AMERICAN ENGAGEMENT

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Thank you, chairman, for that introduction. It is a pleasure to be back in the country of my birth, where I also served as an American Foreign Service officer. It is also a treat to be in Rotterdam, that vibrant city with a world reputation for hard work, international commerce, and a great maritime tradition.

We started this morning with the maritime aspects of NATO's new strategic concept. Then, we turned to the so-called Dutch Maritime Network. Now it is my task to refocus, once again, on the security and economic dimensions of the transatlantic relationship. These are big and rich subjects.

It is like the story of the little kids who saw a fire truck racing by with a Dalmatian dog in the front cab. This led to a discussion of the dog's duties. "They use him to keep the crowds back," said one youngster. "No," said another, "he's just for good luck." The third child brought the argument to a close. "They use the dogs," she said firmly, "to find the fire hydrant."

I suspect that I am a little bit like the Dalmatian here—to help settle you after a lively coffee break, to give an American perspective, and to do so on no less a topic than the security and economic dimension of the transatlantic relationship. So I, too, have to figure out how to connect, and I want to do so on a theme that is increasingly current in public discussion on both sides of the Atlantic, namely American engagement.

Time permits three observations. First, America will remain engaged. Second, Americans are conscious of their limits. Third, the United States armed forces—including the U.S. Navy—will continue to shape the environments in which they operate, to encourage the promotion of stability, and peaceful rather than violent change.

The notion of American engagement has taken some hard knocks recently. Kosovo confirmed American sensitivity to U.S. casualties. Washington has sidestepped the land mine treaty and efforts to establish an international criminal court. The Senate has rejected the test ban treaty without meaningful debate. Moreover, foreign policy seems driven, more than ever, by parochial domestic concerns, on issues such as Cuba, United Nations dues, and now relations with China.

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*Speaking notes for the Conference on the Maritime Dimension of the New Nato, held under the sponsorship of the Commander in Chief of the Royal Netherlands Navy and the Netherlands Atlantic Association at Rotterdam, the Netherlands, November 19, 1999.

However, polling data show that American public support for NATO is at a post-Cold War high, a position shared by American leaders.[1] The U.S. Senate in the end easily approved the admission of three new members to NATO. Moreover, public support for greater defense spending has risen almost consistently since 1990. Sixty-one percent of Americans continue to support an active role for the United States in international affairs.

A recent high point has been the American military engagement in Kosovo, despite a tenuous link to American vital interests. This was followed by President Clinton's assertion that if it is within America's power, the United States will seek to stop anyone who goes after innocent civilians and seeks to kill them, because of their race, ethnic or religious background.[2]

American engagement, however, is highly dependent on leadership . If the nation's leadership is in agreement, the public is likely to follow suit. If it is divided, then the public will be divided. The ability of the president to shape opinion is potentially enormous; used intermittently, however—or late—it easily loses effectiveness.

Since most leaders favor a leadership role for the United States, the division about America's global role is more about strategy than objectives. The division is often ideological, along party lines, though there are major areas of overlap.

Also, the American public tends to support the notion of shared leadership in the international arena, and is willing to take the positions of allies, friends, and others into account. Thus, there is considerable, if soft, support for the United Nations. However, when it comes to crisis management involving U.S. forces, Americans prefer United States leadership.

Finally, congressional procedures and traditions make it possible for individual or small groups of legislators to hold up action, to redirect legislation by linking it to unrelated issues, or simply to derail legislative initiatives. This has become part of our system of checks and balances. In practice, it means that in the end the United States may well do the right thing after it has tried everything else.

But now my second point: Americans have become conscious of their limits. The image of the lone sheriff may be part of our western lore, but it is not seen today as our preferred

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[1] These observations are based on findings by a poll conducted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations in 1998. These polls have been conducted every four years since 1974. John E. Rielly, ed., *American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy 1999*, Chicago: Lake County Press, 1999. See also Opinion Analysis, Office of Research and Media Reaction, United States Information Agency, M-29-99, February 19, 1999, and M-69-99, April 22, 1999, and U.S. Foreign Policy Survey, Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C., as summarized in Lori A. Plotkin, "Behind the Polls: Domestic Support and U.S. Global Leadership," Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, unpublished manuscript, Summer 1999.

[2] These comments were made during a visit of President Clinton with KFOR troops in Skopje, Macedonia, on June 22, 1999.

model for official American conduct in the world.[3] The eminent success of the last major ground campaign in Desert Storm was possible only because of allies who supplied territory, forces, political support, and money. Americans are neither willing nor able to protect Western interests by themselves, and they want partners.[4]

So the rhetoric of American leadership has been leavened by experience. This lesson is easily understood by a people who in American civil society practice cooperation at all levels. Policy elites understand this too. Some now see the United States, which started as a continental power before becoming a maritime power, as returning to the original image of a continental power, albeit with a continent that is now the world itself. Because in a figurative sense America now has borders with most other nations, it must continually build coalitions and alliances to secure its interests. The factors that make up this picture are shared values, interconnectedness, equilibrium, and a sense of mutual dependence.[5]

