

# The New Twilight Struggle: Freedom and Power in the Post-Cold War Era

By Kim R. Holmes

I have been asked to discuss the political implications of the new world order. This is a challenging task for two reasons. The first is that the political landscape in the world today is so foggy that it is very difficult to see beyond the horizon. No one knows for sure what will happen in Russia, the Balkans, South Africa, China, and many other countries which are facing great decisions in their history. And until we know what will happen in these countries—until history begins to reveal itself in a more coherent way—the future will remain foggy indeed.

The second reason is that there really is no new world order. The end of the East-West conflict has unleashed a seismic shift in the international system that is producing much disorder and chaos. This is truly a period of very rapid change—and in like all such periods, it is difficult to discern trends or to make predictions. But one thing is certain: no major power (including the United States), nor any multinational organization (i.e. the United Nations), nor any single ideology is creating “order” in the world today.

Instead, world politics appears to be having a nervous breakdown. The United States is confused and withdrawn, almost depressed, disappointed and uncertain of its role as the world’s remaining superpower. Russia is in chaos, suffering a severe identity crisis. Europe and Japan are experiencing “post traumatic stress syndrome”—Europe is paralyzed by Bosnia and the stresses posed by the reunification of Europe, while Japan is undergoing a painful process of re-adjustment and reform. And elsewhere around the world, you see what psychologists call the “return of the repressed”—the rebirth of radical nationalism and ethnic hatreds which had been buried by the repression of Communist empires.

While certainly confusing, the international system today is not entirely chaotic or lacking in reason. There are, in fact, underlying trends and ideological themes which characterize this new age of ours. These trends and themes may be like faint figures in a distant fog, but they are beginning to take shape. As such, they may help us to begin defining the fundamental characteristics of the post-Cold War era.

## THE RETREAT FROM FREEDOM

The first of these is at once a trend and a theme—a political trend and an ideological theme. It is what I call the retreat from freedom.

After the Soviet Union collapsed, the world was seized by a mood of hope. Democracy and markets seemed to have triumphed over their historical foes of dictatorship and communism. Scholars talked of the end of history, while American leaders spoke of promoting democracy around the world as the centerpiece of American foreign and defense policy. The Western values of freedom and democracy seemed to be on the march across the globe—not only in Europe and Eurasia, but as we saw with the North American Free Trade Agreement, in Latin America as well.

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Of course, it was not long before this optimistic mood began to sour. First there was the Persian Gulf war. Then the wars in former Yugoslavia broke out, outraging us with pictures of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. Then reform began to go badly in Russia and the former Soviet Union. In addition, the failure of the Clinton Administration's policy of "assertive multilateralism"—that is, attempting to work through the United Nations to establish peace in war torn places like Somalia—marked the end of any hope of creating a new world order.

In the wake of this disappointing turn of events came a loss of confidence in freedom and democracy, particularly in Russia, Eastern Europe, and other places where democratic reforms were supposed to take root after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Western values were no longer on the march, but in retreat.

Indeed, in some parts of the world, there has been a furious and quite conscious rejection of Western liberalism, defined here as the belief in freedom, individualism, a market economy, and representative government—better known as "democracy" (by the way, the purest form of these values can be found in American and British conservatism). The Bosnian Serbs who practiced ethnic cleansing seemed to be atavistic freaks, harking back to a time when fascism and nazism were the main challenges to Western liberalism. So, too, were the mass killings in Rwanda, where thugs hacked away at dead bodies only because they belonged to a different tribe. Radical nationalism and ethnic hatreds are, in fact, rampant throughout the world—from Russia to South Africa, and from Serbia to Tajikistan. You can even see them in the Western world as well—in Germany, for example, where neo-nazis are disturbing the political peace. These nationalists are fast becoming a defining factor in the post-Cold War era.

