Chapter 2

Geopolitics and ideology in US grand strategy

Conceptualizing geopolitics

"Few modern ideologies are as whimsically all-encompassing, as romantically obscure, as intellectually sloppy, and as likely to start a third world war as the theory of 'geopolitics,'" complained Charles Clover in a 1999 *Foreign Affairs* article.[20] Throughout the century-long history of the term, geopolitics has been used and misused to the point where its utility as a meaningful concept has been significantly reduced. The original conceptualization of geopolitics, developed by Rudolf Kjellan and later adapted by Nazi Germany's Karl Haushofer, saw the state in Darwinian terms as a biological organism. Superior organisms (states) would naturally expand and absorb weaker ones as part of the natural evolutionary process.[21] Geopolitics has generally not been used or understood in this manner since that time, though some still associate the term with its historical lineage. Purveyors and practitioners of geopolitics in recent years also have in many instances failed to specify what exactly is meant when using some variation of the word. For the concept of geopolitics to have any analytical value, its meaning must first be clarified and more narrowly defined. A typology of geopolitics may be said to encompass three aspects.

First, geopolitics contains a descriptive component explaining the realities of the geographical landscape as it relates to international political and strategic matters. International borders are but one example in which geography plays a crucial role in political matters, from the

20 Charles Clover, "Dreams of the Eurasian Heartland: The Reemergence of Geopolitics," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 2 (1999): 9.

21 G. R. Sloan, *Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy 1890–1987* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988), p. 6.

discussions among states over their demarcation, the rivers that transect them, the mountain ranges that hinder the movement of both merchants and armies across them, and the minerals and energy resources found within or even straddling them. Another might be maritime choke points such as the Malacca Straits, the Suez Canal, and the Straits of Hormuz. Describing the political and strategic realities of international relations in objective terms cannot be accomplished without acknowledging the physical realities of geographical position. Colin S. Gray argues that "all politics is geopolitics" due to the fact that "all political matters occur within a particular geographical context."[22]

A second use of the term geopolitics is the prescriptive element that entails a global strategy to secure a nation's interests and offers policymakers a plan of action given the realities of the descriptive component. Geopolitical reasoning here implies a process by which policymakers view and divide the world according to preconceptions based on theoretical assumptions, political realities, and ideological convictions. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, taking a more critical look at geopolitics, views it as:

> a problem-solving theory for the conceptualization and practice of statecraft. A convenient label for a variety of traditions and cultures of theory and practice, geopolitics sees itself as an instrumental form of knowledge and rationality. It takes the existing power structures for granted and works within these to provide conceptualization and advice to foreign policy decision-makers. Its dominant modes are declarative ("This is how the world is") and then imperative ("this is what we must do.")[23]

This prescriptive element might also be termed *geostrategy*, defined by Brzezinski as the "strategic management of geopolitical interests."[24] Colin Gray makes the more general argument that "all strategy is geostrategy" because "strategy is always 'done' tactically by what Carl von Clausewitz called war's 'grammar,' in specific geographical contexts."[25] Ó Tuathail argues that geostrategy is "a form of geopolitical

22 Colin S. Gray, "Inescapable Geopolitics" in *Geopolitics: Geography and Strategy*, eds. Colin S. Gray and Geoffrey Sloan (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 164 [original emphasis].

23 Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society," in *Geopolitics: Geography and Strategy*, eds. Colin S. Gray and Geoffrey Sloan (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 109.

24 Brzezinski, *Grand Chessboard*, p. 31.

discourse that makes explicit strategic claims about the material national security interests of the state across a world map characterized by state competition, threats and dangers.[26]" In *The White House Years*, Henry Kissinger frequently refers to "geopolitics" and the "geopolitical" aspects of particular issues, which he defined as "an approach that pays attention to the requirements of equilibrium[27]." These statements highlight the close relationship between prescriptive geopolitics and the International Relations theory of Realism, where power, state survival, and an anarchical international system are fundamental assumptions. The overriding aim of a realist-based foreign policy is the pursuit of materialistic military and economic capabilities (the means of wielding power in the international system according to realists) as well as balancing against the capabilities of those states that threaten the interests, and therefore the survival, of the state. Geopolitical reasoning embraces many of these same assumptions.[28]

