

2007

Hegemony Under Siege: The Crisis of American Power in the Middle East

Henry Berger
Washington University, Department of History

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.slu.edu/lj>



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Henry Berger, *Hegemony Under Siege: The Crisis of American Power in the Middle East*, 52 St. Louis U. L.J. (2007).

Available at: <https://scholarship.law.slu.edu/lj/vol52/iss1/16>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Saint Louis University Law Journal by an authorized editor of Scholarship Commons. For more information, please contact [Susie Lee](#).

HEGEMONY UNDER SIEGE: THE CRISIS OF AMERICAN POWER IN THE MIDDLE EAST

HENRY BERGER*

It is likely that we shall have to wait for the historians to sort out all the reasons why the administration of George W. Bush led the United States into its current predicament in the Middle East. It will undoubtedly take even longer to unravel all the consequences of its actions.

Justifying the American invasion and occupation of Iraq, now in its fifth year, the President has argued that the United States must remain in Iraq to prevent terrorists, specifically al Qaeda, from turning the country into a “sanctuary” from which they “will follow us home.”¹ Ignoring critics who have maintained that the American military offense greatly facilitated the development of terrorist operations in Iraq, the administration also began, in June 2007, to discuss plans for a long term U.S. presence in the country, maintaining military bases there and likening the projected American presence

* Henry W. Berger is Professor Emeritus of History at Washington University in St. Louis where he taught courses on the history of American foreign policy and protest politics for thirty-five years. Soon after Thomas F. Eagleton retired from the United Senate and returned to St. Louis, he and Professor Berger co-taught a highly regarded course on the Vietnam War era for thirteen years.

1. President George W. Bush, Commencement Address to United States Coast Guard Academy Graduates (May 23, 2007), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070523-4.html>; see also Sheryl G. Stolberg, *Bush Says Iraq Pullout Leaves U.S. at Risk*, N.Y. TIMES, May 24, 2007, at A16. The President made the same argument to the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in August 2007. Thom Shanker, *Historians Question Bush's Reading of Lessons of Vietnam War for Iraq*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 23, 2007, at A8. It was in this address that the President made the claim that leaving Iraq would have the same consequences as did America's departure from South East Asia in the 1970s: North Vietnam's victory in South Vietnam, the conquest by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and large numbers of refugees who fled the region in the aftermath of the conflict. *Id.* The President ignored the largely accepted view that the United States was losing the war in Vietnam, could not win it, and facilitated the victory of the Khmer Rouge by its bombing and on-the-ground military intervention in Cambodia. See, e.g., GEORGE C. HERRING, AMERICA'S LONGEST WAR: THE UNITED STATES AND VIETNAM 323–68 (4th ed. 2002); JAMES S. OLSON & RANDY ROBERTS, WHERE THE DOMINO FELL: AMERICA AND VIETNAM 1945–2006, 233–45 (5th ed. 2006); George Packer, *Planning for Defeat: How Should We Withdraw From Iraq?*, NEW YORKER, Sept. 17, 2007, at 56–65.

to that in South Korea where U.S. troops have been stationed for fifty-four years following the armistice that was negotiated in 1953.²

The analogy of Iraq with Korea is gravely flawed. The United States entered the Korean War under a United Nations mandate to assist in repelling North Korea's invasion of South Korea.³ A clearly defined armistice line was drawn at the end of hostilities.⁴ Though still a divided country, Korea has not been enmeshed in the sectarian violence, terrorist warfare, and gang-related assaults which, though recently in decline, have been a daily occurrence in Iraq.⁵ Most Iraqis oppose the American occupation, undertaken without United Nations authorization, and the proposed establishment of military facilities in their country.⁶ The Korean analogy is no more valid than were earlier Bush administration attempts to compare its actions in Iraq with the occupation of Germany and Japan at the end of World War II.⁷

The administration's grandiose plans to re-make the Middle East, originally conceived as a dividend from an expected success in Iraq, now appear indefinitely frustrated. Rising tensions with an Iranian regime that has expanded its reach in the region, a virtual civil war in the Palestinian territories between Fatah and Hamas, and a fragile political structure in Lebanon have only intensified the challenges facing an increasingly vulnerable administration.⁸ While U.S. military hegemony in the area (and in the world at large) remains unassailable, its potency has decreased because America's political and diplomatic leverage has eroded and the nation's dependence on Middle East oil has not lessened.⁹

2. See David E. Sanger, *With Korea as Model, Bush Team Ponders Long Support Role in Iraq*, N.Y. TIMES, June 3, 2007, at A1; Stolberg, *supra* note 1 (quoting Richard A. Clarke and Sen. Harry Reid (D.-Nev)).