**Nationalism.** Nationalism and ethnic separatism, of course, can take many forms. Nationalism can be xenophobic and exclusionary, as in Bosnia, Russia, and other parts of Eastern Europe and Eurasia. But it can also have a human face, appearing to be mere expression of democracy. For example, in her elation over Nelson Mandela's inauguration as president, a South African black woman said recently: "We have always had such low esteem. Now is the time to be... who we are. To tell the truth, that is why our children must go back to our basic culture." After hearing this, another black woman added, "and to maintain our blackness."

In other words, black majoritarian rule in South Africa will finally give blacks the opportunity "to be black." But maintaining "blackness" is not what a multiracial democracy is about. Democracy is about individual human rights and representative government, regardless of race. Democracy is supposed to be color-blind. These women's opinions, which are widely shared by members of the African National Congress, show that while black nationalism in Africa appears to be democratic—in the sense that it is compatible with majoritarian rule—it is not "liberal." No classic liberal doctrine would put race at the center of its definition of democracy.

While nationalism in Africa often is motivated by racial pride and tribal hatreds, nationalism in other parts of the world is not racial or even ethnically based. For example, many of the leaders in the Bosnian war, whether they be Serb or Muslim, are old apparatchiks in the Communist leadership of former Yugoslavia. They are stirring up old religious hatreds for political gain, not necessarily because they are Muslim believers or nationalist fanatics. Being of the same ethnic heritage, Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims are pawns in the hands of Yugoslavia's old Communist leaders who are struggling for power and territory.

But whether nationalism is ethnically based or not—or whether it is a power tool or a political philosophy—it is still fundamentally illiberal.

**Neo-Communism.** So, too, are the various former Communist parties which, refashioning themselves as democratic socialists, are making a political comeback in Poland, Hungary, and Russia. Some of these neo-communists may accept the rules of democracy, and even pretend to embrace a market economy. Others may not. Some call themselves socialists, while others keep the name Communist. But one thing is certain: their political roots are not in Western liberalism.

Between neo-communism and Western liberalism, the conflict is mainly—but not only—over economic policy. Notwithstanding their market and democratic rhetoric, neo-communists in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union still favor socialist economic policies.

But that is not all they favor. Despite their abandonment of their totalitarian past, neo-communists throughout Eastern Europe and Eurasia still embrace a collectivist view of society and politics; Russian Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, for example, says repeatedly that the individualistic thinking of Western liberalism is “hostile to the Russian mentality.” Moreover, most neo-communists are more nationalistic in their foreign policy than liberal reformers. The Communist Party in Russia, for example, takes an imperialist position in foreign policy, calling for the restoration of the Soviet Union.

**Islamic Fundamentalism.** Western liberalism is under attack from Islamic and other forms of religious fundamentalism as well. Radical Islam, of course, is not a new phenomenon. Its struggle with Western liberalism began in earnest with the 1978-1979 Iranian revolution, and its presence during the Cold War period was mostly as a separate side show, only occasionally influencing the central game (in Afghanistan, for example).

However, radical Islam today has taken on a new face. It is more diverse, unpredictable, and therefore more dangerous. It has the new face of Iranian-backed guerrilla training camps in Sudan, Lebanon, and Afghanistan, of radical Islamic fundamentalists in Algeria, of new terrorist cells in Egypt and Lebanon, and even of terrorists attacks inside the U.S.—for example, on the World Trade Center in New York.

**The Forces of Illiberalism.** These three phenomena — nationalism, neo-communism and Islamic and other forms of religious fundamentalism — are today the main political and ideological threats and rivals to Western liberalism. They are the main forces of illiberalism in the world today. With their roots deep in history, they nonetheless have come to occupy a new place not only in world politics, but in history. They have supplanted the great ideological conflict that raged for much of the 20th century between totalitarian communism and fascism on the one side and Western liberalism on the other.

There are many differences between this old ideological and political struggle and the new ones. For one thing, neither nationalism nor Islamic fundamentalism has any significant following within the Western world, as communism and fascism once did (nationalism, however, is growing even in the Western world—in Europe, for example). For another, as ideologies, communism and fascism had far broader appeal in their time than nationalism, neo-communism, and Islamic fundamentalism do today. Moreover, neo-communism is not really totalitarian, nor is it as threatening and widespread as the original version.