Finally, the third way in which geopolitics is used refers to a specific theoretical perspective entailing a global strategy based on an almost unavoidable confrontation between maritime- and continental-based powers vying for global dominance. Reflected in the writings of theoreticians such as Sir Halford MacKinder and Nicholas Spykman, the prescriptive theory of geopolitics asserts that control over the Eurasian continent in some manner (either by controlling its heart or its boundaries) is the key to global power, a theory to which the aforementioned Brzezinski subscribes. The similarities between this view and the US Cold War strategy of containment will be expanded upon in the following section, while Russian strategists supporting this theory are represented in a school of thought known as Eurasianism.[29]

US foreign policy has consistently been interlaced at various times with all three types of geopolitical thinking. The Monroe Doctrine in 1823 set out to establish the Western Hemisphere as solely within the

25 Gray, "Inescapable Geopolitics", p. 164.

26 Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Geopolitical Structures and Cultures: Toward Conceptual Clarity in the Critical Study of Geopolitics," in *Geopolitics: Global Problems and Regional Concerns,* Bison Paper, no. 4 (Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, 2002), pp. 75–99.

27 Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (London: Weidenfeld & Nickelsen, 1979), p. 914.

28 Adherents of critical geopolitics find it troubling that this linkage is simply accepted without reflection. Their view is that geopolitical theory, argumentation, and the very use of the word presuppose a set of underlying assumptions biased toward Great Powers and Great Power politics. Geopolitics therefore cannot hope to be an objective portrayal of political factors that are geographically based. See Ó Tuathail, "Understanding Critical Geopolitics."

29 Clover, "Dreams of the Eurasian Heartland."

US sphere of influence. In the mid-1800s, the concept of Manifest Destiny reflected a belief held by American leaders that it was their country's fate to expand its borders to the Pacific Ocean. President Theodore Roosevelt strengthened the Monroe Doctrine in 1904 by proclaiming American willingness to employ military might to enforce the spirit of European non-intervention in the hemisphere. These actions reflect geopolitical thinking that couples geographical realities together with political interests in order to form strategy and policy. Three prominent geopolitical thinkers have influenced US strategic thinking on a global scale over the past century: Alfred Thayer Mahan, Sir Halford MacKinder and Nicholas Spykman.

Alfred Thayer Mahan

One of the more prominent geopolitical theorists, writing just before the term "geopolitics" was actually coined, was the American naval strategist Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan. His seminal work, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, published in 1890, became an instant global success and made a lasting impact in the field of geopolitics. At the end of the nineteenth century, railroads and steam engines were revolutionizing the transport sector. Mahan argued that while rail stood for the majority of a country's internal trade, the bulk of international trade relied (and would continue to rely) on shipping, as waterborne transport remained easier and cheaper than land transport.[30] The wealthiest countries, active in maritime economic activities such as production, shipping, and colonial endeavors, required substantial naval capabilities to protect these interests.[31] Mahan's argument for the importance of naval supremacy was grounded in the belief that sea power was crucial to the economic and security interests of the state. Scholar John Gooch described the impact of Mahan's work on US policy as immediate and substantial:

> Mahan's message to Americans was that they must now play an international role upon the world scene. To do this, the United States must cease to be an insular continental power and instead become a global force by building up her maritime power. The first step in this process had already been taken: a naval appro-

30 Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *Inventing Grand Strategy and Teaching Command: The Classic Works of Alfred Thayer Mahan Reconsidered* (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997). The oceans remain vital to international trade; ships transport nearly 90% of the world's goods.

31 Ibid.

> priations bill in 1883 had authorized the construction of four steel battleships in American yards, and they had been completed four years later. Mahan's ideas gave this policy a new impetus. Six weeks after the publication of his book, Congress agreed to the construction of three "seagoing, coast-line battleships." With this decision, the United States set out on the path to sea power as Mahan understood, explained, and preached it.[32]

Another of Mahan's works, *The Problem of Asia* (1900), predicted that the conflict between Russian land power and the maritime powers (at that time Britain) would continue, focused around a "Debated and Debatable Middle Strip" in Asia, from China to the Mediterranean Sea between 30 and 40 degrees north latitudes.[33] Historically, Russia had sought to gain access to warm water ports, and Mahan therefore saw Russian expansion as inevitable. This almost-preordained conflict between land and sea powers would occur around the "Debated Middle Strip" in Asia – an area that included the southern half of present-day Central Asia.

