together. Theodore Roosevelt preferred power, taking advantage of a strengthened presidency to pursue an imperialist agenda—but one whose ambition quickly outstripped political support for such expansionism.

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7. Hillary Clinton, quoted in Partnership for a Secure America, "Quotes on Bipartisanship," http://www.psaonline.org/userdata_display.php?modin=52; and Mitt Romney, "Rising to a New Generation of Global Challenges," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 86, No. 4 (July/August 2007), pp. 17–18.
8. On U.S. multilateralism and the role of international institutions in shaping world order, see John Gerard Ruggie, *Winning the Peace: America and World Order in the New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

Woodrow Wilson favored cooperation, embracing the League of Nations and collective security—but the Senate rejected this institutional commitment to multilateralism. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the architect of liberal internationalism, was the first president to blend these two traditions.

Franklin Roosevelt's coupling of power and partnership was perhaps most evident in his so-called Great Design—his vision of a cooperative security system in which China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States would form a consortium of great powers to manage collectively the postwar order and put down threats to the peace.[9] Roosevelt dubbed the system the "Four Policemen," envisaging a directorate that resembled the Concert of Europe, which emerged after the defeat of Napoleonic France in 1815. By virtue of its sheer power, the United States would be the first among equals in such a directorate, relying on its primacy to extend political and economic influence.[10] The Great Design, like the Concert of Europe, would embrace a shared set of understandings and norms; territorial issues and political disputes were to be resolved through consultation and compromise rather than unilateral action. These ideas shaped Roosevelt's diplomacy at the Yalta Conference in 1945, and they found concrete expression in the United Nations and the Bretton Woods system.

BIPARTISANSHIP AND LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM

Roosevelt's approach to grand strategy was distinguished not just by the marriage of power and cooperation, but also by the exceptional nature of the political support it enjoyed in Washington and the polity at large. Indeed, the rise of liberal internationalism in the United States corresponded with an unprecedented surge in bipartisan cooperation on matters of foreign affairs.[11] As Figure 1 illustrates, the politics of foreign policy were deeply partisan prior to World War II. In this respect, foreign policy was similar to domestic policy. In the 1940s these trends began to change. Bipartisan cooperation increased sharply on foreign policy and, to a lesser extent, on domestic policy. Between the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam in 1968, members of Congress reached across the aisle nearly three out of every four times they voted on foreign policy legislation. In contrast, bi-

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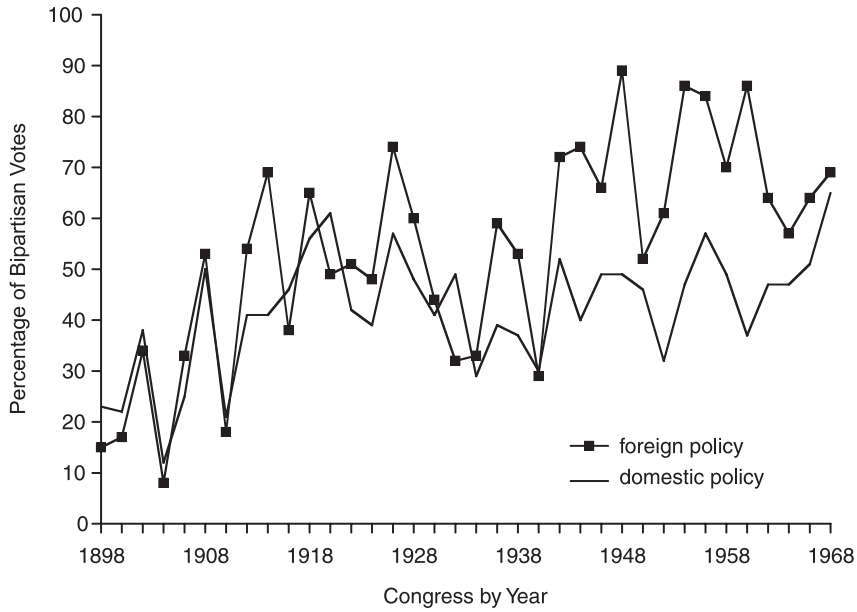
9. For a discussion of the Great Design, see Gordon A. Craig and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 101–113.
10. See John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 53; and G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 163–214.
11. Following common practice, bipartisanship is defined as the extent to which majorities or near majorities of both parties in Congress vote together.

Figure 1. Bipartisanship in the U.S. Congress, 1898–1968



SOURCE: Adapted from Peter Trubowitz and Nicole Mellow, "Going Bipartisan: Politics by Other Means," *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. 120, No. 3 (Fall 2005), pp. 433–454.
NOTE: This figure is based on individual vote data provided by Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal on their website, "Voteview," http://voteview.ucsd.edu/. Only the year for the second session in each Congress is depicted on the horizontal axis. Foreign policy and domestic policy classifications for each vote are from Poole and Rosenthal. For a full discussion, see Trubowitz and Mellow, "Going Bipartisan," pp. 439–441.

partisanship occurred about half the time on domestic policy issues. To be sure, partisan politics did not always stop at the water's edge; Republicans and Democrats often clashed over foreign aid and trade matters. Partisan divisions, however, were sporadic and transitory. On the basic elements of grand strategy—when military force should be used, the importance of international support, and the role of multilateral institutions—consensus was the norm.

This bipartisan spirit was reflected in—and furthered by—the leadership of Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt's struggle to coax the United States from its isolationist shell led him to pay careful attention to Wilson's presidency and the Senate's rejection of the League of Nations. FDR was intent on avoiding Wilson's mistakes. Wilson's agenda for collective security was deeply partisan—playing to the interests of core Democratic constituencies while

ignoring the interests and ideological proclivities of Republicans.[12] In contrast, Roosevelt ensured that the United Nations Charter was devoid of provisions that might provoke Republican objections. He also sought to make Republicans stakeholders in his foreign policy by appointing members of the opposition to important foreign policy posts and working closely with Wendell Willkie, the candidate he defeated in the 1940 election, to combat isolationism.[13]

As Figure 1 demonstrates, bipartisan cooperation on foreign policy waned after the close of World War II—but only temporarily. It revived with the onset of the Cold War and the rise of the Soviet threat, with Democrats and Republicans closing ranks around the liberal internationalist agenda launched under Roosevelt's watch. As a high-ranking State Department official put it in 1949, "The end in view is to achieve agreement on a sound and publicly supported policy. . . . Party discipline may rally adherents to one side or the other. But a successful bipartisan foreign policy will make it virtually impossible for 'momentous divisions' to occur in our foreign affairs."[14] Republican Senator Arthur Vandenberg, who had made the transition from isolationism to liberal internationalism during World War II, wrote in 1950 that "'bipartisan foreign policy' means a mutual effort, under our indispensable two-party system, to unite our official voice at the water's edge."[15]

Harry Truman's administration worked closely with lawmakers on Capitol Hill to promote economic recovery, rearmament, and stability in Western Europe. The Marshall Plan and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade both enjoyed broad bipartisan support. The United States took the lead in fashioning the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and a host of other alliances, bolstering these pacts with the forward deployment of U.S. troops. A fierce partisan battle over Truman's management of the Korean War did break out during the 82d Congress (1951–52), but even that dispute was short-lived. As Figure 1 makes clear, bipartisanship returned with the armistice of 1953. The bipartisan consensus behind the compact between power and partnership was then to extend until the late 1960s, when it began to be sorely tested by the Vietnam War.

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12. For a critique of Wilson's handling of the politics of the League, see John Milton Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 35–41.
13. Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America during World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), pp. 130–153; and Cooper, *Breaking the Heart of the World,* pp. 408–409.
14. Ernest A. Gross, "What Is a Bipartisan Foreign Policy?" Department of State Bulletin, No. 21 (October 3, 1949), p. 505.
15. Arthur H. Vandenberg Jr., quoted in Richard H. Heindel, "Review of *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg,*" *American Historical Review,* Vol. 58, No. 2 (January 1953), p. 402.

The bipartisanship nurtured by Roosevelt, and sustained by his successors, was intimately linked to the rise of liberal internationalism for three main reasons. First, bipartisanship made possible the political entrepreneurship needed to launch liberal internationalism. A U.S. commitment to power and partnership represented a dramatic departure in foreign policy, opening its backers to criticism from the left and right. So too was institutionalized multilateralism a novelty for the United States. Politicians eyeing the next election could hardly count on public support for the projection of U.S. power during peacetime. Liberal internationalism's supporters were thus assuming significant political risks, making bipartisanship a necessary condition for its domestic viability. Only if both parties agreed to hold their fire would lawmakers be prepared to embrace such a far-reaching shift in policy.

Second, inasmuch as liberal internationalism is both "internationalist" and "liberal," its implementation required broad institutional support, not just strong leadership by the executive branch. The projection of U.S. power necessitated that members of Congress were prepared to accept the maintenance of a large military establishment, a sizable defense budget, and the potential sacrifice of U.S. lives in distant missions—three planks that had been long resisted by isolationists and had served as sources of protracted partisan conflict in the past. In similar fashion, committing the United States to collective security pacts, alliances, and multilateral economic institutions depended on Senate ratification—a requirement that unilateralists had regularly used to block U.S. participation in pacts and treaties, including the League of Nations. That Senate ratification requires a two-thirds majority makes liberal internationalism particularly dependent upon bipartisanship. Even when a single party controls the White House and has a majority in Congress, it regularly needs help from the opposition to ratify treaties.

Third, bipartisanship proved critical to the implementation of liberal internationalism because it provided for constancy and continuity in foreign policy even as elections shifted power from one party to the other. During the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, U.S. foreign policy regularly lurched among stark alternatives as control over Congress and the White House changed hands.[16] In contrast, liberal internationalism was embraced by Republican and Democratic administrations alike, giving it remarkable staying power. Had it not been for the new bipartisanship on foreign policy, liberal internationalism would have been unlikely to outlast Roosevelt and the

16. For a historical summary of this period, see Charles A. Kupchan and Peter L. Trubowitz, "Grand Strategy for a Divided America," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (July/August 2007), pp. 73–76.

Republican capture of Congress after World War II.[17] Bipartisanship turned liberal internationalism from a fleeting idea into a durable grand strategy.