3. Howard S. Levie, *How It All Started—And How It Ended: A Legal Study of the Korean War*, 35 AKRON L. REV. 205, 214–16 (2002).

4. Sanger, *supra* note 2.

5. See *id.*

6. See Gregory H. Fox, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 36 GEO. J. INT'L L. 195, 201–02 (2005) (noting the hostilities in Iraq were commenced without the authorization of the United Nations); Douglas Jehl & David E. Sanger, *The Struggle for Iraq: Occupation Foes; Iraqis' Bitterness Is Called Bigger Threat than Terror*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 17, 2007, at A12; Lawrence Wright, *Ask the Iraqis*, NEW YORKER, Oct. 22, 2007 at 57.

7. Sanger, *supra* note 2. David Sanger reported that the U.S. bases in Iraq would be located “at Al Asad in Anbar Province, Balad Air Base about 50 miles north of Baghdad, and Tallil Air Base in the south.” *Id.*

8. See Steven Erlanger, *Hamas-Fatah Gunfight Worsens Factional Strife in Gaza*, N.Y. TIMES, May 12, 2007, at A3; Hassan M. Fattah, *Furious Street Battles Remind Lebanon of Its Bloody Past*, N.Y. TIMES, May 23, 2007, at A12; Mark Mazzetti & David S. Cloud, *Bush Defends Moving Against Iranians Who Help Shiites Attack U.S.-Led Forces in Iraq*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 27, 2007, at A8.

9. Since 9/11, the United States has invaded Afghanistan and Iraq and has dispatched armed forces around the world to fight terrorism. U.S. defense spending totals “more than the

Despite the presence of over 162,000 U.S. troops, an additional 12,000 men from coalition countries (mostly British), and Iraqi security forces totaling 360,000, violence in Iraq has not ended, two million Iraqis have fled the country, and more than two million additional Iraqis have been internally displaced.¹⁰ Oil and electricity production have stalled at their 2004 levels while the annual gross domestic growth rate of four percent is far less than it was in May 2004 (forty percent).¹¹ Most telling of all, Iraqi confidence in their nation's future has dropped from seventy percent in 2003, just after the downfall of Saddam Hussein, to thirty-six percent in 2007.¹² Fifty-five percent of Iraqis supported a strong central government in August 2007, a decline from eighty-five percent in August 2003.¹³

Nor has the Iraqi government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki met most of the "benchmark" political goals set by the United States, such as an oil revenue sharing agreement and a timetable for provincial elections, essential to the future stability of the country.¹⁴ Maliki was quoted as saying to an American military commander that "[t]here are two mentalities in this region, conspiracy and mistrust."¹⁵ In mid-September 2007, the outlook for a resolution of the multiple crises in Iraq was not promising despite a decrease in August of daily attacks by insurgents and militias, a decline in U.S. troop and Iraqi security force fatalities, and a reduction in Iraqi civilian deaths.¹⁶

Nonetheless, in a candid assessment of United States policy in the Middle East five months earlier, conservative columnist David Brooks wrote that the ongoing national debate about whether to support President Bush's decision increasing American forces in Iraq (Bush had already begun to execute the troop "surge") was not about "retracting American power and influence."¹⁷ Even most critics of the escalation, Brooks pointed out, "take it for granted that

combined military budgets of China, Russia, India, and Britain." Fareed Zakaria, *Beyond Bush: What the World Needs Is an Open, Confident America*, NEWSWEEK, June 11, 2007, at 24. Discussion of America's oil dependence will follow in this article.

10. Jason Campbell et al., *The State Of Iraq: An Update*, N.Y. TIMES, June 10, 2007, § 4, at 15 [hereinafter Campbell June 10]; Jason Campbell et al., *The State Of Iraq: An Update*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 4, 2007, at A23 [hereinafter Campbell Sept. 4]; David S. Cloud, *Violence Rising in Much of Iraq, Pentagon Says*, N.Y. TIMES, June 14, 2007, at A14; Josh White, *It "Makes Sense" to Consider a Draft, War Czar Says*, SEATTLE TIMES, Aug. 11, 2007, at A1; Zakaria, *supra* note 9, at 28.

11. Campbell June 10, *supra* note 10.

12. *Id.*

13. Campbell Sept. 4, *supra* note 10.

14. Damien Cave, *Iraqis are Failing to Meet Benchmarks Set by U.S.*, N.Y. TIMES, June 13, 2007, at A1.

15. *Id.*

16. Campbell Sept. 4, *supra*, note 10; Damien Cave & Stephen Farrell, *At Street Level, Unmet Goals of Troop Buildup*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 9, 2007, at A1.