This sense, however, is not shared by policymakers who want to limit the American role to those cases where only the United States can make a difference—such as on the

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[3] Richard N. Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States After the Cold War*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1997. Haass assesses conceptual models of American thinking about foreign policy: hegemony, isolationism, Wilsonianism, humanitarianism, and realism. To these he adds his own preferred view of "regulation." More recently, Haass has suggested that the United States should use its primacy to forge a consensus with other great powers toward a durable order based on peaceful relations, nonproliferation, respect for human rights, and economic openness. Where these objectives cannot be achieved, Haass advocates building consensus on a regional scale or, failing that, coalitions of the willing. Rejecting both hegemony and unilateralism, he prescribes an American foreign policy which "must project an imperial dimension, although not in the sense of territorial control or commercial exploitation," but based on "principles affecting both relations between states and conditions within them." "What To Do With American Primacy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 5, p. 37. For yet another concept—"mutualism"—see Hugh De Santis, *Beyond Progress*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

[4] See David C. Gompert, in *America and Europe: A Partnership for a New Era*, David C. Gompert and F. Stephen Larrabee, eds., New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 3. The authors argue that, to pursue common interests, American and European leaders must raise their sights and forge a global partnership of equals, in which Europe shares the burden of protecting common vital interests in other regions, and the United States shares leadership across the board, including NATO commands. The American public preference for shared over sole leadership is almost four to one. "The New European Security Architecture: Volume IV," USIA, Office of Research and Media Reaction, Washington, D.C., March 1999, p. 29.

[5] See James E. Goodby and Kenneth Weisbrode, "Back to Basics: US Foreign Policy for the Coming Decade," The Atlantic Council of the United States, *Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 8, September 9, 1999. The authors, noting that the American people will not support an American role of balancer of last resort in a complex and changing world, call for a new Eurasian security community, in the construction of which the United States should lead the way. The essential pieces of such a community should be (a) stability and cohesion in Europe and between the European Union and the United States, (b) mature and effective relations among China, Russia, and the West, and (c) systematic patterns of consultation and policy coordination among the states that benefit from the global economy, and positive relations between these states and the developing world. The mechanisms would include formalized NATO-Russian cooperation in a "joint committee for strategic stability," a similar committee for Northeast Asia, including China, Japan, Russia, Korea, and the United States, and American support for the United Nations.

Korean peninsula or in the Taiwan Straits.[6] In this view, America's influence is more credible and effective when it maintains a measured distance from all regional conflicts. And that wise senior statesman, George Kennan, admonishes that American foreign policy should respect our own limits and rest on a deeper understanding of our friends and adversaries.[7]

Furthermore, even those American opinion makers who are comfortable with the notion of interdependence conclude that a basic adjustment of the transatlantic relationship is necessary. As they explain it, the alternative to partnership is not American leadership and European independence, but American retreat and European isolation.[8] In this view, Europe should pick up more of the burden of protecting common vital interests, and the United States should share decisionmaking across the board.[9] Moreover, this thinking explicitly envisions a partnership in which Europe shares the burdens of protecting common interests in other regions.[10] Thus, this vision of a new partnership is broad, and encompasses not just NATO, but also U.S.-EU relations and a common commitment to Atlantic, and ultimately global free trade.[11] The broad scope of this agenda should not be obscured by the fact that, as I see it, NATO is likely for now to be occupied principally in Europe, with the Balkans.

Here I should perhaps mention that Americans are also aware of European limits. Today, the major factor governing security relations between America and Europe is Europe's military weakness.[12] A true partnership will require a militarily strong Europe. There has

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[6] Kay Bailey Hutchison, "The Case for Strategic Sense," *The Washington Post*, September 13, 1999, p. 27. Senator Hutchison's way of thinking is not new. Gordon Craig notes that "...from the very beginning, Americans preferred to pursue a policy exclusively American.... They either abstained from any involvement in the quarrels and problems of other nations or, when they felt compelled to intervene, did so on their own terms and sometimes for objectives imperfectly understood or agreed to by their allies." Gordon Craig, "Looking for Order," *The New York Review*, May 12, 1994, p. 8.

[7] Geneva Overholser, "Kennan's Counsel," *The Washington Post*, August 3, 1999, p. A15.

[8] *America and Europe*, p. 13.

[9] What such a new division of labor between America and Europe might look like under a new partnership in the next decade is explored by Marten van Heuven and Gregory F. Treverton in "Europe and America: How Will the United States Adjust to the New Partnership?" Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, IP-171, 1998.

[10] "The [NATO] Alliance is committed to a broad approach to security, which recognizes the importance of political, economic, social and environmental factors in addition to the indispensable defense dimension." *The Alliance's Strategic Concept*, approved by Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C., on April 23 and 24, 1999, paragraph 25. The strategic concept also refers to "...operations...beyond the Allies' territory" (paragraph 52), and "...outside the Allies' territory..." (paragraph 59).

[11] See Gregory F. Treverton, "An economic agenda for the new era," in *America and Europe*, Ch. 3.