Bipartisanship was thus essential to liberal internationalism's birth as well as its maintenance. The coalition of Democrats and Republicans first cobbled together by Roosevelt was its political base, and remained so during the Cold War. In this respect, the fortunes of the liberal internationalist compact were directly linked to the strength of the bipartisan center in U.S. politics and, as we show in the next section, the international and domestic circumstances that gave rise to it.

THE GEOPOLITICAL SOURCES OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM

From the outbreak of World War II until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the presence of powerful aggressor states encouraged strong domestic support for a compact between power and cooperation. Even before the United States entered World War II, many of the country's leading strategic thinkers (e.g., Isaiah Bowman, Edward Mead Earle, and Nicholas John Spykman) had concluded that distance was no longer a reliable guarantee of the nation's security.[18] Instead, the United States would have to prevent any single power or group of powers from establishing control over the Eurasian heartland and rimland—the huge landmass extending from Iberia to Siberia. Doing so would require not just the projection of U.S. military power, but also the consensual help of allies that shared the United States' strategic priorities.

The same intuition about the benefits of linking power and partnership lay at the heart of Truman's strategy of containment. The United States alone did not have sufficient economic and military resources to check the threat posed by Soviet and Chinese expansionism. Allies would be required to supply the troops needed to balance Soviet and Chinese power and to provide staging areas to deploy U.S. forces across the geographic expanse of Eurasia. The United States also needed a global network of alliances for political reasons—to shore up the Western democracies and their partners in Asia and the third world by ensuring that these states did not drift toward neutrality or, worse, align with the opposing bloc.[19]

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17. In 1946 the Republicans took both chambers of Congress, ending fourteen years of Democratic rule.

18. Isaiah Bowman, *The New World: Problems in Political Geography* (Yonkers-on-Hudson, N.Y.: World Book, 1928); Edward Mead Earle, *Against This Torrent* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1941); and Nicholas John Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1942).

19. See Thomas J. McCormick, *America's Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After*, 2d ed. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), chaps. 3–6; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*

The effort to establish a liberal economic order was driven by geopolitical as well as economic imperatives. U.S. elites believed that economic nationalism and mercantilist trade policies had helped set the great powers on the path to World War II—hence the need for an open trading system that would benefit all democracies and counter the logic of zero-sum competition.[20] In addition, only if U.S. allies in Europe and Asia enjoyed a speedy and robust economic recovery would they be able to withstand the military and ideological threat posed by Soviet communism. Justifying economic aid for European recovery on geopolitical rather than humanitarian grounds was key to winning Republican support for the Marshall Plan.[21] The reduction of impediments to trade, the financial institutions fashioned at Bretton Woods, and foreign aid all became central planks of the liberal internationalist agenda.

The Cold War also exercised a disciplining effect on U.S. politics. As during World War II, strategic necessity was invoked to tame partisan gamesmanship.[22] By identifying liberal internationalism with anticommunism, Truman and his successors made it politically treacherous for Democrats and Republicans alike to pursue alternative policies. The fear of being labeled soft on communism weaned politicians away from Henry Wallace's version of Wilsonianism as well as Robert Taft's more isolationist agenda. At the same time, the nuclear era made unacceptable the potential consequences of recklessness or belligerence, keeping politicians from straying too far to the right. When politicians ignored the need for centrism—as did George McGovern on the left and Barry Goldwater on the right—they paid dearly at the polls.

THE DOMESTIC SOURCES OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM

By the 1940s, conditions inside as well as outside the United States were ripe for the onset of an era of bipartisanship. The task of building broad support for liberal internationalism was significantly advanced by profound changes in the country's political landscape that had opened up new opportunities for bipartisan cooperation. Roosevelt occupied the White House at a moment in "political time," to use presidential scholar Stephen Skowronek's felicitous

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), chaps. 1–4; and Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), introduction.

20. See John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 18–23.

21. On the political resistance that Truman and his secretary of state, Dean Acheson, encountered in selling European recovery on nonsecurity grounds, see Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), pp. 326–329.

22. On the rise of bipartisanship during the 1940s, see Henry W. Berger, "Bipartisanship, Senator Taft, and the Truman Administration," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (Summer 1975), pp. 221–237.

phrase, when domestic as well as international circumstances made "going bipartisan" in foreign policy an attractive political strategy for Democrats and Republicans alike.[23] The convergence of foreign policy interests between the country's northern and southern states and the dampening of ideological differences among elites and the public played important roles in consolidating liberal internationalism.

THE NORTH-SOUTH ALLIANCE. By the end of World War II, a combination of wartime spending, international trade, and industrialization had brought about a major shift in the regional alignments underpinning U.S. foreign policy.[24] For decades, the North and South had differed sharply over foreign trade and the size of the U.S. military. The Republican North supported a stronger military and protectionist policies toward Europe, invariably running afoul of the Democratic South, which favored a smaller military establishment and the liberalization of trade. By the interwar period, however, rapid industrialization had transformed the United States into the world's leading economic power. The urban Northeast was the primary beneficiary of the economic expansion. By the time Roosevelt took office in 1933, the Northeast's rising position in the world economy was increasing the region's support for economic openness and giving it a direct interest in the prosperity and stability of Europe, its main export market. After the trying times of the Depression years, the North was coming to favor a more activist role for the United States in liberalizing and stabilizing the international system.

As northern support for liberal internationalism increased, so did opportunities for political alliance with the South. Southern elites had their own reasons for backing the liberal internationalist compact. Loyalty to Roosevelt and the Democratic Party certainly played a role. But economic interests were paramount. The South's export of raw materials was still the mainstay of its economy. Southern dependence on international stability and open markets readily translated into support for multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and the Bretton Woods system, which promised to check aggression and prevent the spread of economic nationalism. Meanwhile, military bases and supporting enterprises sprouted throughout the South. A commitment to a foreign policy that combined power and cooperation was now as good for the "martial metropolises" of the South as it was for the urban Northeast.

Converging economic interests were not the only source of the new North-

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23. Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

24. On the regional and partisan bases of liberal internationalism, see Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 96–168.

South alliance. The Democratic Party, long based in the South, benefited from the flow of southerners to the North's factories, as well as the party's growing appeal to northern voters. For the first time, the party had a foothold in the North, enabling it to span the Mason-Dixon line. Democrats in the North and South disagreed sharply about civil rights and labor regulation.[25] But they nonetheless found common cause in the fight against economic nationalism, fascism, and communism. This North-South consensus within the Democratic Party paved the way for the sweeping changes in U.S. foreign policy orchestrated by Roosevelt and Truman, and then embraced by their successors.

Republicans approached liberal internationalism more tentatively, with the party divided along East-West lines. Dwight Eisenhower (and later Richard Nixon) had to balance the competing interests of the party's eastern wing, which had embraced liberal internationalism, against its western wing in the Great Plains and Mountain West, which had not. This divergence was due in part to western fears of competition from overseas producers of cheap agricultural goods and raw materials. The western wing was also concerned about expenditures on foreign assistance and defense—outlays that bestowed disproportionate benefits on the Northeast and South.[26] Until Ronald Reagan's administration, this intraparty divide compelled Republican leaders to favor liberal internationalism "lite." They looked for ways to limit the cost of maintaining order and openness on the Eurasian landmass by substituting, where possible, allies for arms. Eisenhower presided over the construction of multilateral alliances along the Sino-Soviet perimeter, such as the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization and the Central Treaty Organization, while Nixon sought to reduce the costs of containment through various means, including the opening to China, the nurturing of "regional policemen" such as Iran, and arms control with the Soviets.

Republican support for liberal internationalism was thus consistently more qualified than Democratic support. The Republican rank and file was divided over the virtues of free trade, military spending (at least on conventional weapons), and presidential prerogative in making foreign policy.[27]

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25. On regional tensions over domestic policy, see Richard Franklin Bensel, *Sectionalism and American Political Development, 1880–1980* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984). As John Gerard Ruggie observes, regional differences over racial issues would ultimately weaken the liberal internationalist compact. See Ruggie, "Doctrinal Unilateralism and Its Limits: America and Global Governance in the New Century," in David P. Forsythe, Patrice C. McMahon, and Andrew Wedeman, eds., *American Foreign Policy in a Globalized World* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 31–50. See also Joseph A. Fry, *Dixie Looks Abroad: The South and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1789–1973* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), pp. 240–255.
26. On regional tensions within the Republican Party from the 1930s through the 1980s and their implications for foreign policy, see Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest*, chaps. 3, 4.
27. On Democratic and Republican support for Eisenhower's foreign policies, see Robert David

Republicans in the heartland competed with their "Rockefeller" brethren in the East for control of the party's foreign policy agenda. Nonetheless, liberal internationalism had sufficient backing within the Republican Party as a whole to clear the way for a sustainable bipartisan consensus—regardless of which party held the White House and Congress.

THE RISE OF THE MODERATES. In 1950 a committee of the American Political Science Association (APSA) published a report bemoaning the apolitical nature of party politics in the United States, arguing that the absence of ideological differences between Democrats and Republicans was stunting national debate.[28] It is not surprising that the APSA committee reached this judgment about the state of U.S. politics. The post–World War II electoral landscape was considerably less polarized than before along regional as well as socioeconomic lines—remarkably so, given that class had initially been the principal axis along which the politics of the New Deal was organized. But as V.O. Key explained, and the seminal study *The American Voter* later confirmed, class had declined as the defining feature of political parties after World War II.[29]

The rapid economic expansion fueled by the war and the postwar boom was the most important reason for this change. As it often does, economic growth acted like a political balm, easing the class tensions sparked by the Depression and making it easier for the country's political leaders to find common ground on foreign as well as domestic policy.[30] Looking back on the period, Walter Dean Burnham wrote, "The period since 1950 may legitimately be described as one of great confusion in American party politics, a period in which the classic New Deal alignment seems to have evaporated without being replaced by an equally structured ordering of politics."[31]

The narrowing of ideological differences thus accompanied the decline of region and class as important political dividing lines. Indeed, by the end of the Eisenhower era the emergence of a pragmatic, moderate center had prompted

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Johnson, *Congress and the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Malcolm E. Jewell, *Senatorial Politics and Foreign Policy* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1962).

28. American Political Science Association, "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: Report of the Committee on Political Parties," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 44, No. 3, Pt. 2, Supp. (September 1950), pp. v–96.

29. V.O. Key Jr., *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups,* 4th ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1958), p. 274; and Angus Campbell, Phillip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (New York: Wiley, 1960).