17. David Brooks, *The Iraq Syndrome, R.I.P.*, N.Y. TIMES, Feb. 1, 2007, at A23.

the U.S. is going to be in the Middle East for a long time to come;” “No major American leader doubts that America must remain, as Dean Acheson put it, the locomotive of the world.”¹⁸

Acheson made that claim at the dawn of America’s global reach at the outset of the Cold War.¹⁹ It was also the moment when Great Britain was compelled to relinquish its role as imperial overseer around the globe. Britain was unable to continue funding economic aid to Greece and Turkey.²⁰ In February 1947, the British Ambassador asked that the United States assume the responsibility.²¹ Secretary of State George Marshall noted that “it was tantamount to British abdication from the Middle East with obvious implications as to their successor.”²²

Long an admirer of the British Empire even when he thought its leaders employed the wrong tactics in running it, Acheson was confident that the United States could and should take the reins of leadership from Great Britain on behalf of “western civilization” against Soviet Communism and against nationalist threats to global stability.²³ A major policymaker in the presidential administration of Harry S. Truman, Acheson was well positioned to act on his vision of American power.²⁴ He played a central role in formulating the Truman Doctrine, the American response to the crisis, and in gaining its acceptance from key congressional leaders.²⁵ Never shy of ownership, the pithy Acheson later wrote that “this was my crisis.”²⁶ He insisted that the President emphasize the danger of communism in order to attract wide public

18. *Id.*

19. DOUGLAS BRINKLEY, DEAN ACHESON: THE COLD WAR YEARS, 1953–71, 133 (1992).

20. THE FORRESTAL DIARIES 245 (Walter Millis ed., 1951); DEAN ACHESON, PRESENT AT THE CREATION: MY YEARS IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT 217 (1969).

21. ACHESON, *supra* note 20, at 217–18.

22. THE FORRESTAL DIARIES, *supra* note 20. It should be noted that in 1947 Greece was regarded as much a part of the Middle East as of Europe. The British, for example, considered Greece the western anchor of their imperial lifeline that stretched from the Mediterranean through the Suez Canal to the Indian Ocean. The “Near East,” a geographical designation invented by Britain and France, was defined in terms of its distance between those countries and the “Far East.” The region was diplomatically reconfigured after World War II by the United States Department of State, a process largely guided by Dean Acheson. Today, Greece is not included in the grouping and the Middle East is defined as including Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, the Persian Gulf states, Yemen, Iran, and Afghanistan.

23. JOHN T. MCNAY, ACHESON AND EMPIRE: THE BRITISH ACCENT IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY 6 (2001).

24. Acheson was, he later said of himself, “present at the creation” of American foreign policy during and after the Second World War, serving in succession as Assistant Secretary of State (1941–1945), Undersecretary of State (1945–1947), and finally as Secretary of State (1949–1953). See ACHESON, *supra* note 20, at vii, viii, ix. A recent study of Acheson’s empathy towards empire is MCNAY, *supra* note 23.

25. ACHESON, *supra* note 20, at 217–19; MCNAY, *supra* note 23.

26. ACHESON, *supra* note 20, at 219; MCNAY, *supra* note 23.

support rather than mention American economic interests in the Middle East, including oil, that might also be endangered should either Greece or Turkey fall to Communism.²⁷

But as intra-State Department memos concerning the drafting of the Truman Doctrine made clear, policymakers understood the economic as well as the political and ideological stakes at hand.²⁸ As one official, Joseph Jones, wrote on February 26, 1947, the crisis was “primarily an economic crisis centered in Britain and [its] Empire, France, Greece[,] and China.”²⁹ These were “precisely the areas from which the U.S. has in the past received its greatest protection and from which United States foreign policy now draws its greatest strength[,] . . . areas . . . where there exists, or we hope will exist,” he observed, “friendly and democratic bases for United States foreign policy.”³⁰ The situation, if not addressed, “will have the most profound repercussions imaginable,” Jones warned.³¹ “If these areas were allowed to spiral downwards into economic anarchy, then at best they will drop out of the U.S. orbit and try an independent nationalistic policy; at worst they will swing into the Russian orbit.”³² Neither course would be acceptable, and the outcome, he predicted, would be “a depression far greater than that of 1929–1932” because of the loss of export markets for American goods and capital.³³

The Truman Doctrine, which rallied the Congress and the public behind the administration’s Cold War, anti-communist foreign policy was, therefore, also intended to preserve, protect, and advance U.S. national concerns in the context of an international system conducive to American political and economic interests.³⁴ That this latter objective remains a central part of U.S.

