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will be judged by history on the basis of how wisely he managed the inevitable change and, above all, by how well he preserves the peace. That is why examining how statesmen have dealt with the problem of world order—what worked or failed and why—is not the end of understanding contemporary diplomacy, though it may be its beginning.



CHAPTER TWO

The Hinge: Theodore Roosevelt or Woodrow Wilson

Until early in this century, the isolationist tendency prevailed in American foreign policy. Then, two factors projected America into world affairs: its rapidly expanding power, and the gradual collapse of the international system centered on Europe. Two watershed presidencies marked this progression: Theodore Roosevelt's and Woodrow Wilson's. These men held the reins of government when world affairs were drawing a reluctant nation into their vortex. Both recognized that America had a crucial role to play in world affairs though they justified its emergence from isolation with opposite philosophies.

Roosevelt was a sophisticated analyst of the balance of power in Euro-

sisted on an international role for America because its national interest demanded it, and because a global balance of power was inconceivable to him without American participation. For Wilson, the justification of America's international role was messianic: America had an obligation, not to the balance of power, but to spread its principles throughout the world. During the Wilson Administration, America emerged as a key player in world affairs, proclaiming principles which, while reflecting the truisms of American thought, nonetheless marked a revolutionary departure for Old World diplomats. These principles held that peace depends on the spread of democracy, that states should be judged by the same ethical criteria as individuals, and that the national interest consists of adhering to a universal system of law.

To hardened veterans of a European diplomacy based on the balance of power, Wilson's views about the ultimately moral foundations of foreign policy appeared strange, even hypocritical. Yet Wilsonianism has survived while history has bypassed the reservations of his contemporaries. Wilson was the originator of the vision of a universal world organization, the League of Nations, which would keep the peace through collective security rather than alliances. Though Wilson could not convince his own country of its merit, the idea lived on. It is above all to the drumbeat of Wilsonian idealism that American foreign policy has marched since his watershed presidency, and continues to march to this day.

America's singular approach to international affairs did not develop all at once, or as the consequence of a solitary inspiration. In the early years of the Republic, American foreign policy was in fact a sophisticated reflection of the American national interest, which was, simply, to fortify the new nation's independence. Since no European country was capable of posing an actual threat so long as it had to contend with rivals, the Founding Fathers showed themselves quite ready to manipulate the despised balance of power when it suited their needs: indeed, they could be extraordinarily skillful at maneuvering between France and Great Britain not only to preserve America's independence but to enlarge its frontiers. Because they really wanted neither side to win a decisive victory in the wars of the French Revolution, they declared neutrality. Jefferson defined the Napoleonic Wars as a contest between the tyrant on the land (France) and the tyrant of the ocean (England)¹—in other words, the parties in the European struggle were morally equivalent. Practicing an early form of nonalignment, the new nation discovered the benefit of neutrality as a bargaining tool, just as many an emerging nation has since.

At the same time, the United States did not carry its rejection of Old

World ways to the point of forgoing territorial expansion. On the contrary, from the very beginning, the United States pursued expansion in the Americas with extraordinary singleness of purpose. After 1794, a series of treaties settled the borders with Canada and Florida in America's favor, opened the Mississippi River to American trade, and began to establish an American commercial interest in the British West Indies. This culminated in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, which brought to the young country a huge, undefined territory west of the Mississippi River from France along with claims to Spanish territory in Florida and Texas—the foundation from which to develop into a great power.

The French Emperor who made the sale, Napoleon Bonaparte, advanced an Old World explanation for such a one-sided transaction: "This accession of territory affirms forever the power of the United States, and I have just given England a maritime rival that sooner or later will lay low her pride."² American statesmen did not care what justification France used to sell her possessions. To them, condemnation of Old World power politics did not appear inconsistent with American territorial expansion across North America. For they considered America's westward thrust as America's internal affair rather than as a matter of foreign policy.