30. Historically, bipartisan cooperation in Washington has generally increased during periods of economic prosperity. Partisan pressures on lawmakers ease with rising personal incomes and expanding federal coffers. For statistical evidence on the effects of economic growth on bipartisanship, see Peter Trubowitz and Nicole Mellow, "'Going Bipartisan': Politics by Other Means," *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. 120, No. 3 (Fall 2005), pp. 433–454.

31. Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), p. 304.

Harvard sociologist Daniel Bell to pronounce "the end of ideology."[32] On Capitol Hill, this development manifested itself in the rise of a "moderate bloc"—a group of lawmakers who were more likely to vote with the opposing party than their own. Conservative Democrats (mostly from the South) regularly aligned with Republicans as part of the so-called Conservative Coalition, while liberal Republicans (mostly from the eastern seaboard) reached out to the left, aligning with northern Democrats. Figure 2 reveals just how substantial a presence moderates were in Congress by the 1950s. The unusually centrist character of U.S. politics after World War II helped consolidate the bipartisan foreign policy compact between power and cooperation.[33]

Public opinion for the most part tracked elite opinion. On the critical foreign policy question of the era—how to deal with the Soviet Union—Republicans and Democrats generally saw eye to eye. As Figure 3 indicates, from the 1948 Berlin Blockade through the escalation of the Vietnam War, Republican and Democratic voters shared much common ground on the appropriate mix of military power and diplomacy needed to counter the Soviet threat. Some years the public favored more sticks than carrots; other years, voters preferred greater reliance on negotiation. Nonetheless, partisan affiliation had little impact on preferences; shifts in popular attitudes did not run along party lines.

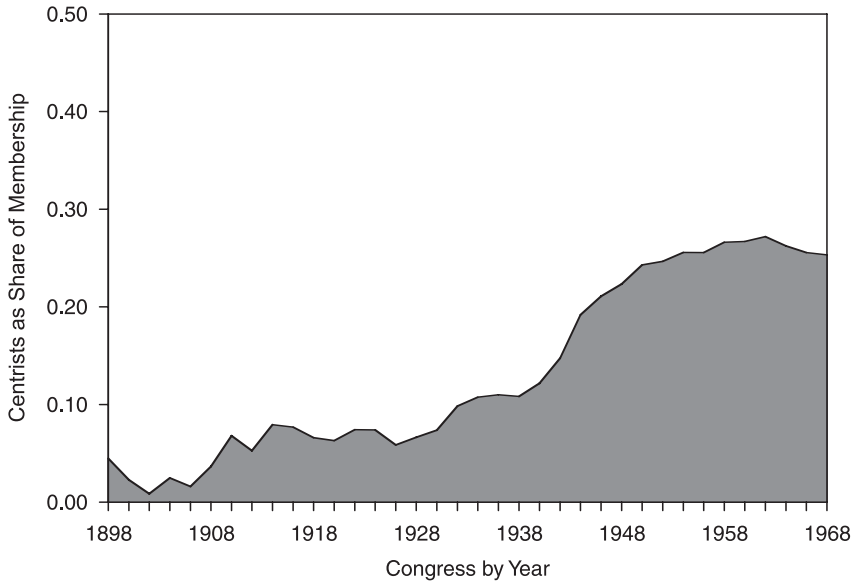
Moreover, voters from both parties embraced the idea that power as well as diplomacy were needed to navigate the geopolitical shoals of superpower rivalry, an embrace that reflected the public's willingness to support both defense spending and arms control during the Cold War era.[34] Public backing for power projection and collaboration also helps explain why Republican and Democratic administrations alike consistently sought to strike a balance between preventing communist expansion and taking actions that risked triggering a confrontation with the Soviet Union.

The Demise of the Liberal Internationalist Compact

Despite its impressive political foundations, the liberal internationalist compact did not survive the Cold War's end. Many scholars have chronicled the

32. Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (New York: Free Press, 1960).
33. Some of the "moderate" lawmakers who embraced liberal internationalism veered from the center on domestic matters. Notably, on issues such as race and labor, a significant number of southern Democrats—whose support was so essential to liberal internationalism's rise—were to the right of northern Democrats, not to mention many Republicans from other parts of the country. This observation strengthens our case that liberal internationalism rested on a unique convergence of views on foreign policy both within and across the parties.
34. See Craig and George, *Force and Statecraft*, pp. 114–131; and Miroslav Nincic, "The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Politics of Opposites," *World Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (July 1988), pp. 452–475.

Figure 2. "Moderate Bloc" in the U.S. Congress, 1898–1968



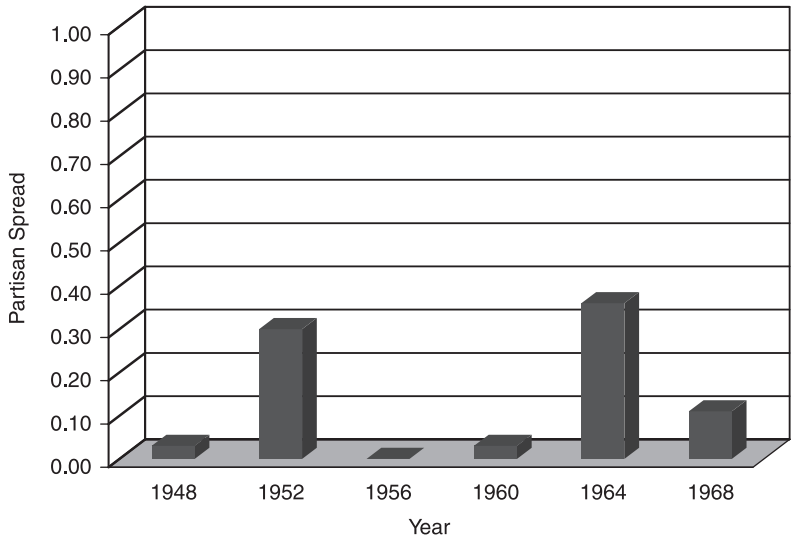
SOURCE: Calculated from Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal nominate score data, http://voteview.uh.edu/.

NOTE: Moderates are defined as lawmakers whose policy views lie closer to the ideological midpoint of the two parties than to their own party's center. Following Sarah A. Binder, party medians for each Congress were calculated using Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal's nominate scores, which measure representatives' ideological positions. Within each Congress, the midpoint between the two medians was then calculated. If a representative's nominate score was closer to the midpoint than to the median for his or her party, he or she was coded as moderate. The percentage of moderates was then derived for each Congress. Only the second session for each Congress is depicted on the horizontal axis. See Binder, "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947–96," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 93, No. 3 (September 1999), pp. 519–533. We thank Nicole E. Mellow for her assistance in generating this index.

erosion of liberal internationalism in the United States—and most attribute it to the presidency of George W. Bush.[35] According to its numerous critics, the Bush administration's skeptical attitude toward international institutions, its belief in the order-producing effects of the assertive use of military force, and its combative approach to neutralizing domestic opponents have all taken

35. See, for example, Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound;* Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *War and the American Presidency* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004); John B. Judis, *The Folly of Empire: What George W. Bush Could Learn from Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Scribner, 2004); and G. John Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 81, No. 5 (September/October 2002), pp. 44–60.

Figure 3. Polarization in the U.S. Electorate over Soviet Threat, 1948–68



SOURCE: National Election Studies survey data, http://www.electionstudies.org.
NOTE: This figure is based on questions from various National Election Study (NES) surveys asking respondents whether the United States should take a more cooperative or a more confrontational stance toward Soviet power and communism: 1948 (variable V480043); 1952 (V520055); 1956 (V560050); 1960 (V600064); 1964 (V640347); and 1968 (V680100). Respondents were asked to place themselves on a three- or five-point scale, with 1 indicating a more cooperative stance toward the Soviets. The partisan spread refers to the mean party difference: the greater it is, the farther apart Republican and Democratic voters were on the question posed in the study. In 1952 NES did not ask a question dealing with the Soviet Union. In its place, we used a question concerning how Washington should respond to Chinese intervention in the Korean War. See American National Election Studies (ANES), "Questions Asked in ANES Surveys," 1950s and 1960s question file, http://www.electionstudies.org/resources/questions/questions.htm.

their toll on liberal internationalism. Although this interpretation is partly correct, the liberal internationalist compact started coming apart well before Bush took office. Indeed, by the 2000 elections, the bipartisan coalition behind liberal internationalism was already in serious disarray.

The roots of liberal internationalism's demise stretch back to the 1970s and the sharp ideological conflicts over foreign policy that emerged during the Vietnam War. While many Americans remained staunch proponents of the militarized containment of Soviet communism, many others began to charge that the United States had fallen prey to errant leadership, exaggerated threats, and the excessive use of U.S. power. High levels of defense spending and the extension of Cold War rivalry to the developing world no longer enjoyed

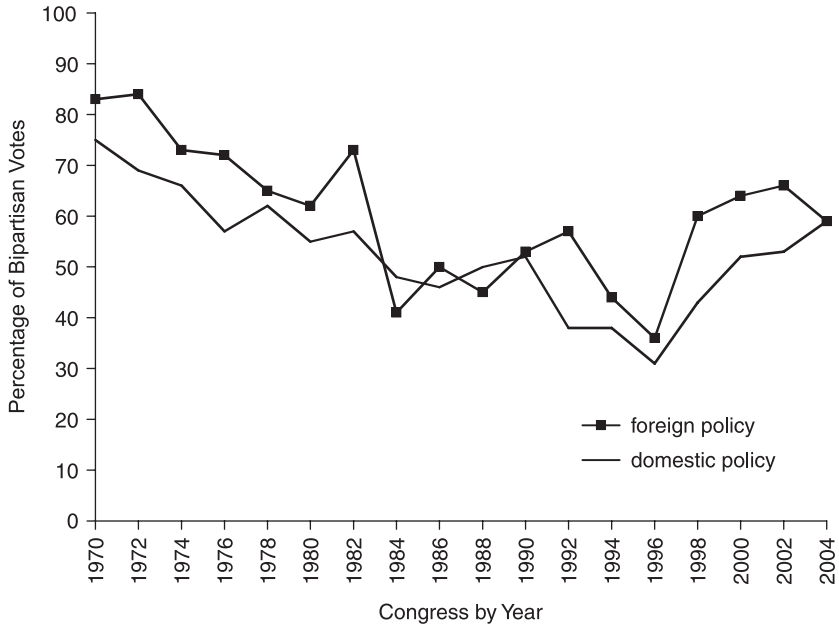
steady, bipartisan support. Most Republicans and Democrats continued to back peacetime military deployments in Western Europe and East Asia, and they stood behind an open international economy. But beginning in the 1970s, even these fundamental tenets of liberal internationalism were open to challenge on Capitol Hill. Lawmakers on the left tried to curb the use of U.S. military power, while their conservative counterparts looked for ways to reduce the nation's reliance on international institutions and multilateral diplomacy.[36]

The intensification of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry during the 1980s bolstered flagging support for the liberal internationalist compact. Liberal internationalism, however, never fully recovered from the political divides produced by the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights movement, and the duress caused by the economic downturn of the 1970s. As Figure 4 indicates, despite a temporary increase in the early Reagan years, bipartisanship over foreign policy never returned to the levels of the 1950s and 1960s. The incomplete restoration of bipartisanship in part reflected conflicting judgments about the gravity of the geopolitical risks posed by nuclear parity and the more assertive turn in Soviet foreign policy. But conditions at home had also changed: the Vietnam War left behind the scars of a divided nation; Ronald Reagan was a polarizing president; and the North-South alliance of the Roosevelt era was giving way to new tensions between the increasingly Republican South and the increasingly Democratic North.