27. ACHESON, *supra* note 20, at 220–23; WALTER LAFEVER, *AMERICA, RUSSIA AND THE COLD WAR 1945–2002*, 58–59 (9th ed., McGraw Hill 2002). On the origins of the Cold War in the Middle East, see BRUCE R. KUNIHOLM, *THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR IN THE NEAR EAST: GREAT POWER CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY IN IRAN, TURKEY, AND GREECE* (1980); LAWRENCE S. WITTNER, *AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN GREECE 1943–1949* (1982); Concerning American involvement in Iran which eventually supplanted British dominance, see MARK J. GASIOROWSKI, *U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND THE SHAH: BUILDING A CLIENT STATE IN IRAN* (1991); MARY ANN HEISS, *EMPIRE AND NATIONHOOD: THE UNITED STATES, GREAT BRITAIN, AND IRANIAN OIL 1950–1954* (1997); MARK H. LYTLE, *THE ORIGINS OF THE IRANIAN-AMERICAN ALLIANCE 1941–1953* (1987).

28. *See* Letter from Joseph Jones to William Benton (Feb. 26, 1947) (on file with Harry Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Mo.).

29. *Id.*

30. *Id.*

31. *Id.*

32. *Id.*

33. Letter from Joseph Jones to William Benton (Feb. 26, 1947) (on file with Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Mo.).

34. *See id.*

foreign policy is a principal reason why David Brooks was correct to say that America's sojourn in the Middle East will continue into the indefinite future.³⁵

To be sure, George W. Bush and other administration officials justified the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq as part of a retaliatory war on terror the president declared in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001.³⁶ It may also be true that the President and his colleagues, including former National Security Advisor, currently Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice, believe their own rhetoric about democratizing the Middle East.³⁷ But it is also a matter of public record that the administration did not dismiss equally important national interests in the Middle East or the potential threat it argued Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime posed to those interests.

According to most accounts, Vice President Dick Cheney, a vociferous advocate of an invasion of Iraq, effectively terminated internal administration debate on the matter when he addressed the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on August 26, 2002.³⁸ Issuing what amounted to a declaration of war, Cheney repeated the administration's charges that Saddam possessed weapons of mass destruction and was attempting to secure nuclear weapons.³⁹ "Should all his ambitions be realized," the Vice President pointedly asserted, "the implications would be enormous for the . . . United States and for the peace of the world. . . . Armed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror, and seated atop ten percent of the world's oil reserves, Saddam Hussein could then be expected to seek domination of the entire Middle East, take control of a great portion of the world's energy supplies, directly threaten America's friends throughout the region, and subject the United States or any other nation to nuclear blackmail."⁴⁰

Three weeks after Cheney's remarks to the veterans, President Bush released the National Security Strategy Document (NSSD) to the public, a blue

35. Brooks, *supra* note 17.

36. See Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, 1 PUB. PAPERS 129-36 (Jan. 29, 2002).

37. See *id.*; Address to the Nation on Iraq, 1 PUB. PAPERS 277-80 (Mar. 17, 2003); Address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City, 2 PUB. PAPERS 1572-76 (Sept. 12, 2002); Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York, 1 PUB. PAPERS 917-22 (June 1, 2002); see also, GEORGE PACKER, THE ASSASSINS' GATE: AMERICA IN IRAQ (2005) (for the justification by the Bush Administration of the Iraqi invasion and claims that "Operation Iraqi Freedom" would transform the Middle East); THOMAS E. RICKS, FIASCO (2006); BOB WOODWARD, PLAN OF ATTACK (2004); BOB WOODWARD, STATE OF DENIAL (2006); Jeffrey Goldberg, *Breaking Ranks*, NEW YORKER, Oct. 31, 2005, at 59-60 (concerning Condoleeza Rice).

38. Vice President Dick Cheney, Speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention (Aug. 26, 2002) available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html>; see also PACKER, *supra* note 37, at 61-62; RICKS, *supra* note 37, at 49-51.

39. Cheney, *supra* note 38.

40. *Id.*; PACKER, *supra* note 37, at 61-62; RICKS, *supra* note 37, at 49-51.

print for United States foreign policy in the twenty-first century.⁴¹ The NSDD incorporated the preemptive strike program the President had earlier announced to graduating cadets at West Point and it declared America's "unprecedented—and unequalled—strength and influence in the world."⁴² The document also promoted "a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests."⁴³

The values, "freedom, democracy, and free enterprise," were repeatedly invoked throughout the text of the NSDD.⁴⁴ National interests, assumed to be synonymous with values, were not so much explicitly defined as taken for granted; instead, a series of proposed actions by the United States, presented in power point fashion, were listed, each of them proclaimed as vital to American national security interests: championing human dignity, strengthening alliances to defeat terrorism, and preventing attacks against the United States and our friends, "work[ing] with others to defuse regional conflicts," especially in the Middle East, "prevent[ing] our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends with weapons of mass destruction," expanding "global economic growth through free markets and free trade; . . . opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy;" setting "agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power;" and changing United States national security institutions in the intelligence and military sectors to "meet the challenges . . . [of] the twenty-first century."⁴⁵

Most of the recommendations for executing these measures, however, revealed as much the vulnerabilities of American interests as their importance

41. THE WHITE HOUSE, THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES (Sept. 2002), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>.