But there is one striking similarity between the old twilight struggle and the new one: in both cases, there is a conflict between the basic tenets of illiberalism and liberalism.

For example, between nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism, on the one hand, and Western liberalism on the other, you see a conflict between:

- ✓ The identity, rights, and allegiances of a group, religious community or nation (in nationalism and radical Islam) vs. the rights of individuals (in Western liberalism)
- ✓ Authoritarian government vs. representative government
- ✓ Order vs. liberty
- ✓ Monolithic political systems vs. political pluralism
- ✓ Closed conformist cultures vs. open, competitive ones
- ✓ Corporate, statist or socialist economies vs. market economies

The conflict between neo-communism and Western liberalism is more ambiguous. It is still an open question whether the conversion of neo-communists to democracy and market economic principles is sincere. However, their adherence to socialist policies, their authoritarian streak, and their nationalist foreign policies suggest that it is not.

I do not wish to explain too much with this thesis; obviously, there are many developments in Bosnia, Russia, and the Middle East that must be explained by factors other than nationalism, neo-communism, and Islamic fundamentalism.

But I do believe that in these three phenomena we are witnessing a significant historical development: a reinvigoration of illiberal political movements. In other words, we are witnessing the revival of old challenges to Western liberalism, but done so in a new historical context and, in some cases, in new ways.

These new movements, though not as threatening as totalitarianism, could nonetheless prove to be dangerous indeed. In their extreme forms, nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism are already very dangerous. They could become even more so in the future. And while the twilight struggle with communism lasted only around 70 years, the West's struggle with permutations of nationalism, Islamic fundamentalism, and other illiberal movements based on culture and religion could last much longer. After all, culture, religion, and national identities run much deeper than ideologies based on the theories of intellectuals.

There is one more point to consider. It is not quite right to suggest that the threat of Communist and fascist totalitarianism represented mainly a crisis within Western civilization. To be sure, there was a clash between liberalism and communism within the Western intellectual tradition, but in reality the conflict was much broader than that, encompassing political and cultural traditions outside the West. For example, Russia historically was not part of the West, yet it was there and in other non-Western countries, like China, that communism took root. And even in pre-World War II Germany, the root cause of nazism was the lack of a Western liberal tradition. At best, pre-war Germany was divided between East and West, while Russia had its roots in Byzantium and oriental forms of despotism.

In other words, communism and nazism took root in countries that either were outside the Western tradition, or were only tenuously tied to it.

If this is true, then it is not right to dismiss the reinvigoration of illiberal movements as insignificant because they are not occurring mainly within the West. In fact, nationalism already is an important political factor in Central and Eastern Europe, and it could prove to very dangerous indeed in Russia. With the exception of Germany and (hopefully) Japan, the future threats to Western liberalism most likely will come from the same places that have threatened it in the past—from Russia, China and the Middle East.

**The Old and the New.** Where the old and the new meet in this post-modern age is in the “the ideology of the group,” which is becoming more pervasive in political culture throughout the globe. Old group ideologies such as nationalism are being revived at a time when new forms of group ideologies are finding greater currency in the Western world. In the multicultural movement in this country, for example, group-defined rights of all kinds are working their way into U.S. law. Individuals are seeking special protection from the state because they belong to a group defined as a historical victim of discrimination.

Nationalism, of course, is a classic group ideology. It places the nation and its culture—the group—above the individual. This emphasis on the group is one of the reasons why nationalist states are so prone to form dictatorships and to endanger their neighbors. What worth is the individual or a neighboring country when the good and glory of the nation or ethnic group is of central importance? Suspending the rights of individuals or transgressing against neighboring nations is a lot easier to do under a group ideology than under Western liberalism. The former poses a defensive “us versus them” mentality, while the latter assumes a universality where all individuals and nations are created equal.