The liberal internationalist compact, although it began to erode in the 1970s and was only partly repaired in the 1980s, did not meet its demise until the end of the Cold War. Partisan divisions over the 1991 Persian Gulf War were a harbinger of a widening foreign policy gap between Republicans and Democrats. Partisan differences arose as the war approached; the Senate authorized the use of military force to expel the Iraqi army from Kuwait by only a slim margin—52 to 47—with the vote breaking primarily along party lines. Nonetheless, the norms of liberal internationalism prevailed in terms of both the conduct of the war and public support for it. President George H.W. Bush sought and received the authorization of the UN Security Council "to use all necessary means . . . to restore international peace and security in the area."[37] More than 70 percent of the U.S. public supported Operation Desert Storm once it began—in part because the war enjoyed broad international backing. Almost forty nations contributed ground, sea, or air forces, with foreign countries committing some 200,000 personnel to the conflict. Coalition allies also

36. See Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest,* pp. 178–183; Fry, *Dixie Looks Abroad,* pp. 254–259; and Johnson, *Congress and the Cold War,* pp. 190–241.
37. For the text of the resolution, see http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/18076.pdf.

Figure 4. Bipartisanship in the U.S. Congress, 1970–2004



SOURCE: Adapted from Peter Trubowitz and Nicole Mellow, "Going Bipartisan: Politics by Other Means," *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. 120, No. 3 (Fall 2005), pp. 433–454.

made significant financial contributions, covering $54 billion of the total cost of $61 billion.

Bush, however, could not translate military success into either re-election or consensus. The partisan divisions that arose in the face of definitive victory in 1991 proved more lasting than the partisanship fueled by setbacks in Korea some forty years earlier. As Figure 4 shows, bipartisanship dropped significantly during the first half of the 1990s, reaching a post–World War II low in the 104th Congress (1996–97). As the Senate minority leader, Tom Daschle, noted in 1996, "The Cold War exerted a powerful hold on America, and it forced the parties to work together to advance American interests through bipartisan internationalism. . . . The tragedy is that such cooperation increasingly seems an artifact of the past."[38]

Democrats more regularly identified with one half of the liberal internationalist compact—partnership—while playing down the other—power. Bill

38. Tom Daschle, "The Water's Edge," *Foreign Policy,* No. 103 (Summer 1996), pp. 4–5.

Clinton's administration only hesitantly embraced the assertive use of the U.S. military. It promptly withdrew from Somalia in 1993 after U.S. personnel suffered fatalities. The Clinton White House also consistently sought to limit the risk to U.S. forces by relying primarily on air power when using force—as in the high-altitude bombing campaign used to drive Yugoslav forces from Kosovo in 1999. Meanwhile, international institutions and treaties fast became the stuff of partisan conflict, especially after the Republican Party captured control of Congress in 1994. The Clinton administration dragged its feet on the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto Protocol, but eventually supported U.S. participation in both. Congress, however, was not enthusiastic about either pact.[39] Clinton sent the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to the Senate, where Republicans promptly voted it down. He turned to multilateralism to bring peace to Kosovo, but the Republican-controlled House refused to pass a resolution endorsing the NATO campaign. Instead, Republicans claimed that the Clinton administration's penchant for multilateralism was compromising U.S. sovereignty. As John Bolton, who would become undersecretary of state and then UN ambassador in the George W. Bush administration, wrote toward the end of the Clinton administration, "globalists" were imposing "harm and costs to the United States . . . [by] belittling our popular sovereignty and constitutionalism, and restricting both our domestic and our international policy flexibility and power."[40]

If Clinton tilted toward international partnership, George W. Bush veered sharply toward military power. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld promised a "revolution" in the country's war-fighting capabilities and, especially after September 11, the Pentagon's budget soared.[41] With both the White House and the Congress in Republican hands, Bush gave multilateral cooperation and international institution building short shrift. Soon after entering office, Bush renounced the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, and the Antiballistic Missile Treaty. He declined offers of NATO involvement in the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan, and then went to war in Iraq without UN authorization and with only a handful of allies. Through much of his first term, Bush and his top advisers were openly dismissive of international institutions and multilateralism.

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39. See Charles A. Kupchan, *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), p. 216; and Philip H. Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, *Allies at War: America, Europe, and the Crisis over Iraq* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), pp. 31–45.
40. John R. Bolton, "Should We Take Global Governance Seriously?" *Chicago Journal of International Law,* Vol. 1, No. 2 (Fall 2000), p. 206.
41. In FY 2000, the U.S. defense budget was slightly more than $300 billion. By FY 2005, it had risen to slightly more than $500 billion.

President Bush's unilateralism exacerbated partisan tensions at home, as did his governing style. During the 2000 presidential campaign, Bush had promised to govern as "a uniter, not a divider."[42] Once in office, however, he consistently tacked away from the center, urged by his political advisers to exploit rather than repair partisan differences. His chief pollster had declared in a memo that the once vaunted center of U.S. electoral politics had collapsed and political strategies aimed at capturing it would backfire.[43] The underlying logic of the memo was that the most effective policies would be polarizing ones—those designed to mobilize the Republican Party's base.

Even after September 11, with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq creating a need for national unity, Bush subordinated consensus building to wedge politics. Whereas Franklin Roosevelt and his successors sought to foster bipartisanship in foreign policy, the Bush administration used foreign policy as a tool of partisan warfare, especially at election time. In the 2004 presidential election, Bush focused his campaign on the threat of terrorism, charging that the country would "invite disaster" if the Democrats were to win.[44] Vice President Richard Cheney pursued the same critique of the opposition, warning, "If we make the wrong choice [of candidates], then the danger is that we'll get hit again."[45] Following the election, the *Economist* concluded that "America is more bitterly divided than it has been for a generation."[46] The rhetoric continued in the 2006 midterm elections, with Bush insinuating that a Democratic victory would mean "the terrorists win and America loses."[47]

Despite the backdrop of September 11 and the wars that followed, partisanship in U.S. politics intensified. Instead of ushering in an era of revived political cooperation, the terrorist attacks produced only a brief upturn in bipartisanship. During the 108th Congress (2003–04), voting on foreign policy returned to the pre–September 11 pattern. And by the time the Democrats took back the House and Senate in the 2006 midterms, the gap had only widened. When the 110th Congress took its first votes on the Iraq War, only 17 of 201

42. George W. Bush, acceptance speech, Republican National Convention, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 3, 2000, in *Washington Post,* August 4, 2000.
43. Matthew Dowd wrote the memo for Bush's chief political adviser, Karl Rove. For an account of its impact on Bush's approach to governing, see Thomas B. Edsall, *Building Red America: The New Conservative Coalition and the Drive for Permanent Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), especially pp. 51–77.
44. Sheldon Alberts, "Candidates Address 'Security Moms': Bush Warns Kerry Would 'Invite Disaster,'" *Gazette* (Montreal), October 19, 2004.
45. Quoted in Mark Silva, "Cheney Back on the Campaign Trail as GOP's 'Attack Dog,'" *Chicago Tribune,* August 18, 2006.
46. "America's Angry Election," *Economist,* January 3, 2004, p. 7.
47. Michael Abramowitz, "Bush Says 'America Loses' under Democrats," *Washington Post,* October 30, 2006.

Republicans in the House joined the Democrats to oppose the surge of U.S. troops into Baghdad. In the Senate, only 2 Republicans joined the Democrats to approve a resolution calling for a timetable for withdrawal. In contrast, 95 percent of House and Senate Democrats voted to withdraw U.S. troops in 2008. According to one widely used index, Congress is more politically fractious and polarized today than at any time in the last 100 years.[48]

THE GEOPOLITICAL SOURCES OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM'S DECLINE

It is no accident that bipartisanship and liberal internationalism weakened as the Cold War faded into the past. The presence of a nuclear-armed competitor promoted strategic restraint, encouraged Washington to develop the rules and frameworks needed to sustain cooperation among the Western allies, and made it imperative for American officials to win support at home and abroad for U.S. leadership. Unipolarity provides a very different set of geopolitical and domestic incentives.[49] The absence of a counterpoise to the United States has left U.S. power unchecked. During the 1990s, unquestioned primacy and the sense of invulnerability that came with it weakened both sides of the compact between power and partnership. The U.S. defense budget shrank; absent the Soviet threat, the country could afford to lighten its load overseas and reap a peace dividend. Unipolarity also meant greater ambivalence toward multilateralism. The United States could now shirk off some of the constraining institutional obligations it had assumed amid the Cold War.