42. *Id.*

43. *Id.*; see also ANXIOUS ABOUT EMPIRE: THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS ON THE NEW GLOBAL REALITIES 187–215 (Wes Avram ed. 2004). The President would reiterate the union of interests and values in his second inaugural address: "The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. . . . America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one." President George W. Bush, Second Inaugural Address (Jan. 20, 2005) available at <http://whitehouse.gov/inaugural/>. Intended or not, the President suggested in these remarks that interests and beliefs had not been previously joined in American foreign policy. This was most certainly not true. Revisionist historians William Appleman Williams and Walter LaFeber demonstrated the contrary many years ago and have now been joined by Robert Kagan, long associated with conservative politics. See generally ROBERT KAGAN, DANGEROUS NATION (2006); WALTER LAFEVER, THE AMERICAN AGE: UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY AT HOME AND ABROAD SINCE 1750 (1989); WALTER LAFEVER, THE NEW EMPIRE: AN INTERPRETATION OF AMERICAN EXPANSION, 1860–1898 (1963); WILLIAM A. WILLIAMS, THE CONTOURS OF AMERICAN HISTORY (1961); WILLIAM A. WILLIAMS, THE ROOTS OF THE MODERN AMERICAN EMPIRE: A STUDY OF THE GROWTH AND SHAPING OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN A MARKETPLACE SOCIETY (1969); WILLIAM A. WILLIAMS, THE TRAGEDY OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY (Rev. and Enlarged ed., Dell Publishing Co. 1962).

44. See THE WHITE HOUSE, *supra* note 41, at Introduction.

45. *Id.* at 1–2.

to the nation's continued well being. Acknowledging the dangers of attacks against the United States itself, the NSSD admitted that America was dependent upon allies to combat global terrorism and to defuse regional conflicts, that "Europe and Japan [are] vital to U.S. national security interests," and that policymakers must work "with our allies, trading partners, and energy producers to expand the sources and types of global energy supplied, especially in the Western Hemisphere, Africa, Central Asia, and the Caspian region."⁴⁶

The exclamatory rhetoric extolling American global dominance notwithstanding, the United States has become increasingly dependent on the world it seeks to lead and control. While such dependence was also true in 1947 when Dean Acheson insisted America was the engine that could, the terms of the relationship have changed. Then, America needed the rest of the world as an open marketplace to which it could export goods and capital. Without free trade and free markets, policymakers feared economic depression would recur and Americans would lose their political freedoms.⁴⁷ "We must not go though the thirties again," President Truman warned in a speech at Baylor University in Texas promoting American exports of goods and capital.⁴⁸

Producing half of the world's industrial goods and possessing an overwhelming favorable balance of trade in the post World War II years, the United States was able to finance and supply the recovery of Western Europe and Japan while fueling its own prosperity with domestic oil production.⁴⁹ At the same time waging the Cold War, America maintained dozens of military bases abroad and was the architect of a half dozen major treaty alliances with sixty countries.⁵⁰ Because of its enormous economic, diplomatic, and military

46. *Id.* at 18–20.

47. *See* Address on Foreign Economic Policy, Delivered at Baylor University, PUB. PAPERS 167–72 (Mar. 6, 1947).

48. *Id.*

49. Michael Klare has noted that "during the 1950s, foreign oil accounted for 10[%] of total U.S. consumption" and in the 1960s 18%. MICHAEL T. KLARE, BLOOD AND OIL: THE DANGERS AND CONSEQUENCES OF AMERICA'S GROWING PETROLEUM DEPENDENCY 10 (2004). The increasing dependence on foreign oil began to rise significantly in the 1970s and after. *Id.*; *see also* WILLIAM S. BORDEN, THE PACIFIC ALLIANCE: UNITED STATES FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY AND JAPANESE TRADE RECOVERY, 1947–1955 (1984); MICHAEL J. HOGAN, THE MARSHALL PLAN: AMERICA, BRITAIN, AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF WESTERN EUROPE, 1947–1952 (1987) (concerning U.S. efforts in the postwar recovery of Western Europe and Japan); DAVID S. PAINTER, OIL AND THE AMERICAN CENTURY: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF U.S. FOREIGN OIL POLICY, 1941–1954 (1986); HOWARD SCHONBERGER, AFTERMATH OF WAR: AMERICANS AND THE REMAKING OF JAPAN, 1945–1952 (1989); DANIEL YERGIN, THE PRIZE: THE EPIC QUEST FOR OIL, MONEY, AND POWER (1991).