In this spirit, James Madison condemned war as the germ of all evils—as the precursor of taxes and armies and all other "instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few."³ His successor, James Monroe, saw no contradiction in defending westward expansion on the ground that it was necessary to turn America into a great power:

It must be obvious to all, that the further the expansion is carried, provided it be not beyond the just limit, the greater will be the freedom of action to both [state and federal] Governments, and the more perfect their security; and, in all other respects, the better the effect will be to the whole American people. Extent of territory, whether it be great or small, gives to a nation many of its characteristics. It marks the extent of its resources, of its population, of its physical force. It marks, in short, the difference between a great and a small power.⁴

Still, while occasionally using the methods of European power politics, the leaders of the new nation remained committed to the principles that had made their country exceptional. The European powers fought innumerable wars to prevent potentially dominant powers from arising. In America, the combination of strength and distance inspired a confidence that any challenge could be overcome *after* it had presented itself. European nations, with much narrower margins of survival, formed coalitions

tions against the *possibility* of change; America was sufficiently remote to gear its policy to resisting the *actuality* of change.

This was the geopolitical basis of George Washington's warning against "entangling" alliances for any cause whatsoever. It would be unwise, he said,

to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her [European] politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course.⁵

The new nation did not treat Washington's advice as a practical, geopolitical judgment but as a moral maxim. As the repository of the principle of liberty, America found it natural to interpret the security conferred on it by great oceans as a sign of divine providence, and to attribute its actions to superior moral insight instead of to a margin of security not shared by any other nation.

A staple of the early Republic's foreign policy was the conviction that Europe's constant wars were the result of its cynical methods of statecraft. Whereas the European leaders based their international system on the conviction that harmony could be distilled from a competition of selfish interests, their American colleagues envisioned a world in which states would act as cooperative partners, not as distrustful rivals. American leaders rejected the European idea that the morality of states should be judged by different criteria than the morality of individuals. According to Jefferson, there existed

but one system of ethics for men and for nations—to be grateful, to be faithful to all engagements under all circumstances, to be open and generous, promoting in the long run even the interests of both.⁶

The righteousness of America's tone—at times so grating to foreigners—reflected the reality that America had in fact rebelled not simply against the legal ties that had bound it to the old country but against Europe's system and values. America ascribed the frequency of European wars to the prevalence of governmental institutions which denied the values of freedom and human dignity. "As war is the system of government on the old construction," wrote Thomas Paine, "the animosity which nations reciprocally entertain, is nothing more than what the policy of their governments excites, to keep up the spirit of the system. . . . Man is not the

enemy of man, but through the medium of a false system of government."⁷

The idea that peace depends above all on promoting democratic institutions has remained a staple of American thought to the present day. Conventional American wisdom has consistently maintained that democracies do not make war against each other. Alexander Hamilton, for one, challenged the premise that republics were essentially more peaceful than other forms of government:

Sparta, Athens, Rome, and Carthage were all republics; two of them, Athens and Carthage, of the commercial kind. Yet were they as often engaged in wars, offensive and defensive, as the neighboring monarchies of the same times. . . . In the government of Britain the representatives of the people compose one branch of the national legislature. Commerce has been for ages the predominant pursuit of that country. Few nations, nevertheless, have been more frequently engaged in war. . . .⁸

Hamilton, however, represented a tiny minority. The overwhelming majority of America's leaders were as convinced then as they are now that America has a special responsibility to spread its values as its contribution to world peace. Then, as now, disagreements had to do with method. Should America actively promote the spread of free institutions as a principal objective of its foreign policy? Or should it rely on the impact of its example?

The dominant view in the early days of the Republic was that the nascent American nation could best serve the cause of democracy by practicing its virtues at home. In the words of Thomas Jefferson, a "just and solid republican government" in America would be "a standing monument and example" for all the peoples of the world.⁹ A year later, Jefferson returned to the theme that America was, in effect, "acting for all mankind":

. . . that circumstances denied to others, but indulged to us, have imposed on us the duty of proving what is the degree of freedom and self-government in which a society may venture to leave its individual members.¹⁰

The emphasis American leaders placed on the moral foundations of America's conduct and on its significance as a symbol of freedom led to a rejection of the truisms of European diplomacy: that the balance of

power distilled an ultimate harmony out of the competition of selfish interests; and that security considerations overrode the principles of civil law; in other words, that the ends of the state justified the means.