While unipolarity afforded the United States the geopolitical freedom that fueled neo-isolationist and unilateralist alternatives to liberal internationalism, it also weakened the perceived need for political discipline and bipartisan cooperation. The priority assigned to matters of national security declined, and public indifference to foreign policy increased, leaving politicians more free to expose foreign policy to partisan purpose.[50] During the Clinton years, important ambassadorial posts were left vacant because the Republicans refused to confirm the president's nominees. The Senate preferred to vote down the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty rather than let the White House withdraw it

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48. See http://www.voteview.com/.
49. For discussion of the impact of unipolarity and eroding norms of sovereignty on U.S. policy, see G. John Ikenberry, "Is American Multilateralism in Decline?" *Perspectives on Politics,* Vol. 1, No. 3 (September 2003), pp. 533–550; and G. John Ikenberry, "The Security Trap," *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas,* Vol. 1, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 8–19.
50. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Erosion of American National Interests," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 76, No. 5 (September/October 1997), pp. 28–49; James Schlesinger, "Fragmentation and Hubris: A Shaky Basis for American Leadership," *National Interest,* No. 49 (Fall 1997), pp. 3–10; and James M. Lindsay, "The New Apathy: How an Uninterested Public Is Reshaping Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 79, No. 5 (September/October 2000), pp. 2–8.

from consideration. As Republican Senator Chuck Hagel explained such obstructions, "What this is about on the Republican side is a deep dislike and distrust for President Clinton."[51] The public's diminishing interest in matters of state both fueled and was the product of elite indifference. Media coverage of foreign affairs plunged. The time allocated to international news by the main television networks fell by more than 65 percent between 1989 and 2000. The space devoted to international news in the mainstream print media experienced a similar decline.[52]

Even with the new sense of threat that emerged after September 11, unipolarity continued to favor unilateralism. The United States felt strong enough to deal with Islamic extremists on its own, turning down NATO's offer of help in Afghanistan and invading Iraq with only a few allies in tow. The Bush administration and many of its supporters judged traditional allies such as France and Germany as strategic impediments, their opposition to the Iraq War stemming from their desire to contain U.S. power.[53] The difficulties that the United States has since encountered in bringing stability to Afghanistan and Iraq have made clear that the Bush administration overestimated both the merits of unilateralism and the utility of superior military force. During his second term, President Bush has been more solicitous of allies and more willing to engage in multilateral diplomacy. During 2007 Washington concluded a deal with North Korea to close down its nuclear program and agreed to negotiate directly with Iran. But these moves represent tactical adjustments in the face of dwindling alternatives, not a return to bipartisanship or the liberal internationalist fold.

TERRORISM AND THE FALSE PROMISE OF UNITY. Many scholars expected the events of September 11 to restore Washington's enthusiasm for partnership at home and abroad.[54] And as we have shown above, in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, bipartisanship did increase. It dropped off again by 2003, however, with partisan differences emerging over a range of foreign policy matters, including the war in Iraq, the "global war on terrorism," and defense spending priorities. Underlying changes in the U.S. political

51. Quoted in Alison Mitchell, "Bush and the G.O.P. Congress," *New York Times,* May 19, 2000.
52. Tyndall Report, as cited in David Shaw, "Foreign News Shrinks in an Era of Globalization," *Los Angeles Times,* September 27, 2001; and Hall's Magazine Editorial Reports, cited in James F. Hoge Jr., "Foreign News: Who Gives a Damn?" *Columbia Journalism Review,* Vol. 36, No. 4 (November/December 1997), pp. 48–52.
53. See, for example, Walter Russell Mead, *Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), pp. 120–125. See also Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).
54. See, for example, Francis Fukuyama, "The United State," *Financial Times,* September 15–16, 2001; G. John Ikenberry, "American Grand Strategy in the Age of Terror," *Survival,* Vol. 43, No. 4 (Winter 2001–02), pp. 19–34; and Moisés Naím, "Even a Hegemon Needs Friends and Allies," *Financial Times,* September 14, 2001.

landscape, which we detail below, were the most potent impediments to the durable reconstitution of a bipartisan center. But the nature of the new threat—Islamic extremism and transnational terrorism rather than Soviet communism and interstate war—also stood in the way of the return of the liberal internationalist compact after September 11.

Unlike the threat posed by an expansionist power, the threat posed by international terrorism is sporadic and elusive. The most effective countermeasures include law enforcement, intelligence gathering, and covert operations—activities that entail bureaucratic coordination, but not national mobilization. The greatest successes are nonevents that go unreported: terrorist attacks that are averted or never planned. The country is ostensibly at war, but Americans are not being asked to head to recruiting stations or man production lines. The nation is not collectively involved in the struggle as it was during World War II or the Cold War. In these respects, the fight against terrorism does not readily inspire a sense of shared national purpose and sacrifice.

Terrorism has encouraged multilateralism, but only on a limited number of policy items—such as sharing intelligence, cooperating on law enforcement, and freezing the terrorists' sources of financial support. On the central question of military response, terrorism, unlike Soviet expansionism, has tended to provoke unilateral retaliation rather than new institutions, multilateral diplomacy, or joint military action. The United States chose to be largely on its own when it invaded Afghanistan and Iraq. Israel has faced terror strikes on its territory for decades, but it has been alone when it responds. The same is true for Britain and its struggle against the Irish Republican Army, and for France and its fight against terrorists from North Africa and the Middle East.[55] This pattern of unilateral response arises from the military requirements of counterterrorist operations. Missions against terrorist networks usually entail special operations and covert action, both of which demand unity of command and close-hold planning.

Historical precedents also suggest that the threat of Islamic extremism may over time lead Americans to raise protective barriers at home, rather than to project military power abroad or reinforce multilateral institutions. Terrorism, after all, helped convince Britain and France to retreat from the Middle East and other areas where they were not welcome. And prior to September 11, it is notable that the United States generally reacted to terrorist attacks on its overseas assets by pulling them out—as in Beirut in 1983, Somalia in 1993, and Yemen in 2000.[56] In the aftermath of the chaos and violence that have wracked

55. Kupchan, *The End of the American Era,* p. 222.
56. Ibid., pp. 223–230.

Afghanistan and Iraq since the U.S. invasions, Americans may conclude that the best way to guarantee security at home is by cordoning the country off from trouble in the Middle East. Most of the countries that joined the U.S.-led effort to bring stability to Iraq have already withdrawn their troops. It is not inconceivable that the NATO-led coalition in Afghanistan will similarly unravel in the face of mounting casualties and insufficient progress in bringing stability to the country.

GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. Some scholars argue that a different aspect of the international setting—globalization—provides strong incentives for Democrats and Republicans alike to return to liberal internationalism. According to John Ikenberry, "As global economic interdependence grows, so does the need for multilateral coordination of policies."[57] Combating climate change, advancing global health, and preventing genocide are other challenges that provide Washington good reason to pursue programmatic collaboration with like-minded states. As the Princeton Project on National Security concludes, the United States should create "institutions and partnerships that give liberal democracies the collective capacities to protect themselves and solve common problems, both within and alongside existing international institutions."[58]

It is the case that interdependence and the growth resulting from foreign trade and investment have helped sustain the United States' enthusiasm for economic openness and its support for multilateral trade and investment regimes. Globalization is no guarantee of greater international cooperation, however. Indeed, as the protectionism and economic nationalism of the interwar period made clear, interdependence can have the opposite effect amid sharp downturns in the international economy. In the United States, the dislocations associated with outsourcing, current account and budget deficits, and higher oil prices are already strengthening protectionist impulses across the political spectrum.[59] As for global warming, the United States opted out of the Kyoto Protocol, the main multilateral regime erected to contain the emission of greenhouse gases. And even if Washington signs on to the successor framework to the Kyoto Protocol, collaborative efforts to cut emissions—or, for that matter, find an AIDS vaccine—would not constitute the programmatic in-

57. Ikenberry, "Is American Multilateralism in Decline?" p. 540.
58. Ikenberry and Slaughter, *Forging a World of Liberty under Law,* p. 59.
59. Enthusiasm for free trade appears to have dampened significantly since the Democrats took control of Congress in the 2006 elections. See David J. Lynch, "Election Pushes Globalization to the Forefront," *USA Today,* November 14, 2006; Kenneth F. Scheve and Matthew J. Slaughter, "A New Deal for Globalization," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 86, No. 4 (July/August 2007), pp. 34–47; and Alan S. Blinder, "Free Trade's Great, but Offshoring Rattles Me," *Washington Post,* May 6, 2007.

vestment in institution building that is central to the liberal internationalist agenda.

On the military front, Washington has been forthright in assessing the severity of crises in the developing world. But such assessments did not translate into forceful efforts to stop the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, nor have they halted the killing in Darfur today. In these cases, U.S. interests have not been sufficiently salient to drive either the generous deployment of U.S. power or the fashioning of effective partnerships. And even if a combination of U.S. power and multilateral leadership would provide the optimal response to such challenges, many domestic obstacles stand in the way of the liberal internationalist compact.

THE DOMESTIC SOURCES OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM'S DECLINE

As with the rise of liberal internationalism, its demise was the product of domestic as well as international circumstances. Indeed, when historians look back on this period, they may well judge domestic developments as more decisive than geopolitical ones in explaining liberal internationalism's demise. Important shifts inside the United States—shifts that began before the collapse of the Soviet empire—have weakened the bipartisan foundations of liberal internationalism and politicized the making of U.S. foreign policy.

THE RETURN OF REGIONAL DIVIDES. The United States is today experiencing the return of important regional divides; partisan differences are again running along regional lines, making it more difficult to sustain a centrist coalition.[60] The most significant development in regional alignments has been the shift of the South into the Republicans' electoral column. Once the core of the Democratic Party, the South is now the Republican Party's main regional power base. At the end of World War II, the Democrats "owned" virtually every southern seat in Congress. In the 1970s and 1980s, Republicans made significant gains in the South. By the mid-1990s, they had captured a majority of the South's congressional seats, and their hold on the region has only strengthened since.[61]

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60. There is a large and growing literature on this topic. See, for example, Earl Black and Merle Black, *Divided America: The Ferocious Power Struggle in American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007); Gary C. Jacobson, "Polarized Politics and the 2004 Congressional and Presidential Elections," *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. 120, No. 2 (Summer 2005), pp. 199–218; and Robert S. Erikson, Gerald C. Wright, and John P. McIver, "Public Opinion in the States: A Quarter Century of Change and Stability," in Jeffrey E. Cohen, ed., *Public Opinion in State Politics* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 229–253.

61. See Earl Black and Merle Black, *Politics and Society in the South* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); and Martin P. Wattenberg, "The Building of a Republican Regional Base in the South: The Elephant Crosses the Mason-Dixon Line," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* Vol. 55, No. 3 (Autumn 1991), pp. 424–431.