One reason why “democratic” nations—that is, nations sharing the values of Western liberalism—get along with one another better than nations which do not is that democracies share a belief in the principles of representative government, the market economy, and civil liberties. These domestic principles inspire their international principles, and thus define and limit their actions in world politics. Democracies can find common ground because they pursue their national interests according to common rules and internationally accepted standards of behavior, all of which are grounded in the classic Western liberal tradition.

Contrast this with the attitude of a nation whose legitimacy is grounded in notions of nationalism or sectarian religion. If the basic principle of political legitimacy is the cultural or religious rights of a people and a nation—something which is narrow, particularistic, and in some cases even xenophobic—then that nation and those people share nothing in common with other peoples or other nations. International politics becomes a zero-sum game. It would be a source of much instability and many wars.

It is no accident that some of the most disruptive and dangerous forces on the world scene today are also the most illiberal. There is a connection between their illiberal political culture and their aggressive and in some cases imperialistic foreign policies. Ultrationalists, Islamic fundamentalists, and other illiberal extremists want to overturn the international order because they believe it threatens their culture. Russian nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky wants to redraw the map of Eurasia, washing the boots of Russian soldiers in the Indian Ocean, because he believes that Russians are superior to other nationalities and have a right to lord over others. To a radical Iranian mullah, Khomeini’s brand of Islamic faith justifies not only assassination for blasphemous writings, but attacks on neighboring countries. And to Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, the cause of Serbian nationalism requires not only dismembering Bosnia, but thumbing his nose at NATO, the United Nations, and the entire outside world.

This understanding of nationalism and other group ideologies in world politics is important for us to know. It shows that we are not dealing with forces that can be easily accommodated or won over. It shows an intractability and inflexibility that is based on fundamentally different values and goals—something akin to that which Communist regimes displayed toward us during the Cold War. And it shows that the U.S. agenda of pressing for democracy and free markets abroad has limits, not only practically but philosophically and culturally.

## THE WORLD DIVIDED: THE REALIGNMENT OF WORLD POWER

I would now like to turn to a second trend in world politics—one that is partly the result of some of the forces I have already described.

The world today is undergoing a profound realignment of power. The end of the Cold War did more than unleash pent-up forces like nationalism. It also rearranged the stage of global politics. It took some old players, like the Soviet Union, out of the game, creating power vacuums in Europe and Eurasia. It added new prominence to other countries like Japan and China which are playing greater regional roles than before. Of course, it helped to create a passiveness in U.S. foreign policy, reflected in Bill Clinton's near paralysis on issues like Bosnia. And while it eased some longstanding conflicts, such as between the Arabs and Israelis, it created new ones in Bosnia and large parts of the former Soviet Union.

**Collapsing Power Centers and Power Vacuums.** Perhaps the single most striking feature of this new realignment of power is the collapse of former power centers and the creation of power vacuums. The most obvious of this case, of course, has been in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As a result, wars have broken out in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan, and Bosnia, and there is widespread instability throughout the region. Nor should we forget that Russia has been on the verge of civil war twice in the past three years.

The obvious result has been to take Russia out of the superpower game. We thought for a while—in the heady days of the new world order and the Persian Gulf war—that U.S.-Russian cooperation would bring peace to a host of regional conflicts.

While cooperation with Russia was rather good in 1991-1992, lately Russia has proven to be either too weak or unwilling to play a major international role in settling regional conflicts. Moscow's inability to persuade the Serbs to keep their peace pledges, for example, has shown the limits of their contribution to European peace and stability.

Another consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Empire has been the steady discrediting of existing international institutions. This was wholly unexpected. Many people believed that the United Nations would triumph now that the paralyzing East-West conflict was over. Of course, it did not.

And many thought that NATO and other Western security structures in Europe could weather the collapse of the Warsaw Pact. Of course, NATO has had a difficult time finding a new identity. The Bosnian crisis has bled the credibility out not only of NATO, but out of the United Nations as well.