Sir Halford Mackinder

Just over a decade after the publication of Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Sir Halford Mackinder stood before the Royal Geographical Society in London and presented quite a different analysis entitled "The Geographical Pivot of History." Mackinder declared the end to a 400-year long age of exploration and discovery he termed the "Columbian epoch," and that the world could from then on be described as a "closed political system" where events on one side of the globe would have an effect on the other.[34] This transition entailed a shift from the dominance of sea power in the Columbian epoch to the rise of land power in the post-Columbian age, brought about by technological changes such as the railroad.

Much of the broad expanses of Eurasia, rich in natural resources, are inaccessible by ship and therefore impenetrable to sea power. The advent of the railroad enhanced transportation in this region, stretching from Siberia to the edge of modern-day Europe and encompassing the whole of Central Asia, and caused Mackinder to wonder "Is not the

32 John Gooch, "Maritime Command: Mahan and Corbett," in *Seapower and Strategy*, eds. Colin S. Gray and Roger W. Barnett (London: Tri-service Press, 1994), p. 31.
33 Sloan, *Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy*, p. 91.
34 Halford Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *Geographical Journal*, vol. 23 (1904): 422.

pivot region of the world's politics that vast area of Euro-Asia which is inaccessible to ships, but in antiquity lay open to the horse-riding nomads, and is today about to be covered with a network of railways?"[35] Strategic and well protected, the state controlling this region had an obvious advantage in challenging the traditional maritime powers on its periphery. "In the present condition of the balance of power, the pivot state, Russia, is not equivalent to the peripheral states," wrote Mackinder, but "the oversetting of the balance of power in favor of the pivot state, resulting in its expansion over the marginal lands of Euro-Asia, would permit the use of vast continental resources for fleet-building, and the empire of the world would then be in sight."[36] Mackinder developed and refined his "heartland" concept in later versions, and came to view Eastern Europe as the focal point in the struggle between sea and land power. This belief was embodied in Mackinder's often-repeated phrase: "Who rules East Europe controls the heartland; who rules the heartland commands the World-Island [the entirety of Eurasia]; Who rules the World-Island commands the world."[37]

Nicholas Spykman

Although harboring similar theoretical assumptions as Mackinder about the coming conflict between maritime and continental power, Nicholas Spykman, writing during the Second World War – but already thinking of the post-war geopolitical landscape – argued that the heartland theory was flawed. The heartland itself posed no threat to maritime powers; the area of most concern was in fact the buffer zone (called the "Rimland") between the two where control over the maritime routes encircling the Eurasian land mass would be crucial.[38] Spykman, echoing Mahan, wrote that "one of the basic patterns in the politics of the Old World during the last century was the opposition between the British naval power operating along the circumferential sea route and Russian land-power trying to smash an opening through the encircling ring" to gain access to a warm water port, a goal Russia had pursued unsuccessfully for several centuries, thwarted by "geography and sea power."[39]

35 Ibid: 434–5.
36 Ibid: 436.
37 Quoted in Geoffrey Sloan, "Sir Halford J. Mackinder: The Heartland Theory Then and Now," in *Geopolitics: Geography and Strategy*, eds. Colin S. Gray and Geoffrey Sloan (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 27.
38 Sloan, *Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy*, p. 63.

Echoing the sentiments of Mackinder and Mahan, Spykman recognized that with the USSR's landmass, the "full application of western technology to the resources of the vast territory could develop an economy strong enough to support one of the Great War machines of the twentieth century."[40] Spykman fully intended his ideas to be applied by decision-makers in Washington. The task of US policymakers, then, was to maintain control over the Rimland to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining access to the maritime routes. As Spykman put it, "The Mackinder dictum … is false. If there is to be a slogan for the power politics of the Old World, it must be 'Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world.'"[41]

Cold War containment: mixing geopolitics and ideology

World War Two affected American geopolitical assumptions on two levels. First, the attack on Pearl Harbor changed many Americans' geopolitical beliefs by demonstrating the limitations of oceans as natural defensive barriers. Second, the United States had again been drawn into a war on the Eurasian continent. As Geoffrey Sloan wrote

> there is strong evidence to suggest that the Second World War resulted in Roosevelt's perception of the political importance of the Eurasian continent to the security of the United States taking a form which had many similarities with one of the central concepts of Mackinder's heartland theory.