The Republican drive into Dixie was actually part of a two-pronged "southern strategy" aimed at the West as well as the South.[62] The strategy was effective. By the time of Bush's run for the presidency in 2000, the party had a virtual lock on the geographic zone that Republican political strategists called the "Big L"—the states stretching from Montana south to Arizona and east to Georgia. Moderate "Rockefeller" Republicans from the Northeast have all but disappeared from the party caucus, paving the way for a conservative takeover. Meanwhile, Democrats in Congress increasingly hail from liberal states in the Northeast and along the Pacific Coast. The states of New England, whose congressional delegations used to be heterogeneous in their partisan composition, have become a Democratic bastion. As conservative Democrats in the South have gradually lost their seats to Republicans, the Democratic caucus has moved farther to the left.

These regional realignments pose formidable obstacles to bipartisanship. From the 1950s to the 1980s, the delegations that states sent to Congress were heterogeneous in their partisan makeup. So were the regional coalitions that formed on Capitol Hill on foreign policy matters. In the last twenty years, congressional delegations have become more politically homogeneous, making it more difficult to build coalitions that cut across partisan and regional divides.

Economic trends have expedited a divergence of interest and outlook across regions and have reinforced the efforts of both parties to secure territorial strongholds. Even before the Berlin Wall came down, higher tax rates, labor costs, and energy prices in the Northeast and Midwest made it harder for elected officials from states in those regions to find common ground on foreign and domestic policy with lawmakers from the South and Mountain West, who had competing economic concerns. The uneven effects of globalization during the 1990s exacerbated regional economic disparities and tensions.[63] The outsourcing of U.S. jobs hit the aging industrial centers of the North especially hard. Well-paying, unionized jobs in manufacturing were the first to be lost as production lines were moved abroad and cheap imports arrived from low-wage economies. Once the leading edge of liberal internationalism, the Northeast and Midwest have been at the forefront of recent efforts to rein in

62. On these developments, see Nicole E. Mellow, "A House Divided: Regional Conflicts, Coalitions, and Partisanship in Postwar America," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2003, pp. 25–27. Kevin P. Phillips coined the term "southern strategy." See Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1970).

63. See Helzi Noponen, Julie Graham, and Ann K. Markusen, eds., *Trading Industries, Trading Regions* (New York: Guilford, 1993); and Peter Eisinger and Charles Smith, "Globalization and Metropolitan Well-Being in the United States," *Social Science Quarterly,* Vol. 81, No. 2 (June 2000), pp. 634–644.

the United States' commitment to free trade.[64] Winning support on Capitol Hill for the liberalization of foreign trade now depends on the backing of congressional delegations from Red states in the South and Mountain West.

The South and the West have also provided the surest support for foreign policies that put a premium on military power. Some analysts attribute these regional differences to strategic subcultures: southerners are said to be more nationalistic and less willing to accept the constraints on national autonomy that accompany institutionalized multilateralism.[65] Whatever the merits of such claims, changes in the economic and political geography of military spending and production have made it harder for politicians from different parts of the country to agree on national security policy.[66] Since the 1970s, Pentagon spending on military procurement and research and development has benefited the South and West at the expense of the Northeast and Midwest, contributing to the decline of the manufacturing sector in the North.[67] In addition, Southern and Western states that make up the so-called gunbelt have consistently received a larger share of the resources spent on military bases and personnel.

Demographic developments have also contributed to partisan and regional cleavages. Recent immigration and population movements inside the United States have combined to produce a more politically balkanized country—what demographer William Frey calls the "two Americas."[68] One America is multi-

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64. See Gordon L. Clark, "NAFTA—Clinton's Victory, Organized Labor's Loss," *Political Geography,* Vol. 13, No. 4 (July 1994), pp. 377–384; and Wendy J. Schiller, "Trade Politics in the American Congress: A Study of the Interaction of Political Geography and Interest Group Behavior," *Political Geography,* Vol. 18, No. 7 (September 1999), pp. 769–789.

65. See, for example, Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), chap. 3. On the United States' strategic subcultures, see Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001); and Henry R. Nau, *At Home Abroad: Identity and Power in American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002).

66. See Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest,* pp. 219–232.

67. Ann Markusen, Peter Hall, Scott Campbell, and Sabina Dietrich, *The Rise of the Gunbelt: The Military Remapping of Industrial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Gregory Hooks, "Military and Civilian Dimensions of America's Regional Policy, 1972–1994," *Armed Forces and Society,* Vol. 29, No. 2 (Winter 2003), pp. 227–251; and Benjamin O. Fordham, "Paying for World Power: The Costs and Benefits of Postwar American Military Spending," in Andrew J. Bacevich, ed., *The Long War: A New History of U.S. National Security Policy since World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

68. See William H. Frey, "Metropolitan Magnets for Domestic and International Migration" (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, October 2003). Other analysts suggest that the digital economy is contributing to this process of balkanization by detaching workplace from geography, enabling Americans to make decisions about where they live based on lifestyle, values, and political orientation. See Joel Kotkin, *The New Geography: How the Digital Revolution Is Reshaping the American Landscape* (New York: Random House, 2000).

racial and multiethnic. It is based in the metropolitan areas along the East and West coasts and in the Great Lakes region, the preferred destinations for many immigrants making their way to U.S. shores from less developed regions of the world. These communities are largely liberal and Democratic. The other America, largely white and from working- or middle-class backgrounds, is also on the move, leaving the multiracial urban centers of the rustbelt and heading to the growing sunbelt economies of the South and Mountain West, where electoral reapportionment magnifies their political weight. These communities are growing more conservative and Republican. As each of the "two Americas" becomes more homogeneous, the political gap between them widens, adding to the impediments facing bipartisan cooperation.

MODERATES: A DWINDLING BREED. During the 1950s, authoritative voices complained that the absence of substantive differences between the two main political parties was leaving the United States without adequate deliberation and choice. At present, the prevalent worry is that Democrats and Republicans share little, if any, common ground on the main domestic and foreign policy issues of the day, leaving the country divided and adrift. The Council on Foreign Relations saw fit to issue a report calling for urgent efforts to rebuild a bipartisan consensus on foreign policy.[69] A group of foreign policy luminaries from both parties founded the Partnership for a Secure America with the primary aim of "recreating the bipartisan center in American national security and foreign policy."[70] Congress mandated the formation of the Iraq Study Group to forge a policy on Iraq that might enjoy support from both sides of the aisle. As one of the co-chairs, James Baker, commented after presenting the group's final report to President Bush, "This is the only bipartisan report that's going to be out there."[71]

The concerns of these groups and others like them are entirely justified; the political center in the United States has effectively collapsed. Conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans are a dying breed. The gap between the parties has widened; both are veering away from the ideological commonalities upon which the bipartisan center was based during the Cold War.[72] Many

69. Roman, "Both Sides of the Aisle."
70. For a description of the organization and a list of its founding members, see http://www.psaonline.org.
71. Quoted in Jim Lehrer, "Baker, Hamilton Discuss 'New Way Forward' Proposal for Iraq," Online Newshour, December 6, 2006, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/july-dec06/bakerhamilton_12-06.html.
72. See Barbara Sinclair, *Party Wars: Polarization and the Politics of National Policy Making* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006); Richard Fleisher and John R. Bond, "The Shrinking Middle in the U.S. Congress," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (July 2004), pp. 429–451; and Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Off Center: The Republican Revolution and the Erosion of American Democracy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005).

of the most conservative Democrats in Congress used to be more conservative than the most liberal Republicans. But this overlap has all but disappeared, making it harder to fashion the pragmatic compromises that long sustained liberal internationalism.[73] As Figure 5 makes clear, the collapse of the moderates began before the end of the Cold War, but it accelerated in the 1990s, driven by the Republican takeover of Congress and the leadership of House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Not since the 1920s have so few lawmakers consistently identified themselves with the political center. Pragmatism, so vital to liberal internationalism, has given way to ideological extremism.

The Red versus Blue divide both reflects and accelerates this erosion of ideological centrism. As Red America becomes more conservative and Blue America more liberal, the parties that represent these two regions grow further apart ideologically. Congressional redistricting has made matters worse by creating many more safe seats than there were in the past. Partisan gerrymandering is nothing new; parties have long used it to try to lock up competitive or swing districts. But gerrymandering has turned into a regularized mechanism for protecting the incumbent party, thereby encouraging ideological conformity and party-line voting while discouraging bipartisan cooperation. When constituencies tilt heavily toward one party, candidates have little reason to adopt centrist positions to appeal to swing voters and independents.[74] Once lawmakers are in office, the relatively homogeneous makeup of their electoral base gives them few incentives to reach out across the aisle. Redistricting has thus diminished the political demand for and the payoffs of bipartisanship.[75]

The sharpening of socioeconomic cleavages is contributing to the ideological polarization that increasingly finds expression in partisan competition.[76] For many Americans, wages have not kept pace with inflation. U.S. workers historically received roughly three-quarters of corporate income, but since 2001 they have received only one-quarter of the increase in corporate income.[77] The rich have been getting richer, while the working class has been losing ground. Pressure from Americans disadvantaged by globalization has been one of the

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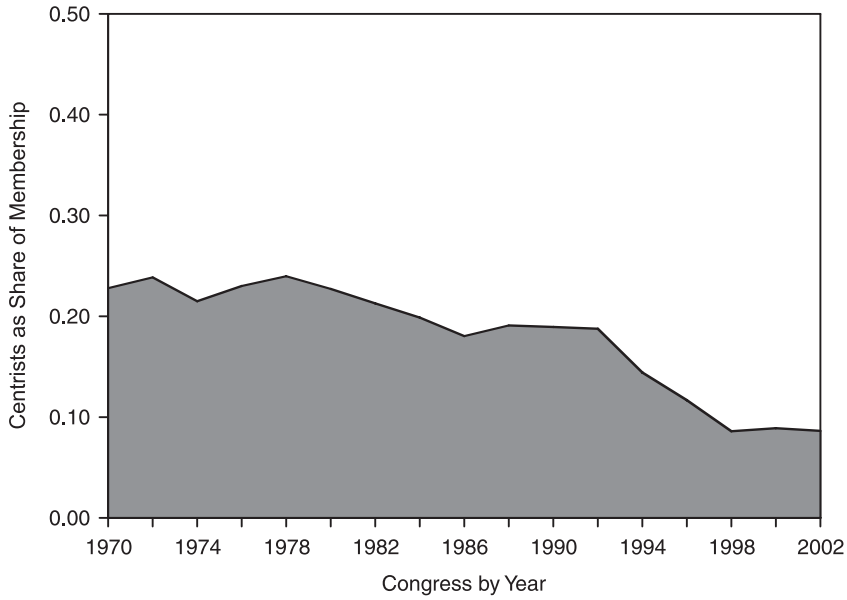
73. See Jeffrey M. Stonecash, Mark D. Brewer, and Mack D. Mariani, *Diverging Parties: Social Change, Realignment, and Party Polarization* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 2003); and Sean M. Theriault, "Party Polarization in the U.S. Congress: Member Replacement and Member Adaptation," *Party Politics,* Vol. 12, No. 4 (July 2006), pp. 483–503.
74. See David W. Rohde, *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
75. On the impact of single-interest lobby groups and their deep-pocketed donors, see Hacker and Pierson, *Off Center.*
76. See Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006).
77. Lawrence Summers, "Only Fairness Will Assuage the Anxious Middle," *Financial Times,* December 10, 2006.