50. LAFEBER, *supra* note 27, at xx–xxi.

power, the United States was able to meet both its domestic and overseas challenges for nearly a half century.⁵¹

Commencing in the late 1970s, however, industrial goods production in the United States began to decline and foreign imports of those products significantly rose.⁵² The American share of global domestic production is half of what it was in 1950 and manufacturing employment in the United States has shrunk from twenty-two percent in 1977 to eleven percent in 2003.⁵³

While one-third of the world's largest corporations originate in the United States, more than any other country, significant numbers of them have centered their operations abroad, exporting goods into the United States at the expense of domestic jobs and pushing former and potential workers into lower paying service employment.⁵⁴ Emanuel Todd has written, "Since 1988, the profits that they [American based multinationals] bring back into the country amount to less than what foreign companies that set up shop in the United States are taking back to their own countries."⁵⁵

51. See EMMANUEL TODD, *AFTER THE EMPIRE: THE BREAKDOWN OF THE AMERICAN ORDER* 64 (C. Jon Delogu trans., Columbia University Press 2003); LAFEBER, *supra* note 27, at xx–xxi.

52. See TODD, *supra* note 51:

On the eve of the Great Depression of 1929, 44.5[%] of global industrial production was based in the United States as opposed to 11.6[%] in Germany, 9.3[%] in Great Britain, 7[%] in France, 4.6[%] in the Soviet Union, 3.2[%] in Italy, and 2.4[%] in Japan. Seventy years later the industrial production of the United States [was] lower than the combined production of the European Union and only slightly higher than that of Japan.

Id.

53. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, *MANUFACTURING IN AMERICA* 14, 17–18 (Jan. 2004), available at http://www.commerce.gov/opa/press/Secretary_Evans/2004_Releases/Manufacturing%20Report/DOC_MFG_Report_Complete.pdf. The overall share of global domestic production is currently 29%, up from a low of 20% in 1980. Zakaria, *supra* note 9, at 28. The increase, in part, is due to a rising level of defense expenditures and hi-tech goods. See *id.* at 24, 28. In 1950, "sixty percent of the world's manufacturing production . . . came from the United States." Richard B. Du Boff, *U.S. Hegemony: Continuing Decline, Enduring Danger*, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/analysis/2003/12decline.htm>. In 1999, the figure was 25%. *Id.* An example of the decline of industrial goods dominance is the U.S. global share of the automobile industry, nearly 70% in the 1950s, fell to under 18% in 2007 while foreign companies accounted for 51% of auto sales in the United States. Mike Klesius, *Hot Wheels Then & Now*, AARP BULLETIN, March 2007, available at http://www.aarp.org/bulletin/power_of_50/hot_wheels.html?print=yes; *U.S. Automakers Dip Below 50% of Market Share in the U.S.*, EARTH TIMES, Aug. 1, 2007, <http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/89261.html>; see Frank Ahrens & Sholnn Freeman, *Toyota Topples the King*, WASH. POST, Apr. 25, 2007, at D1.

54. See Fortune Global 400, http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/global500/2007/full_list/index.html; Global Trade Watch, *Department of Labor Certified Trade-Related Job Loss*, http://www.citizen.org/trade/forms/taa_info.cfm.

55. TODD, *supra* note 51, at 65. Todd's assertion has to be qualified since precisely how much of foreign companies is "foreign" and how much is owned by U.S. corporate and financial investments is a matter of debate as is the impact of immigration on the employment and wages

Despite an annual rise in exports of thirteen percent from the previous year, the American trade deficit, increasing steadily since the end of the Cold War, reached a record \$763.3 billion in 2006, “a 6.5 percent increase over the year before.”⁵⁶ Of major significance, the Census Bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce reported, “the [trade] deficit was fueled by the continuing American need for foreign oil and imports of consumer goods from China and other countries.”⁵⁷

Acknowledging America’s increasing foreign oil dependency, President Bush announced in his State of the Union Address in January 2007 a goal of reducing gasoline usage in the United States by twenty percent over the next ten years; “When we do that,” he triumphantly declared, “we will have cut our total imports [of oil] by the equivalent of three-quarters of all the oil we now import from the Middle East.”⁵⁸