These unprecedented ideas were being put forward by a country which was prospering throughout the nineteenth century, its institutions in good working order and its values vindicated. America was aware of no conflict between high-minded principle and the necessities of survival. In time, the invocation of morality as the means for solving international disputes produced a unique kind of ambivalence and a very American type of anguish. If Americans were obliged to invest their foreign policy with the same degree of rectitude as they did their personal lives, how was security to be analyzed; indeed, in the extreme, did this mean that survival was subordinate to morality? Or did America's devotion to free institutions confer an automatic aura of morality on even the most seemingly self-serving acts? And if this was true, how did it differ from the European concept of *raison d'état*, which asserted that a state's actions can only be judged by their success?

Professors Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson brilliantly analyzed this ambivalence in American thought:

The great dilemma of Jefferson's statecraft lay in his apparent renunciation of the means on which states had always ultimately relied to ensure their security and to satisfy their ambitions, and his simultaneous unwillingness to renounce the ambitions that normally led to the use of these means. He wished, in other words, that America could have it both ways—that it could enjoy the fruits of power without falling victim to the normal consequences of its exercise.¹¹

To this day, the push and pull of these two approaches has been one of the major themes of American foreign policy. By 1820, the United States found a compromise between the two approaches which enabled it to have it both ways until after the Second World War. It continued to castigate what went on across the oceans as the reprehensible result of balance-of-power politics while treating its own expansion across North America as "manifest destiny."

Until the turn of the twentieth century, American foreign policy was basically quite simple: to fulfill the country's manifest destiny, and to remain free of entanglements overseas. America favored democratic governments wherever possible, but abjured action to vindicate its preferences. John Quincy Adams, then Secretary of State, summed up this attitude in 1821:

Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her [America's] heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own.¹²

The reverse side of this policy of American self-restraint was the decision to exclude European power politics from the Western Hemisphere, if necessary by using some of the methods of European diplomacy. The Monroe Doctrine, which proclaimed this policy, arose from the attempt of the Holy Alliance—composed of Prussia, Russia, and Austria—to suppress the revolution in Spain in the 1820s. Opposed to intervention in domestic affairs in principle, Great Britain was equally unwilling to countenance the Holy Alliance in the Western Hemisphere.

British Foreign Secretary George Canning proposed joint action to the United States in order to keep Spain's colonies in the Americas out of the grasp of the Holy Alliance. He wanted to make sure that, regardless of what happened in Spain, no European power controlled Latin America. Deprived of its colonies, Spain would not be much of a prize. Canning reasoned, and this would either discourage intervention or make it irrelevant.

John Quincy Adams understood the British theory, but did not trust British motives. It was too soon after the 1812 British occupation of Washington for America to side with the erstwhile mother country. Accordingly, Adams urged President Monroe to exclude European colonialism from the Americas as a unilateral American decision.

The Monroe Doctrine, proclaimed in 1823, made a moat of the ocean which separated the United States from Europe. Up to that time, the cardinal rule of American foreign policy had been that the United States would not become entangled in European struggles for power. The Monroe Doctrine went the next step by declaring that Europe must not become entangled in American affairs. And Monroe's idea of what constituted American affairs—the whole Western Hemisphere—was expansive indeed.

The Monroe Doctrine, moreover, did not limit itself to declarations of principle. Daringly, it warned the European powers that the new nation would go to war to uphold the inviolability of the Western Hemisphere. It declared that the United States would regard any extension of European power "to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety."¹³

Finally, in language less eloquent but more explicit than that of his

Secretary of State two years earlier, President Monroe abjured any intervention in European controversies: "In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do."¹⁴

America was at one and the same time turning its back on Europe, and freeing its hands to expand in the Western Hemisphere. Under the umbrella of the Monroe Doctrine, America could pursue policies which were not all that different from the dreams of any European king—expanding its commerce and influence, annexing territory—in short, turning itself into a Great Power without being required to practice power politics. America's desire for expansion and its belief that it was a more pure and principled country than any in Europe never clashed. Since it did not regard its expansion as foreign policy, the United States could use its power to prevail—over the Indians, over Mexico, in Texas—and to do so in good conscience. In a nutshell, the foreign policy of the United States was not to have a foreign policy.

Like Napoleon with respect to the Louisiana Purchase, Canning had a right to boast that he had brought the New World into being to redress the balance of the Old, for Great Britain indicated that it would back the Monroe Doctrine with the Royal Navy. America, however, would redress the European balance of power only to the extent of keeping the Holy Alliance out of the Western Hemisphere. For the rest, the European powers would have to maintain their equilibrium without American participation.