With the strengthened post-war position of the Soviet Union, a confrontation between American sea power and Soviet land power appeared to be in the offing.

It was under these circumstances that George Kennan, a State Department diplomat stationed in Moscow, sent the now famous "Long Telegram" in February 1946, published in article form in the journal *Foreign Affairs* under the pseudonym X in July 1947. In the key pas-

39 Nickolas Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics* (New York:Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1942), p. 182.
40 Ibid.
41 Quoted in Mackubin Thomas Owens, "In Defense of Classical Geopolitics," *Naval War College Review*, vol. LII, no. 4 (autumn 1999).

sage that was to become the framework for US strategy for decades, Kennan wrote: "it is clear that the main element of any United States policy towards the Soviet Union must be that of long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."[42] More specifically, "the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points."[43] This idea of confronting the Soviets at specific strategic points around the globe, a "strongpoint" rather than a "perimeter" defense, allowed the US to pick its battles and use its limited resources most effectively.

Basic containment strategy echoed the concerns of Mahan and Mackinder about the dangers presented by a country controlling the heartland of Eurasia, and paralleled Spykman's insistence on confronting the Soviets in the buffer zones of the Rimland. Defense of this strategic area was best achieved through a "strongpoint" defense, argued Kennan. In 1949, two hugely significant events – the establishment of Communist China and the development by the Soviets of atomic weapons – led President Truman to authorize a study of how containment could be systematically implemented. A group of State and Defense Department officials drafted what came to be known as NSC-68, what the historian John Lewis Gaddis described as a "single, comprehensive statement of interests, threats, and feasible responses, capable of being communicated throughout the bureaucracy."[44] The resulting document deviated substantially from the "Long Telegram." NSC-68's authors concluded that Kennan's "strongpoint" defense of the Rimland was insufficient and argued for a "perimeter" defense where all geographic areas had equal strategic value. It was impossible for the US to project an image of confidence and strength when the "strongpoint" defense strategy of picking one's battles implied a lack of resources to defend the entire perimeter, especially when, according to Gaddis, "world order, and with it American security, had come to depend as much on perceptions of the balance of power as on what that balance actually was."[45]

---

42 George Kennan (X), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947 [online 17 Nov 2008].
43 Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct."
44 John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 90.
45 Ibid, p. 92.

Throughout the next two decades, US security policy stuck to the basic strategic framework staked out by NSC-68: confronting and containing, by any and all means necessary, the Soviet Union, which signified an existential threat to the United States. The next three administrations, those of Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, each varied in their approaches and strategic solutions, but the main structures in their foreign policies corresponded roughly to those of NSC-68. President Eisenhower introduced the geopolitical concept of falling dominoes, an expansion of the Truman Doctrine (that the US would provide assistance to countries under threat from communist expansionism), whereby the fall of one country to communist influence would lead to a similar occurrence in neighboring countries like falling dominoes. For the US, international communism was indistinguishable from the Soviet threat, and conflicts in the Rimland countries of Korea and Vietnam therefore became crucial to US security. At the same time, the Eisenhower administration employed rhetoric espousing freedom and liberty, conflating the geopolitical contest between the US and the USSR as an ideological battle, thereby shifting the focus away from the actual means by which the conflict was waged.[46]

During the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, containment was pursued more vigorously and less attention was paid to cost/benefit analyses. According to Sloan, "maintaining a line along the entire length of the Eurasian Rimland regardless of the cost of actual political achievements" became the principle strategic goal; containment was "increasingly dictating policy objectives instead of the other way around."[47] The ideological battle between the two superpowers escalated and became nearly inseparable from the strategic conflict. The United States pursued projects that satisfied not only the idealistic sentiment among Americans, but that also served a strategic purpose. When President Kennedy founded the Peace Corps in 1961, his intention was not only to channel American idealism into improving the living standards in developing countries, but also to counter communist influence. As one scholar has argued,