Figure 5. "Moderate Bloc" in the U.S. Congress, 1970–2002



SOURCE: Calculated from Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal nominate score data, http://voteview.uh.edu/.

reasons some Democratic lawmakers have been backing away from support for free trade, breaking with the Republicans on this issue and undermining one of the last remaining policy planks of the liberal internationalist compact. Indeed, during the summer of 2007 Congress stripped the White House of "fast track" authority over trade, hampering the administration's ability to secure new free trade agreements. Just as the post–World War II boom eased ideological differences that soothed ideological clashes over socioeconomic issues, the inequities of globalization are bringing them back to life.[78]

Generational change is expediting the hollowing out of the center. The World War II generation is fast retiring from political life, denying Congress the working, bipartisan relationships built up over several decades of public service. In 1977 more than 75 percent of members had Congress had served in the military. In the 109th Congress (2005–06), veterans made up approximately

78. See I.M. Destler, *American Trade Politics,* 3d ed. (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1995); and James Shoch, *Trading Blows: Party Competition and U.S. Trade Policy in a Globalizing Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

30 percent of the Senate and 25 percent of the House.[79] Close to 90 percent of the House was elected in 1988 or thereafter; these representatives will not have experienced firsthand the bipartisan consensus building and political discipline that accompanied the Cold War.[80] A common refrain in the 1990s, especially after the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994, was that newer members of Congress were less inclined than their predecessors to abide by bipartisan norms and practices.[81]

The polarization of party politics is also increasingly evident in the public's views of foreign policy. To be sure, the United States' broad engagement in global affairs continues to enjoy substantial support among the public.[82] Like their elected representatives in Washington, however, voters often sharply disagree about the character of that engagement. One recent study of public attitudes toward foreign policy reports "an enormous change" to "an American politics that has not only become more divided in partisan and ideological terms on domestic issues but also in the foreign policy arena."[83] Foreign policy issues that have divided the country's political class for some time are now roiling mass opinion as well.[84]

Republican voters are, for example, far more willing to invest in military power than Democrats. And as Figure 6 indicates, this gap is widening, having more than doubled since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Conflicting funding priorities—guns versus butter—are a part of the explanation. Partisan polar-

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79. Andrea Stone, "For a Few in Congress, War Is a Family Concern," *USA Today,* December 6, 2004; and Congressional Research Service, "Membership of the 109th Congress: A Profile," http://www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/RS22007.pdf. See also Busby and Monten, "Without Heirs," p. 39.

80. Norman J. Ornstein, Thomas E. Mann, and Michael J. Malbin, "Vital Statistics on Congress, 2005–2006," book manuscript.

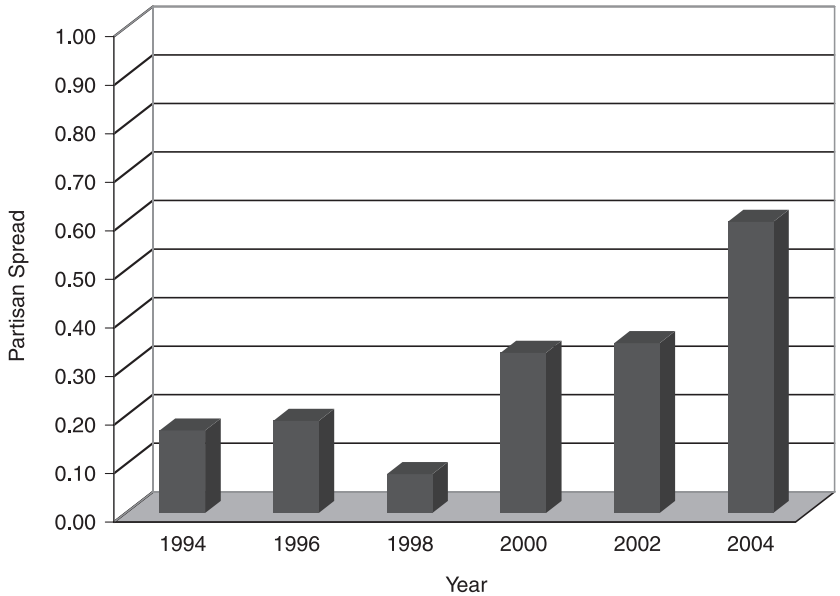
81. Nancy Roman suggests that compressed schedules and the scarcity of time have played a role in denying newer lawmakers the opportunity to interact with members of the opposing party. See Roman, "Both Sides of the Aisle," pp. 42–44.

82. On public support for international engagement, see Benjamin I. Page and Marshall M. Bouton, *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders but Don't Get* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); and Steven Kull and I.M. Destler, *Misreading the Public: The Myth of a New Isolationism* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1999).

83. Robert Y. Shapiro and Yaeli Block-Elkon, "Political Polarization and the Rational Public," in Morton H. Halperin, Jeffrey Laurenti, Peter Rundlet, and Spencer P. Boyer, eds., *Power and Superpower: Global Leadership and Exceptionalism in the 21st Century* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2007), p. 66.

84. The media also appear to be contributing to polarization among the public through a sharp increase in partisan and confrontational broadcasts. See Dan Bernhardt, Stefan Krasa, and Mattias Polborn, "Political Polarization and the Electoral Effects of Media Bias," CESifo Working Paper, No. 1798 (Munich: CESifo Group, September 2006), http://www.SSRN.com/abstract?935017; and William G. Mayer, "Why Talk Radio Is Conservative," *Public Interest,* No. 156 (Summer 2004), pp. 86–103. For surveys on the impact of media on polarization, see Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "News Audiences Increasingly Politicized: Online News Audiences Larger, More Diverse," June 8, 2004, http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID?215.

Figure 6. Polarization in the U.S. Electorate over Defense Spending, 1994–2004



SOURCE: National Election Studies survey data, http://www.electionstudies.org.
NOTE: This figure is based on questions from various National Election Study (NES) surveys asking respondents about their views of defense spending: 1994 (V940929); 1996 (V960463); 1998 (V980485); 2000 (V000581); 2002 (V025114x); and 2004 (V043142). Respondents were asked to place themselves on a seven-point scale, with 1 indicating a strong preference for decreasing defense spending and 7 indicating a strong preference for increasing military spending. The partisan spread refers to the mean party difference: the greater it is, the farther apart Republican and Democratic voters were on the question posed in the NES study. In 2002 NES used a three-point scale. In 1998 NES did not ask a question dealing directly with military spending. In this case, we used a question concerning how willing the United States should be to use military force. See ANES, "Questions Asked in ANES Surveys," 1990s and 2000s question files, http://www.electionstudies.org/resources/questions/questions.htm.

ization over Pentagon spending, however, is also driven by diverging public judgments about the relative efficacy of military power versus diplomacy. Republicans in increasing numbers favor military strength over diplomacy as the best way to ensure security, while Democrats are moving in the opposite direction. In 1999, 46 percent of Republicans saw diplomacy as the better option. In contrast, 60 percent of Democrats favored diplomacy. This partisan gap has widened as a result of the Iraq War and the war on terrorism.[85] In the 2004

85. See Gary C. Jacobson, *A Divider, Not a Uniter: George W. Bush and the American People* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), pp. 222–236.

presidential elections, 66 percent of Bush voters backed military force as the best way to defeat terrorism compared with 17 percent of Kerry voters. Among Kerry voters, 76 percent felt that excessive use of force creates anti-American sentiment and encourages terrorism, with only 25 percent of Bush voters supporting that position.[86] According to an August 2007 poll, after four years of the United States occupying Iraq, only 14 percent of Republicans opposed the war, compared with more than 93 percent of Democrats.[87] This growing public divide does not augur well for grand strategies that seek to combine the use of U.S. military force with the building of multilateral institutions.

Course Correction

Many observers view the foreign policy of the Bush presidency as an aberration that will be rectified by a change of personnel in the White House. Once Bush has stepped down, the bipartisan center can be reconstituted and liberal internationalism reinstated. This vision may be comforting, but it is illusory.[88] The United States long embraced the liberal internationalist compact between military power and institutionalized partnership, but this compact has now come undone.

To be sure, the midterm elections of 2006 constituted a repudiation of Bush's foreign policy, and of the war in Iraq in particular. But Democratic control of Congress has not translated into renewed bipartisanship. Republican moderates fared poorly in the November election; the party's congressional delegation, shorn of its centrists, has only moved further to the right. As the *Washington Post* noted, "The Democrats' victory in the midterm election accelerates a three-decade-old pattern of declining moderate influence and rising conservative dominance in the Republican Party. By one measure, the GOP is more ideologically homogeneous now than it has been in modern history."[89] Meanwhile, the more liberal wing of the Democratic Party has been asserting its grassroots strength.[90] Party leaders have been pushed to the left by increas-

86. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "Politics and Values in a 51%–48% Nation: National Security More Linked with Partisan Affiliation," January 24, 2005, http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID?236.
87. Zogby International, "UPI/Zogby Poll: 54% Lack Confidence in Bush's Ability as Commander in Chief," August 1, 2007, http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.dbm?ID=1343.
88. For a sober assessment of the challenges of making foreign policy in the post-Bush era, see Robert Jervis, *American Foreign Policy in a New Era* (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 103–138.
89. Zachary A. Goldfarb, "Democratic Wave in Congress Further Erodes Moderation in GOP," *Washington Post,* December 7, 2006.
90. Michael Luo, "Antiwar Groups Use New Clout to Influence Democrats on Iraq," *New York Times,* May 6, 2007.

ingly powerful party activists—as made clear by the willingness of presidential hopefuls Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama to tie funding for the Iraq War to a deadline for withdrawal. There is little ideological affinity between the Democratic leadership and its Republican counterpart. As the 2008 presidential election draws near, partisan warfare will only intensify. In neither spirit nor substance is there a bipartisan foundation for the return of liberal internationalism.