For the rest of the century, the principal theme of American foreign policy was to expand the application of the Monroe Doctrine. In 1823, the Monroe Doctrine had warned the European powers to keep out of the Western Hemisphere. By the time of the Monroe Doctrine's centennial, its meaning had been gradually expanded to justify American hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. In 1845, President Polk explained the incorporation of Texas into the United States as necessary to prevent an independent state from becoming "an ally or dependency of some foreign nation more powerful than herself" and hence a threat to American security.¹⁵ In other words, the Monroe Doctrine justified American intervention not only against an existing threat but against any possibility of an overt challenge—much as the European balance of power did.

The Civil War briefly interrupted America's preoccupation with territorial expansion. Washington's primary foreign-policy concern now was to prevent the Confederacy from being recognized by European nations lest a multistate system emerge on the soil of North America and with it the balance-of-power politics of European diplomacy. But by 1868, President

Andrew Johnson was back at the old stand of justifying expansion by the Monroe Doctrine, this time in the purchase of Alaska:

Foreign possession or control of those communities has hitherto hindered the growth and impaired the influence of the United States. Chronic revolution and anarchy there would be equally injurious.¹⁶

Something more fundamental than expansion across the American continent was taking place, though it went practically unnoticed by the so-called Great Powers—a new member was joining their club as the United States became the world's most powerful nation. By 1885, the United States had surpassed Great Britain, then considered the world's major industrial power, in manufacturing output. By the turn of the century, it was consuming more energy than Germany, France, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Japan, and Italy combined.¹⁷ Between the Civil War and the turn of the century, American coal production rose by 800 percent, steel rails by 523 percent, railway track mileage by 567 percent, and wheat production by 256 percent. Immigration contributed to the doubling of the American population. And the process of growth was likely to accelerate.

No nation has ever experienced such an increase in its power without seeking to translate it into global influence. America's leaders were tempted. President Andrew Johnson's Secretary of State, Seward, dreamed of an empire including Canada and much of Mexico and extending deep into the Pacific. The Grant Administration wanted to annex the Dominican Republic and toyed with the acquisition of Cuba. These were the kinds of initiatives which contemporary European leaders, Disraeli or Bismarck, would have understood and approved of.

But the American Senate remained focused on domestic priorities and thwarted all expansionist projects. It kept the army small (25,000 men) and the navy weak. Until 1890, the American army ranked fourteenth in the world, after Bulgaria's, and the American navy was smaller than Italy's even though America's industrial strength was thirteen times that of Italy. America did not participate in international conferences and was treated as a second-rank power. In 1880, when Turkey reduced its diplomatic establishment, it eliminated its embassies in Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United States. At the same time, a German diplomat in Madrid offered to take a cut in salary rather than be posted to Washington.¹⁸

But once a country has reached the level of power of post-Civil War America, it will not forever resist the temptation of translating it into a position of importance in the international arena. In the late 1880s,

America began to build up its navy, which, as late as 1880, was smaller than Chile's, Brazil's, or Argentina's. By 1889, Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Tracy was lobbying for a battleship navy and the contemporary naval historian Alfred Thayer Mahan developed a rationale for it.¹⁹

Though in fact the British Royal Navy protected America from depredations by European powers, American leaders did not perceive Great Britain as their country's protector. Throughout the nineteenth century, Great Britain was considered the greatest challenge to American interests, and the Royal Navy the most serious strategic threat. No wonder that, when America began to flex its muscles, it sought to expel Great Britain's influence from the Western Hemisphere, invoking the Monroe Doctrine which Great Britain had been so instrumental in encouraging.

The United States was none too delicate about the challenge. In 1895, Secretary of State Richard Olney invoked the Monroe Doctrine to warn Great Britain with a pointed reference to the inequalities of power. "To-day," he wrote, "the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition." America's "infinite resources combined with its isolated position render it master of the situation and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers."²⁰ America's renunciation of power politics clearly did not apply to the Western Hemisphere. By 1902, Great Britain had abandoned its claim to a major role in Central America.