> the Peace Corps represented, in part, an attempt to reorient US foreign policy in the Third World toward economic development … US political leaders at the time recognized that under-

46 Sloan, *Geopolitics in US Strategic Policy*, p. 143–145.
47 Ibid, p. 150–152.

> developed, newly independent, and highly nationalistic nations were more susceptible to communist influence than were more prosperous nations.[48]

The partnership of President Richard Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger in 1969 began moving US foreign policy away from the economic development and democracy promotion of the Kennedy and Johnson years. Alone, such goals would not necessarily enhance US security, and their value depended upon the geopolitical context.[49] These adjustments led some to criticize the Nixon and Ford administrations for lacking morality in their foreign policy with its preference for geopolitics and balancing over human rights and democracy.[50] Demonstrating that US grand strategy does not stray far from its ideological component, these two administrations' attempts to pursue a more pragmatic strategy created a sort of domestic backlash.

Indeed, the incoming Carter administration promised another course adjustment from Kissinger's foreign policy of geopolitics to an approach that took more normative concerns into consideration.[51] The human rights aspect of Carter's foreign policy ultimately became more rhetorical in nature as these normative considerations became integrated into the existing geopolitical framework of containment.[52] Just as the grand strategy of the US could not sustain a continued realist-oriented policy, neither could the pendulum swing too far towards a pure ideology-based policy. In 1979, an Islamic revolution in Iran toppled the US-friendly government there and then, later in the year, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan; the Rimland seemed more vulnerable than ever to Soviet dominance. The brief 1973 oil embargo by OPEC provided a poignant reminder of US dependence on petroleum exports from the Middle East, and President Carter responded to the events of 1979 by issuing what came to be known as the Carter Doctrine.

Carter announced the policy in his 1980 State of the Union Address, the text of which was written by National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski: "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region

48 Michael R. Hall, "Impact of the US Peace Corps at Home and Abroad," *Journal of Third World Studies*, (spring 2007) (BNET Research Center [online 1 Nov 2007]).
49 Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 278.
50 Ibid, pp. 336–7.
51 Ibid.
52 Sloan, *Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy*, p. 191.

will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."[53] To this end, the administration established a Rapid Deployment Force based in the US but ready for deployment to the Middle East. In addition, as the Soviets' actions in Afghanistan were perceived to be a threat to Persian Gulf oil, the US conducted covert operations to fund and support the Afghan mujahedeen.[54] The battle for the Rimland and the defense of American oil supplies combined during the Carter years with ramifications that are still felt today, exemplified by repeated US interventions in the Persian Gulf.

With the Reagan administration came the return of ideological rhetoric. Ironically, Reagan criticized the Carter administration's human rights focus during the 1980 campaign and initially conducted a pragmatic foreign policy once in office. In 1983, a combination of factors led to the "rediscovery" of human rights issues, but unlike Carter's focus on government repression and economic disenfranchisement, Reagan emphasized political rights and democratic processes.[55] In addition, Reagan's support of insurgencies that were fighting communist/Soviet-oriented governments in the developing world combined with strong, consistent rhetoric reflecting the administration's belief that the battle was an ideological one.[56] This was encapsulated in the Reagan Doctrine of assisting anti-communist insurgencies in an effort to confront the Soviet Union in the Rimland in an attempt to "roll back" the influence of global communism.[57] It entailed a revival of containment theory's perimeter defense and added as a priority of US policy "to contain and over time reverse Soviet expansionism," with a particular focus on the developing world.[58]

The US had toned down its aggressive containment policies by Reagan's second term, argued Sloan, whereby the administration showed "a continuity with the Nixon era, and maintained that geopolitics was an approach that paid attention to the requirements of

53 Jimmy Carter, 1980 State of the Union Address, *The Jimmy Carter Library and Museum* [online 10 May 2008].
54 Michael Klare, "The Geopolitics of War," *Nation*, 5 November 2001 [online 10 May 2008].
55 Farheed Zakaria, "The Reagan Strategy of Containment," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 105, no. 3 (1990): 372–395.
56 Ibid.
57 US State Department, "Timeline of US Diplomatic History: Reagan Doctrine" [online 4 Mar 2008].
58 Ibid.