The President’s intended goal is a brave and daunting one because oil and gas supply ninety-seven percent of America’s transportation energy needs and sixty percent of the nation’s oil consumption comes from abroad.⁵⁹ The United States Department of Energy forecasts that imports will grow to 70 percent by 2025.⁶⁰ In possession of only three percent of the world’s total oil resources,

of workers with whom they compete in lower skilled occupations. Foreign-born workers total “15.3[%] of the civilian labor force and account for half of the growth . . . in the last ten years.” Robert Pear, *White House Report Lauds Immigrants’ Positive Effects: Says Native-Born Workers Benefit, Too*, N.Y. TIMES, June 20, 2007, at A17. Immigration, especially of “illegals,” became a hot button political issue in 2007 along side the war in Iraq and health care.

56. Steven R. Weisman, *For 5th Year, Trade Gap Hits Record*, N.Y. TIMES, Feb. 14, 2007, at C1.

57. *Id.* The United States’ share of manufactured exports globally declined from 13% in 1980 to 10.8% in 2003. Joseph Quinlan, *Who’s Ahead in Global Manufacturing Exports?*, GLOBALIST, Sept. 6, 2005, <http://www.theglobalist.com/DBWeb/printStoryId.aspx?StoryId=4763>. In contrast, China’s share rose from 1% in 1980 to 7% in 2003. *Id.* The largest share of manufactured exports in 2003, 43.4%, came from the countries of the European Union. *Id.*

58. President George W. Bush, State of the Union Address at the U.S. Capitol (Jan. 23, 2007) available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070123-2.html>; Michael Klare, in *Blood and Oil*, makes the strongest case about America’s growing dependence on oil. See generally KLARE, *supra* note 49.

59. *America’s Oil Dependency and its Implications for U.S. Middle East Policy Before the S. Foreign Relations Subcomm. On Near Eastern and South Asians Affairs*, 109th Cong. 1 (2005) [hereinafter *America’s Oil Dependency*] (statement of Dr. Gul Luft, Executive Director, Institute for the Analysis of Global Security), available at <http://www.senate.gov/~foreign/testimony/2005/LuftTestimony051020.pdf>; INTERNATIONAL OIL & GAS COMMISSION, OIL AND GAS POLICY: EVALUATION FOR ENERGY SECURITY 15 (2007), available at <http://www.ioGCC.state.ok.us/PDFS/2007-Oil-and-Gas-Policy-Evaluation-for-Energy-Security.pdf>; SECURING AMERICA’S FUTURE ENERGY, OIL DEPENDENCY: A THREAT TO U.S. ECONOMIC & NATIONAL SECURITY 2 (2007), available at http://www.secureenergy.org/files/files/155_Briefing-OilDependence.pdf.

60. *America’s Oil Dependency*, *supra* note 59.

the United States consumes twenty-five percent of global production.⁶¹ Of the total oil now imported, twenty-seven percent comes from the Persian Gulf states.⁶² The Gulf states alone also supply Western Europe forty-three percent of its oil needs and Japan, sixty-eight percent, both regions regarded essential to the national security of the United States.⁶³

Given that Middle East producers have provided and will continue to supply an ever larger share of all the world's oil production—twenty-seven percent in 2000; estimated to reach thirty-six percent in 2025—and that the Persian Gulf countries possess sixty-five percent of world oil reserves, it should come as no surprise, then, that the region constitutes a paramount national interest of the United States.⁶⁴

It was primarily to protect American access to oil that President Jimmy Carter announced the Carter Doctrine in January 1980, declaring the flow of Persian Gulf oil a “vital interest of the United States,” interruption of which “would be repelled by any means necessary.”⁶⁵ In 1987, President Ronald Reagan ordered U.S. naval vessels to escort Kuwaiti oil tankers through the Persian Gulf during the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq.⁶⁶

President George H.W. Bush deployed more than 400,000 U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia in August and September 1990 when it appeared that Saddam Hussein might follow his military occupation of Kuwait by invading the desert kingdom.⁶⁷ Bush declared that “[o]ur country now imports half the oil it consumes and could face a major threat to its economic independence” should Saddam Hussein conquer Saudi Arabia.⁶⁸ “[T]he sovereign independence of Saudi Arabia is of vital interest to the United States,” emphasized the President.⁶⁹

61. Editorial, *Mr. Bush's Oil Security Blanket*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 27, 2007, at A16.

62. See *America's Oil Dependency*, *supra* note 59.

63. KLARE, *supra* note 49, at 4.

64. *Id.* at 75–76. Placed in historical context, historian Thomas McCormick has written that the Middle East “is a region that every American [P]resident from Harry Truman onward has marked out in solemn, sacrosanct doctrines as an American sphere of influence . . . all of them committed to maintain access, at stable and profitable prices, to the ocean of oil in the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea regions.” Thomas McCormick, *American Hegemony and European Autonomy*, in *THE NEW AMERICAN EMPIRE: A 21ST CENTURY TEACH-IN ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY* 102–03 (Lloyd C. Gardner & Marilyn B. Young eds., 2005).