Over the longer term, the regional and ideological cleavages that have stoked polarization are poised to grow worse; the Red-Blue divide, the income inequalities driven by globalization, and the ideological homogenization of the parties can all be expected to intensify. Indeed, it is conceivable that politics in the United States may be returning to the deeply etched landscape of the pre–World War II era, when domestic stalemate, inconstancy, and detachment prevailed over both power and partnership.[91] To be sure, candidates calling for the United States to rein in its overseas commitments—such as Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nader—have not fared well in recent elections. But in light of U.S. troubles in Afghanistan and Iraq, the widening gap between rich and poor, and stagnant real wages and rising costs for working families, it is easy to imagine that support for strategic disengagement might grow.

Indeed, surveys indicate that the electorate is already moving in that direction. In 1972, in the midst of impassioned domestic opposition to the Vietnam War, only 36 percent of Americans thought the United States should mind its own business internationally and focus on the home front. Today, 52 percent of Americans hold that view.[92] The inward turn is particularly pronounced among younger Americans; 72 percent of those aged 18 to 24 do not believe that the United States should take the lead in solving global crises.[93] And although many Republicans have remained loyal to the White House on the Iraq War, most Democrats have backed a speedy withdrawal, well aware that a substantial majority of the electorate is running out of patience.

For now, the most likely outcome is continued partisan wrangling rather than a sharp neo-isolationist turn. But party and ideology have become deeply intertwined, and both have become more rooted in salient regional differences. These trends put Democrats and Republicans on divergent courses. The

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91. Jeffry A. Frieden, "Sectoral Conflict and U.S. Foreign Economic Policy, 1914–1940," *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Winter 1988), pp. 59–90; and Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).
92. CBS News, "Poll: Iraq Going Badly and Getting Worse," *CBS News.com*, December 11, 2006, http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/12/11/opinion/polls/main2247797.shtml.
93. Paul Starobin, "Beyond Hegemony," *National Journal*, December 1, 2006, http://nationaljournal.com/about/njweekly/stories/2006/1201nj1.htm.

Democrats, the party that once took the lead in embracing both assertive military engagement abroad and international institution building, have increasingly favored partnership over power. Declining Democratic support for using military force to solve international problems is one barometer of the change.[94] This shift in the preferences of Democrats is not uniform; there are Democratic lawmakers and policy intellectuals who remain committed to Franklin Roosevelt's liberal internationalist formula, but far fewer than during the Cold War.[95]

Meanwhile, the Republicans emphasize military power at the expense of multilateralism. There is little enthusiasm among the Republican leadership for international institutions that they view as encroachments on U.S. sovereignty and unnecessary constraints on Washington's freedom of action. The Bush administration's 2002 National Security Strategy, which emphasized "primacy" and "preemption" and accorded little weight to multilateralism, was symptomatic of this shift in the party's foreign policy orientation. In the wake of the failure in Iraq, it is likely that Republican office seekers will increasingly distance themselves from the excesses of the Bush administration's foreign policy.[96] Such maneuvering, however, is unlikely to lead the party back to a sustained embrace of multilateralism.

Under these political circumstances, efforts to rebuild the liberal internationalist center are unlikely to bear fruit. The United States' deepening polarization means that its leaders can no longer confidently expect to win strong, bipartisan support for the ambitious mix of power and partnership of the Cold War era. A failure to acknowledge that conditions are no longer conducive to liberal internationalism will only strengthen the hands of more extreme voices

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94. On changing attitudes toward military power, see Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "Politics and Values in a 51%–48% Nation." See also James Q. Wilson, "How Divided Are We?" *Commentary*, Vol. 121, No. 2 (February 2006), pp. 15–21; and Benjamin O. Fordham, "Another Look at 'Parties, Voters, and the Use of Force Abroad,'" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (August 2002), pp. 572–596.

95. One of the more hawkish Democratic lawmakers, Senator Joseph Lieberman, was defeated in the 2006 Democratic primary in Connecticut mainly because of his support for the Iraq War. He retained his seat only by running as an Independent. A more conservative wing within the Democratic Party argues that the party must embrace the assertive use of U.S. power and make the war on terrorism their own. See, for example, Peter Beinart, *The Good Fight: Why Liberals, and Only Liberals, Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006); Will Marshall, ed., *With All Our Might: A Progressive Strategy for Defeating Jihadism and Defending Liberty* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006); and Campbell and O'Hanlon, *Hard Power.*

96. Although still at the margins of the Republican Party, its isolationist wing is making a comeback of sorts. See, for example, Rich Lowry, "The 'To Hell with Them' Hawks: And What's Wrong with Them," *National Review*, Vol. 58, No. 5 (March 27, 2006), pp. 38–42; Michael Abramowitz, "Conservative Anger Grows over Bush's Foreign Policy," *Washington Post*, July 19, 2006; and Joshua Kurlantzick, "After the Bush Doctrine: The Fight for Republican Foreign Policy," *New Republic*, February 13, 2006, pp. 19–23.

on the left and the right. To maintain indefinitely a substantial U.S. military presence in Iraq would ultimately heighten the appeal of those arguing for a precipitous retreat, just as efforts to bind the United States to a raft of new multilateral institutions would elevate the voice of unilateralists. The security and welfare of the United States require its continued engagement in global affairs, but trying to resurrect the liberal internationalist consensus to achieve that goal is a prescription for failure.

A wiser course for the United States to pursue is a more discriminating and selective strategy that demands less power and less partnership. Such a strategy would be based on the following principles.[97] Rather than seeking to extend the current range of its global commitments in the absence of domestic support, Washington would encourage others to assume a larger geopolitical role. This approach means supporting a European Union that can shoulder greater defense burdens. It entails welcoming, not resisting, China's and India's rise to great power status. It also involves building up regional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the African Union, so that they can help fill the gap as the United States reduces its geopolitical footprint. The United States would by no means withdraw its forward presence in the strategically important regions of Northeast Asia and the Middle East. But it would shrink the size of its deployments and, especially in the Middle East, gradually move to an offshore posture.

U.S. leaders should also view international partnerships more pragmatically. In an era of partisan polarization, it is difficult to win congressional approval of international pacts and institutions—as Woodrow Wilson's defeat over the League of Nations made clear. Today, proposals for building grand alliances of democracies and new mechanisms of global governance are likely to find scant domestic support. If the United States is to remain a team player in world politics, and immunize itself against a destructive clash with the many nations still supporting institutionalized multilateralism, presidents will have to rely more on pragmatic partnerships, flexible concerts, and task-specific coalitions. Informal groupings—such as the "contact group" for the Balkans, the quartet in the Middle East, and the EU-3/U.S. coalition seeking to contain Iran's nuclear program—are fast becoming the most effective vehicles for diplomacy. The United States' foreign policy must be brought into line with its domestic politics. Selective engagement is best suited to a polarized America.[98]

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97. For a more detailed discussion of this policy agenda, see Kupchan and Trubowitz, "Grand Strategy for a Divided America," pp. 79–83.
98. Our case for retrenchment rests heavily on our arguments about the United States' changing

A strategy of judicious retrenchment may not be the preferred course of neoconservative Republicans or hawkish Democrats, but it has the political advantage of being less objectionable than the alternatives. Liberal Democrats are more apt to favor retrenchment over strategies that put a premium on the projection of U.S. military power; conservative Republicans can be expected to prefer it to strategies that substitute institutionalized international partnerships for national strength. Indeed, the same opinion polls that indicate that the United States' appetite for international engagement is diminishing reveal that the inward turn is affecting Republicans and Democrats alike. We are under no illusions; a more discriminating grand strategy will not put an end to partisan differences over foreign policy. But judicious retrenchment does promise to ease the political gridlock on Capitol Hill that would ensue should either party attempt to rebuild the liberal internationalist compact.

A more discriminating grand strategy also holds out the promise of cross-regional appeal. For different reasons, the urban Northeast, the Pacific Coast, and, increasingly, the Deep South have a stake in a smaller overseas presence. Politicians from the Northeast and the Pacific Coast worry about the "opportunity costs" a strategy of primacy imposes on health care, education, and other domestic priorities. Elected officials in the South measure the costs differently—in terms of the wear and tear on military personnel and their families, a disproportionate share of whom hail from the South. The sacrifices of the region's populace in Afghanistan and Iraq are taking a discernible toll: southern support for projecting U.S. power is declining faster than the national average.[99]

It is far better for the United States to arrive at a more selective grand strategy that enjoys broad domestic support than to continue drifting toward an intractable polarization that is a recipe for political stalemate at home and failed leadership abroad. The country embraced Franklin Roosevelt's liberal internationalism in no small part because its appeal cut across regional and partisan lines. Successful statecraft still depends on forming domestic alliances that

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domestic landscape, but other compelling geopolitical reasons for such a strategy also exist, including redressing the country's military and economic overstretch; ameliorating the recent rise in anti-U.S. sentiment; and adjusting to the ascent of China, India, and other rising powers. On the geopolitical case for retrenchment, see Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001); Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006); Robert Art, *America's Grand Strategy and World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2007); and Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).

99. For southern views of the war in Iraq, see Institute for Southern Studies, "The South and Iraq: Institute Poll—Opposition to Iraq War Growing in the South," October 2006, http://southernstudies.org/2006/10/south-and-iraq.asp.

bridge political divides, but today's United States is different from Roosevelt's. A strategy of selective engagement is calibrated to the problems of our era: the collapse of bipartisanship; the rise of a party system that is polarized along regional lines; the return of ideology to U.S. politics; and the risk of an inward turn in response to the Iraq War. A correction is coming. If the United States is to adapt successfully to today's conditions, its leaders must craft a grand strategy that not only meets the country's geopolitical needs but also restores the political equilibrium necessary to sustain a coherent national strategy.