equilibrium."[59] This change may have come about due to a reassessment of the Soviet threat by the Reagan administration, brought on by a number of factors: recognition of its initial overestimation of the USSR's military capabilities, a favorable strategic balance due to the US military build-up, and the conciliatory tone of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.[60]

Conceptualizing post-Cold War grand strategy

The 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union during the presidency of George H.W. Bush marked the end of the Cold War and of containment policy, although its premises and ideological foundations continue to reverberate in the present. The patterns of American foreign policy during the Cold War were marked by a combined emphasis on geopolitical and ideological considerations that shaped the perspectives of US policymakers. While each component's influence on policymakers varied considerably from one administration to the next, the "loss" of the Soviet Union as a framework for policy formulation represented a huge challenge to the United States as it struggled to fill the conceptual and organizational gap left by Cold War policy planning. In addition, the collapse of one of the two superpowers left the United States in a position of unrivaled military and political power. These early attempts at formulating a new strategic concept are crucial to understanding the evolution of US strategic thinking from the end of the Cold War through to the George W. Bush administration.

In late 1989, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, together with Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis "Scooter" Libby and Colin Powell, organized a project tasked with developing a post-Cold War US grand strategy.[61] President Bush delivered the preliminary results in a speech on 2 August 1990 in Aspen, Colorado that was largely overshadowed by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait that same day. In his speech, President Bush emphasized the more *regionalized* and less predictable threats likely to face the US in the future, and argued that the US military should not be reduced beyond what was needed "to guard our enduring interests – the forces to exercise forward presence in key areas, to respond effectively to crisis, to retain the national capacity to rebuild our forces

59 Sloan, *Geopolitics in United States Strategic Policy*, p. 197.
60 Zakaria, "The Reagan Strategy of Containment."
61 Ibid.

should this be needed."[62] A month later, President Bush addressed a joint session of Congress and presented his case for the coming conflict with Iraq. While Bush acknowledged the importance of protecting the supply of oil from the Middle East, he also noted that the crisis in the Persian Gulf offered "a rare opportunity to move toward an historic period of cooperation. Out of these troubled times … a new world order can emerge."

This *new world order* was one in which "the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle," "nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice," and in which "the strong respect the rights of the weak." While Bush claimed that "recent events have surely proven that there is no substitute for American leadership," his vision clearly involved some type of multilateral framework grounded in international law. Bush welcomed the United Nations' actions with regard to Kuwait, saying "we're now in sight of a United Nations that performs as envisioned by its founders … The United Nations is backing up its words with action."[63]

Bush's speech seemed at odds with the results of Cheney and Wolfowitz's grand strategy group. In March 1992, less than a month before the publication of the group's findings as the "Defense Planning Guidance for the fiscal years 1994–1999" (DPG), a draft copy of the report was provided to the *New York Times*.[64] According to the *Times*, the new strategy had as its fundamental principle that of US primacy: "our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival."[65] A second objective was to address regional threats and conflicts, especially in areas involving US interests such as oil, nuclear proliferation, or narcotics trafficking. This regional focus was designed to increase respect for international law, limit conflicts, and "encourage the spread of democratic forms of government and open economic systems." The DPG considered it "improbable that a global conventional challenge to US and Western security will reemerge from the Eurasian heartland for many years to come." Further, the draft strategy shunned collective action through the United Nations in favor of objective-focused "ad-hoc assemblies," but also refused to rule out unilateral action – that the

62 George H.W. Bush, "Remarks at the Aspen Institute Symposium in Aspen Colorado, 2 August 1990," *The American Presidency Project* (University of California [online 12 Feb 2007]).
63 Cheney, "Defense Strategy for the 1990s."
64 Patrick E. Tyler, "US Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop A One-Superpower World," *New York Times*, 8 March 1992.
65 Quoted in Tyler, "US Strategic Plan ...."