While NATO has had a hard time, the former countries of the Warsaw Pact have had even more difficulties. They have been unable to integrate themselves adequately into any international or regional system of security or political and economic cooperation. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are knocking on NATO's door. But the allies refuse to open it wide enough to let them in, shunting them instead to an ambiguously defined antechamber. The Commonwealth of Independent States is weak and unworkable. And the United Nations has proved completely unable to influence events in the CIS and Eastern Europe.

All in all, the former states of the Eastern bloc are, for a variety of reasons, not doing very well. Nor are they being integrated rapidly into the West, as we hoped a few years back. They are stumbling along, seething in their instability, and the lack of any transnational system to establish regional security does not bode well for the future.

Other power vacuums are emerging in the world as well. The defeat of Saddam Hussein has created a power vacuum which only the United States can fill. The U.S. now is the main military

power containing not only Iraq, but Iran. A defeated Iraq removed the only major regional countervailing power against Iran, which is still a security problem for the United States and Iran's neighbors in the Persian Gulf.

If the United States were to leave the Persian Gulf today, we might be inviting Iranian aggression against Bahrain or the United Arab Emirates. Yet we cannot rely on Iraq to counterbalance Iran's ambitions in the Persian Gulf. It is an extremely paradoxical situation. We are committed to a so-called dual containment policy against both Iran and Iraq, but because these countries are enemies of each other as well as enemies of ours, we cannot cooperate openly with one against the other to establish a balance of power in the region.

The situation is equally complex in two other regions of the world that are experiencing the shock of rapid transition—the Middle East and Africa. In the Middle East, the closer the PLO-Israeli peace negotiators came to an agreement in principle, the more extremists tried to sabotage it with terrorism. The same was true in the South African elections, where terrorist attacks escalated in the days before the polls opened.

In both cases, the greatest danger of destabilizing political violence may come after the peace agreement or after the elections. Expectations have been raised very high for those who favor peace in the Middle East and democracy in South Africa. These expectations can be easily disappointed if peace or democracy do not produce quick results. The problem may begin when those who opposed the Arab-Israeli peace accord (the radical Arabs and Islamic fundamentalists) or the South African elections (some of the Zulus or the radical whites) refuse to accept the new order of things. Their refusal may be destabilizing, spoiling the peace and possibly destroying it.

My point on the Middle East and South Africa is this: despite the progress being made toward peace and democracy, these regions will remain unstable for some time to come. There is still a vacuum of political legitimacy in the Middle East and South Africa, mainly because some very outspoken and in some cases dangerous groups are refusing to accept the legitimacy of the new order.

**New Power Shifts.** The balance of power is not only collapsing in some regions around the world, creating instability and new conflicts in the process, but it is shifting as well on a global scale. Let me give you a few examples.

1. **Power has shifted from Russia.** But strangely the United States has not gained power as Russia as lost it. Over the past year and a half, the U.S. has not been as assertive as it could have been. President Clinton has made foreign policy a stepchild of his Administration, concentrating most of his attention on domestic policy. The U.S. has not shown much leadership in the world. Thus, America's power is not being exercised. It remains merely potential.

America's power in the world is being weakened today not by adversaries, but by itself—by the indifference of its electorate (and the Congress) in foreign affairs, and by the ineptness of its leadership. We may be seeing a sort of creeping isolationism, not by design, but by drift as the U.S. slowly but inexorably pulls back from overseas commitments either out of indifference or incompetence.

2. **As America's power recedes globally, Russia's power will reemerge regionally.** Russia will probably become more nationalistic over the next few years, reasserting itself in what it calls the "near abroad." As it does so, it will attempt to reestablish its dominance in territories of the former Soviet Union. It will not be strong enough to

## FREEDOM AND POWER IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

The realignment of global power, of course, is the result of many factors—economic, political and military. But one of the most clear and consistent factors affecting the realignment of global power is the pressure of illiberal political movements and forces—namely, nationalism, neo-communism, and Islamic and other forms of radical religious fundamentalism.

These movements are not only the driving force behind much of the instability and warfare in the world today. They also are the main political and ideological alternatives to Western liberalism. As such, they represent “another way,” a source of legitimacy upon which leaders and politicians around the world will be tempted to draw as they seek an alternative to Western liberalism.