65. The State of the Union: Address Delivered Before a Joint Session of the Congress, 1 PUB. PAPERS 197 (Jan. 23, 1980).

66. Linda Greenhouse, *From Democratic Leaders in Congress, Cautious Backing for the Attack*, N.Y. TIMES, Oct. 20, 1987, at A10.

67. LAFABER, *supra* note 27, at 357–59.

68. Address to the Nation Announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia, 2 PUB. PAPERS 1108 (Aug. 8, 1990).

69. *Id.* at 1108–09.

It was also during that crisis that Dick Cheney, then Secretary of Defense in the first Bush administration, elaborated the reasons for the American decision to intervene against Iraq in words strikingly similar to those he used in addressing the Veterans of Foreign Wars in August 2002.⁷⁰ Testifying before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on September 11th 1990, Cheney observed candidly that “we are there [Saudi Arabia] because the fact of the matter is that that part of the world controls the world supply of oil and whoever controls the world supply of oil, especially if it were a man like Saddam Hussein . . . would have a stranglehold on the American economy and—indeed on the world economy.”⁷¹

The pivotal role of oil in United States national security calculations has not changed in the intervening seventeen years. If anything, the dependence has increased and is likely to continue to do so in the near future. Summarizing its findings in a major study, “The National Security Consequences of U.S. Oil Dependency,” the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force on Energy and United States Foreign Policy asserted in October 2006 that “[a]t least for the next two decades, the Persian Gulf will be vital to U.S. interests in reliable oil supply, nonproliferation, combating terrorism, and encouraging political stability, democracy, and public welfare.”⁷² “Until very low levels of dependency are reached,” the Task Force noted, “the United States and all other consumers of oil will depend on the Persian Gulf. Such low levels will certainly not be reached during the twenty-year time frame of this study.”⁷³

Such are the prospects for the future of American values in the Middle East. Rarely, if ever, do policymakers admit that values and interests contradict one another. Realities, however, have a habit of rudely forcing their way into such visions. Democracy and public welfare are, at present, hostage

70. *Crisis in the Persian Gulf Region: U.S. Policy Options and Implications: Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services of the U.S. Senate*, 101st Cong. 9–14 (1990) [hereinafter *Hearings*] (testimony of Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney on Sept. 11, 1990).

71. Ted Koppel, *Will Fight For Oil*, N.Y. TIMES, Feb. 24, 2006, at A23 (quoting Dick Cheney); see KLARE, *supra* note 49, at 50. It was Cheney who was sent to Saudi Arabia in August 1990 to arrange for U.S. forces to be based there, one of the grievances Osama bin Laden listed for the attacks he later directed against the United States. On the first Gulf War, see LAWRENCE FREEDMAN & EFRAIM KARSH, *THE GULF CONFLICT, 1990–1991: DIPLOMACY AND WAR IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER* 370–02 (1993) and BOB WOODWARD, *THE COMMANDERS* 255–63 (1991). On bin Laden and al Qaeda, the best informed study is LAWRENCE WRIGHT, *THE LOOMING TOWER: AL-QAEDA AND THE ROAD TO 9/11*, 169, 247 (2007).

72. COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, *NAT’L SECURITY CONSEQUENCES OF U.S. OIL DEPENDENCY: INDEPENDENT TASK FORCE REPORT NO. 58*, 29–30 (2006). The Task Force of twenty-six members from academia, the corporate world, and former high level government positions was co-chaired by John Deutch, former Director, Central Intelligence Agency, and James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense and former Secretary of Energy.

73. *Id.* at 29.

to goals of a “reliable oil supply” and “political stability” in a region that is the current fulcrum and vortex of American foreign policy and national interests. That United States military power has become a linchpin for ensuring these goals has exacted a price. The predicament in which the nation finds itself should remind us yet again of the perils and costs of hegemony which, despite denial by some commentators and writers—though not as many as once upon a time—America has pursued abroad. It might be wise as well to recall that the history of hegemonies is that they do not last forever (as the Romans and the British discovered). Moreover, the historian Arnold Toynbee wrote in 1948, the civilizations in whose names they rule “[die] not by murder, but by suicide.”⁷⁴

74. ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE, *CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL* 227 (1948).