US "should be postured to act independently when collective action cannot be orchestrated."[66]

The leaked DPG draft was poorly received and widely criticized from all sides. A reworked and softened version of the DPG again resurfaced in the final days of the Bush administration, after an unexpected defeat to Bill Clinton. Despite the fact that it would never become official policy, Defense Secretary Cheney released "Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy" in January 1993. Cheney's Regional Defense proposal stated clearly the author's intention of instituting a new grand strategic concept: "Our national strategy has shifted from a focus on a global threat to one on regional challenges and opportunities. We have moved from Containment to the new Regional Defense Strategy."[67] The alliance of democratic nations developed during the Cold War, referred to repeatedly in the document as the "democratic zone of peace," provided the US with strategic depth and would play a key role in US strategy.[68] Within this regional security framework, hostile non-democratic nations must be prevented from dominating regions deemed critical to US interests and a clear military presence must be established in some regions to accomplish this goal.

Also similar to the DPG, the Regional Defense proposal expressed hope that collective action might solve future security issues, but recognized that a "collective effort will not always be timely and, in the absence of US leadership, may not gel. Where the stakes so merit, we must have forces ready to protect our critical interests."[69] This strategy and the concepts and proposals it contained would be, in effect, placed on a shelf and reopened when President Bush's son was elected president. The strategic thinking expressed during the final months of the Bush administration contributes much to understanding the strategic direction and underlying logic of the George W. Bush administration.

Bill Clinton's election victory in 1992 ushered in a period of strong rhetorical support for multilateralism and economic issues. During the election campaign, Clinton had outlined three main foreign policy goals: restructuring the US military, increasing the role of economics in world affairs, and promoting democracy.[70] In August

66 Ibid.
67 Dick Cheney, "Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy," January 1993, *Information Clearing House* [online 14 Feb 2007].
68 The document defined this "democratic zone of peace" as "a community of democratic nations bound together by a web of political, economic, and security ties."
69 Cheney, "Defense Strategy for the 1990s.".

1993, Clinton tasked National Security Advisor Anthony Lake with creating a group to generate a word or slogan similar to "containment" that encompassed the three foreign policy goals from the campaign. Lake set to work to find an image and a strategy that would "merge strands of neo-Wilsonian idealism with hardcore Morgenthauian realism."[71] A month later, Lake announced a new grand strategy based on the concept of enlargement: "The successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement – enlargement of the world's free community of market democracies."[72] He identified four components of the new strategy: "strengthen the community of major market economies," "foster and consolidate new democracies," "counter the aggression … of states hostile to democracy and markets," and "pursue our humanitarian agenda."[73]

The National Security Strategy (NSS) of 1995, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement," exemplified Clinton's three-pronged strategy of enhancing US security, encouraging US economic prosperity and promoting democracy.[74] Notably, successive NSS documents also emphasized economic issues and argued that external threats to national security were increasingly linked to those from within the US, that "domestic and foreign policies are increasingly blurred."[75] Within this framework, economic issues and democracy promotion were elevated to a level on a par with the more "traditional" areas of security policy encompassing mostly military issues.

Some analysts categorize US grand strategy under the early post-Cold War administrations of Bill Clinton and his predecessor, George H.W. Bush, as generally multilateral yet geared towards primacy.[76] According to Stephen Walt, both administrations "sought to enhance the US position in the world while preserving the alliances, institutional commitments, and broad multilateralist approaches that had

70 Douglas Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine," *Foreign Policy*, no. 106 (spring 1997) [online 3 Apr 2008]: 110–127.
71 Ibid, p. 115. This project became known as the "Kennan Sweepstakes."
72 Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," speech at Johns Hopkins University, 27 September 1993 (Mount Holyoke College [18 Nov 2008]).
73 Ibid.
74 William Jefferson Clinton, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement," *GlobalSecurity.org*, February 1995 [online 1 Apr 2008].
75 Clinton, William Jefferson: "A National Security Strategy for a New Century," *The White House*, February 1998 (GlobalSecurity.org [online 10 Nov 2007]), p. 7; William Jefferson Clinton, "A National Security Strategy for a Global Age," *The White House*, December 2000 (GlobalSecurity.org [online 10 Nov 2007]).
76 G. John Ikenberry, "American Grand Strategy in the Age of Terror," *Survival*, vol. 43, no. 4 (winter 2001–2002): 25.