Examples of how these movements are changing or may change the global balance of power are many:

1. **Nationalism is the biggest threat in Russia and the former Soviet Union.** Its most extreme form, of course, is expressed in the ravings of Vladimir Zhirinovsky. But nationalism is also a factor in the foreign policy of the Russian Communist Party. While the dangers of Russian nationalism are not immediately evident, Russian nationalism could be the force that puts Russia on a collision course again with the West. Nationalism already is causing the foreign policy of Boris Yeltsin, who is neither a radical nationalist nor a neo-communist, to drift in an anti-Western direction.
2. **The conflict in Bosnia is undermining the security and stability — and ultimately, the balance of power — of Europe.** A war with elements of nationalism, communism, and Islamic politics, the Bosnian conflict has undermined the confidence and credibility of NATO. Stirring up the fundamentalists and nationalists in Turkey, which is NATO's only Islamic member, the Bosnian war also has been an irritation in NATO/U.S.-Turkish relations. Europeans are paralyzed and divided by the conflict, while the United States lunges back and forth between extremes of action and inaction.

Partly as a result of this paralysis, the war in Bosnia has helped to slow the expansion of NATO. The fear and trembling caused by Bosnia has made NATO reluctant to embrace Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and other Central and East European countries as full members of the alliance.

The Bosnian conflict also has become an irritation in Russia's relations with the West. Smarting over being left out of NATO's decisions to launch air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs, the Russians can no longer be counted on to support Western positions in Bosnia, which tend to favor the Muslims over the Russians' long-time ally, the Serbs.

Russia also objects to the rapid expansion of NATO eastward. This objection is the major reason why the Clinton Administration has been slow to let Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic join NATO. While there are many reasons for Yeltsin's objections to NATO's expansion, one of them is surely to appease Russian nationalists who are outraged by the West's treatment of the Serbs. Thus, in one more way, the nationalist hatreds stirred up by the Bosnian conflict contribute to a growing East-West divide.

The slow expansion of NATO and this East-West divide have created a power vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe. Since power, like nature, abhors a vacuum, this situation is probably short-lived. When this vacuum is filled, which it surely will be, it will greatly change the balance of power in Europe, either for or against NATO.



- 3. Radical Islam is contributing to a realignment of global power in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia.** First and foremost, it is threatening North Africa and the Middle East with revolutionary upheaval. Radical Islamic groups are on the rise in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and among the Palestinians. Although radical fundamentalists in each country thrive on economic stagnation, local radicals also receive help from foreign Islamic revolutionaries.

The chief culprit in this movement is Iran, which is a threat in its own right to the stability and oil supplies of the Persian Gulf. Iran has become the chief supporter and ally of Sudan's National Islamic Front, a Sunni fundamentalist movement that came to power in 1989. Fundamentalist terrorists from Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia are trained by Iranian revolutionary guards in Sudan, which has overshadowed Lebanon's Bekaa valley as a base for the export of Iran's radical brand of fundamentalism.

These Islamic revolutionaries are targeting not only North African countries, but more important, two strategically important states—Egypt and Turkey. Sudan-trained Islamic terrorists are trying, with Iran's backing, to destabilize Egypt. Lebanon is the staging area for attacks on Turkey. Terrorist attacks are on the rise in Egypt, while the Turkish Islamic Jihad has been responsible for a series of murders and bombings in Turkey.

The establishment of a radical Islamic Egypt would send shock waves through the Arab world and incite Islamic revolution elsewhere. A radical Islamic Turkey would send NATO into a crisis, possibly leading to Turkey's involvement not only in the Azerbaijani-Armenian war, but in the war in Bosnia.

There are other geopolitical implications of Islamic fundamentalism. The collapse of the Soviet Union has opened the way for Iranian and radical Islamic influence to move into Central and South Asia. Iran is expanding its ties with Islamic groups in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Moreover, Iran supports radical fundamentalists in Afghanistan, who in turn back the Tajik fundamentalists. On top of that, Iran is shopping in the former Soviet Union for weapons-related nuclear equipment and nuclear scientists.