[12] See James A. Thomson, "Common Interest, Common Responsibilities," *RAND Review*, Santa Monica, Calif..: RAND, Vol. 23, No. 1, Spring 1999, p. 18. Thomson calls for increased European defense spending, reduction of territorial defense forces, the end of conscription, reduced manpower levels, and volunteer forces able to operate at great distances.

been modest progress in this direction.[13] But these are but initial steps on what will be a long road. Until Europe makes serious and visible progress toward a greater military capability, Americans should be forgiven a certain skepticism about an increased European role.[14]

Now let me bring our discussion back to the role of the U.S. armed forces, and make a few concluding observations based on my experience as a participant in major strategic exercises at the Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, and at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

It seems to me that the American service chiefs remain principally concerned about the ability to conduct major theater operations. This is not to say that much of their daily schedules are not occupied by other tasks, such as peace enforcement over Iraq, peacekeeping in Kosovo, the fight against drugs in the southern hemisphere, or humanitarian assistance. Readiness to conduct major warfighting is seen as a key deterrent in potential trouble spots where the United States is committed not only to safeguard its security but also that of its allies, and where U.S. forces are the ultimate guarantee of the American ability to do so.[15]

The services are also all looking ahead. What strikes me is the emphasis not only on the search for new doctrine, but also for new structures.[16] This search, moreover, has a distinct forward character. The Army After Next (AAN) project has as its aim to link Army XXI to a long-term vision of the Army extending well into the next century.[17] The

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[13] Thomson, ibid., p. 19. For suggestions to reinvigorate Europe's defense industry, see Norman R. Augustine, "Reengineering the Arsenal of Democracy," The Atlantic Council of the United States, *Bulletin*, Vol. IX, No. 6, July 6, 1998. Augustine's "Five suggestions" are: privatization, consolidation within national boundaries, consolidation also across borders, restructuring, and moving further transatlantic business relationships, in the form of teaming, joint ventures, partnerships, cooperative agreements, and in some cases possible equity ownership.

[14] "However, ...independent European capabilities for major combined-arms operations remain a distant prospect." *The Military Balance 1999-2000*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, October 1999, p. 33.

[15] The assumption that the U.S. military will be called upon in the next decades to respond not only to major regional warfare but also to other crises, and to play a key role in shaping the future security environment is shared by serious analysts. See Zalmay Khalilzad and David Shlapak, with Ann Flanagan, "Overview of the Future Security Environment," in *Sources of Conflict in the 21st Century*," Zalmay Khalilzad and Ian O. Lesser, eds., Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1998, Ch. 2. The conceptual template for the role of America's armed forces contains four operational concepts: dominant maneuver, precision engagement, full dimensional protection, and focused logistics. *Concept for Future Joint Operations: Expanding Joint Vision 2010*, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D.C., 1997.

[16] See Francis Fukuyama and Abram N. Shulsky, "Military Organization in the Information Age," Zalmay Khalilzad and John P. White, eds., *The Changing Role of Information in Warfare*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1999, Ch. 11. See also Jeffrey R. Cooper, "Another View of the Revolution in Military Affairs," in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, eds., *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1997, pp. 99-140, at p. 119.

[17] See Walter L. Perry, Bruce R. Pirnie, and John V. Gordon IV, *Issues Raised During the Army After Next Spring [1998] Wargame*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-1023-A, 1999.

Marine Corps is also well into the next century, with topics such as military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) and its project of operational maneuver from the sea.[18] In its annual strategic games called GLOBAL, the Navy has variously explored future contingencies, concepts, and operational issues.

These processes have led to a useful early focus on issues that are around the corner. One is the future role of space in deterrence, warfare, and post-conflict situations.[19] Another is the effect of information technology on future warfare, which the Navy is pursuing under the heading of network centric warfare.[20] Yet another is the role of the private sector, an issue pushed forward by the significance of the now global information industry.

The strategic games have also illustrated the role of allies. A recurrent finding has been the technological gap which exists between U.S. forces and those of its allies. This state of affairs invariably elicits comments from allied players. What has also frequently emerged from these games is a discussion about the rules of engagement, since enhanced information technology often narrows the time available for considered decisionmaking. A related significant issue is that of predelegation of authority.

Finally, it has on occasion been my role in these games to point out that, after the conclusion of conflict, armed forces cannot just go home. Often, there will be a need to secure the new balance resulting from conflict, to deal with the aftermath of any use of weapons of mass destruction, to help care for refugees, to reestablish civil order, and to monitor the new post-conflict situation.

So I conclude that the new NATO strategic concept has arrived none too early. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We need to work out, as we are doing today, just how to apply the concept in practice.

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[18] *United States Marine Corps, Warfighting Concepts for the 21st Century*, Concepts Division, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, Virginia, 22134-5021, n.d.

[19] For a discussion of how space power will affect the conduct of military planning and operations, see Dana J. Johnson, Scott Pace, and C. Bryan Gabbard, *Space: Emerging Options for National Power*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-517, 1998.

[20] See Arthur K. Cebrowski and John J. Gartska, "Network-Centric Warfare: Its Origin and Future," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, January 1998. Vice Admiral Cebrowski is presently the president of the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.