won the Cold War."[77] Both administrations maintained a preponderance of US forces throughout the world with a focus on reacting quickly to preserve regional security, both also supported a strong North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). An explicit strategic policy of hindering the rise of a peer competitor, like that of the DPG leaked in 1992, was never enunciated, though both the multilateral focus and attention to regional issues were designed to prevent the rise of any global threats.[78]

Barry Posen and Andrew Ross saw conflicting pressures in the Clinton administration's agenda. It was ambitious and activist, but could not be achieved without exercising US leadership and power. The Clinton strategy, according to Posen and Ross, blended elements of cooperative security, selective engagement, and primacy grand strategies. They presciently observed that "this ad hoc approach is probably inevitable until a crisis impels a choice. And a failure to develop a clearer consensus on grand strategy may hasten the arrival of that crisis."[79] Without the overarching strategic framework of Cold War containment, the new security environment allowed the US to begin adapting to changing realities. The continued integration of – and increasing emphasis on – ideology as a component of US grand strategy was evident after the end of the Cold War. This thinking would be strongly amplified during the George W. Bush administration.

After their victory in the 2000 election, the Bush Administration assembled a formidable foreign policy team including Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Paul Wolfowitz, and Richard Armitage. These and other key administration officials held starkly differing views on US foreign policy and grand strategy. Some backed the pragmatic and selective engagement course advocated by Bush and Condoleezza Rice during the 2000 election campaign, while others supported an expansionist, primacy-oriented and ideologically driven strategy seen in the 1993 Defense Planning Guidance, Cheney's 1993 defense document, and the policy papers published by the *Project for a New American Century* (PNAC).[80] As Svein Melby observed, this funda-

77 Walt, *Taming American Power,* p. 57.

78 For the Bush Administration, see Svein Melby, "Tendenser i amerikansk forsvarsdebatt" [Trends in American defense debate], *Det sikkerhetspolitiske bibliotek*, no. 10 (1992): 13; For Clinton, see Barry Posen and Andrew Ross, "Competing Visions for US Grand Strategy" in *America's Strategic Choices*, eds. Michael E. Brown et al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).

79 Posen and Ross, "Competing Visions for US Grand Strategy," p. 49.

mental disagreement over policy caused a tension within the administration that could not last. Many commentators predicted that President Bush would be most influenced by the realists and follow the course laid out by his father.[81]

The terrorist attack on 11 September 2001 caused a reshuffling of grand strategic priorities within the White House, opening the door for the more expansionist-minded figures in the administration such as Cheney, Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld to steer US policy.[82] Advocates of an aggressive response that entailed the revamping of US grand strategy from the selective global engagement of US forces to one of primacy clearly succeeded, and the resulting course adjustment was profound. This is not to say that these figures, with their links to neoconservative policy institutes, "hijacked" US foreign policy. None of the themes in the 1992 DPG, the 1993 defense document, or the 2000 PNAC proposal contained wholly new and radical concepts; American primacy, promotion of democratic principles, and even pre-emptive war were elements of previous US grand strategies. Instead, the new direction taken by the Bush administration in the wake of 9/11 simply collected these strands of policy together and forcefully pursued them in a new and aggressive manner, and in a way that resonated with the American public. The shock of sustaining such a significant attack on US soil, along with the generally uncertain nature of the terrorist threat, allowed a much more proactive strategy to be adopted with broad support from the general public.

80 This think tank, politically oriented toward what is known as a neoconservative ideology, kept alive the spirit and tradition of the leaked Wolfowitz 1992 DPG, and its *Rebuilding America's Defenses* (2000) specifically endorsed the document. Many key Bush administration officials had signed under PNAC's report, including Rumsfeld, Cheney, Wolfowitz, Armitage, Douglas Feith, John Bolton, Elliot Abrams, and Lewis "Scooter" Libby, see Dueck, "Ideas and alternatives," p. 526.

81 Svein Melby, *Bush-revolusjonen i amerikansk utenrikspolitikk* [The Bush revolution in US foreign policy] (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2004), pp. 62–3. Dueck outlines a similar division in foreign policy thinking in "Ideas and alternatives," p. 525.

82 Melby, *Bush-revolusjonen*, pp. 129–137; Dueck "Ideas and alternatives," p. 525.