The spread of Islamic fundamentalism in Central and South Asia could have a profound affect on the regional balance of power in Eurasia, Central Asia, and South Asia. It could produce a vehemently negative reaction from Russia, possibly unleashing a Russian drive southward to counter the Islamic threat. Moreover, if radical Islam were to spread to Pakistan, it could produce a conflict between Pakistan and India, which are two nuclear-armed states. Pakistani support for radical Islamic fundamentalists in Kashmir already has become a major source of friction in Indo-Pakistani relations.

- 4. The spread of nuclear weapons and missiles around the world is a time bomb that could be set off by any of the major illiberal forces.** All the major players in arms proliferation are either Communist governments, Islamic regimes, or Arab nationalist states. The worst proliferators of nuclear technologies and missile systems are communist China and North Korea. The main recipients of these technologies have been Islamic Iran and Pakistan, and Arab nationalist Iraq (at least before the Persian Gulf war) and Syria. India has been guilty of proliferating missile systems, but so far it is a minor player in this game.

This proliferation network of illiberal regimes has obvious implications for regional balances of power. For example, a nuclear Iran, backed largely by China, would become the dominant regional power in the Persian Gulf. Moreover, if Iran were to develop long-range missiles, it would become a direct threat to the United States.

But proliferation also has obvious implications for international terrorism. In extreme cases, some of these illiberal regimes may use terrorist surrogates to brandish weapons of mass destruction not only to intimidate and blackmail foes, but to project their power beyond their borders.

5. **It is hard to say if any of these illiberal movements will affect China, which seems to be marching to its own tune.** The authority of the Communist Party will likely wane in the future as economic growth undermines control from Beijing. As the legitimacy of communism weakens, the main force holding China together in the future increasingly will be Chinese culture and some form of Chinese nationalism. The emerging Chinese economic system is likely to be more capitalistic and market-oriented, while the political system will probably remain authoritarian yet more decentralized. While the emergence of liberal democracy in China is not out of the question, it is unlikely.

This new Chinese consciousness could play an important role in China's image of itself as a great power. If it is unlikely that China will evolve into a liberal democracy, then China will probably not become a Western partner in Asia, but rather remain a Western rival.

This does not mean that China and the West must become implacable enemies or even hostile to one another. But by not sharing the West's liberal values, China may continue to define its interests in ways that are incompatible with Western values and interests. China, for example, may continue to see calls for democratization, human rights improvements, and cooperation with the West as a ploy to subvert its interests. As its power grows, China will assert its own values, interests, and cultures against those of the West.

In this way, China's "being different" than the West takes on geopolitical significance; it becomes a factor in China's drive for power and influence in Asia, possibly at the expense of the United States.

## CONCLUSION

Ladies and gentlemen, I have sketched two pictures for you this afternoon. One of rising illiberal political movements. And the second of shifting balances of global power caused or influenced by these movements. Both of these developments do not bode well for American security. It is disturbing that at a time when anti-Western nationalist forces are on the rise, U.S. power is waning. America is cutting its defense forces nearly in half; it is not tending properly to its alliances in Europe and Asia. If we keep this up, we will be unprepared to deal not only with pesky nationalist thugs or Islamic terrorists, but with the most likely challenges to the global balance of power in the future—from Russia and China.

But the future need not be so gloomy. There are, in fact, bright prospects for North, Central, and South America. The passage of the NAFTA may have set loose a steamroller of free trade and democracy in this hemisphere. This could create millions of jobs for all Americans, north and south, and help institutionalize democracy throughout the region.

And I am not entirely ready to give up on Russia and China. If more or less successful, democratic and market reforms could attenuate the historical tendencies of these countries to reject Western liberalism and to challenge the international order.

Since we cannot predict the future with accuracy, our only choice is to remain vigilant and to preserve the power and position of the United States in the world. This is our best insurance policy against future catastrophe. It is our only choice if we wish to remain a free nation.