Supreme in the Western Hemisphere, the United States began to enter the wider arena of international affairs. America had grown into a world power almost despite itself. Expanding across the continent, it had established its pre-eminence all around its shores while insisting that it had no wish to conduct the foreign policy of a Great Power. At the end of the process, America found itself commanding the sort of power which made it a major international factor, no matter what its preferences. America's leaders might continue to insist that its basic foreign policy was to serve as a "beacon" for the rest of mankind, but there could be no denying that some of them were also becoming aware that America's power entitled it to be heard on the issues of the day, and that it did not need to wait until all of mankind had become democratic to make itself a part of the international system.

No one articulated this reasoning more trenchantly than Theodore Roosevelt. He was the first president to insist that it was America's duty to make its influence felt globally, and to relate America to the world in terms of a concept of national interest. Like his predecessors, Roosevelt was convinced of America's beneficent role in the world. But unlike them, Roosevelt held that America had real foreign policy interests that went far

beyond its interest in remaining unentangled. Roosevelt started from the premise that the United States was a power like any other, not a singular incarnation of virtue. If its interests collided with those of other countries, America had the obligation to draw on its strength to prevail.

As a first step, Roosevelt gave the Monroe Doctrine its most interventionist interpretation by identifying it with imperialist doctrines of the period. In what he called a "Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, he proclaimed on December 6, 1904, a general right of intervention by "some civilized nation" which, in the Western Hemisphere, the United States alone had a right to exercise: "... in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrong-doing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power."²¹

Roosevelt's practice preceded his preaching. In 1902, America had forced Haiti to clear up its debts with European banks. In 1903, it fanned unrest in Panama into a full-scale insurrection. With American help, the local population wrested independence from Colombia, but not before Washington had established the Canal Zone under United States sovereignty on both sides of what was to become the Panama Canal. In 1905, the United States established a financial protectorate over the Dominican Republic. And in 1906, American troops occupied Cuba.

For Roosevelt, muscular diplomacy in the Western Hemisphere was part of America's new global role. The two oceans were no longer wide enough to insulate America from the rest of the world. The United States had to become an actor on the international stage. Roosevelt said as much in a 1902 message to the Congress: "More and more, the increasing interdependence and complexity of international political and economic relations render it incumbent on all civilized and orderly powers to insist on the proper policing of the world."²²

Roosevelt commands a unique historical position in America's approach to international relations. No other president defined America's world role so completely in terms of national interest, or identified the national interest so comprehensively with the balance of power. Roosevelt shared the view of his countrymen, that America was the best hope for the world. But unlike most of them, he did not believe that it could preserve the peace or fulfill its destiny simply by practicing civic virtues. In his perception of the nature of world order, he was much closer to Palmerston or Disraeli than to Thomas Jefferson.

A great president must be an educator, bridging the gap between his people's future and its experience. Roosevelt taught an especially stern doctrine for a people brought up in the belief that peace is the normal

condition among nations, that there is no difference between personal and public morality, and that America was safely insulated from the upheavals affecting the rest of the world. For Roosevelt rebutted each of these propositions. To him, international life meant struggle, and Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest was a better guide to history than personal morality. In Roosevelt's view, the meek inherited the earth only if they were strong. To Roosevelt, America was not a cause but a great power—potentially the greatest. He hoped to be the president destined to usher his nation onto the world scene so that it might shape the twentieth century in the way Great Britain had dominated the nineteenth—as a country of vast strengths which had enlisted itself, with moderation and wisdom, to work on behalf of stability, peace, and progress.

Roosevelt was impatient with many of the pieties which dominated American thinking on foreign policy. He disavowed the efficacy of international law. What a nation could not protect by its own power could not be safeguarded by the international community. He rejected disarmament, which was just then emerging as an international topic:

As yet there is no likelihood of establishing any kind of international power . . . which can effectively check wrong-doing, and in these circumstances it would be both foolish and an evil thing for a great and free nation to deprive itself of the power to protect its own rights and even in exceptional cases to stand up for the rights of others. Nothing would more promote iniquity . . . than for the free and enlightened peoples . . . deliberately to render themselves powerless while leaving every despotism and barbarism armed.²⁴

Roosevelt was even more scathing when it came to talk about world government:

I regard the Wilson-Bryan attitude of trusting to fantastic peace treaties, to impossible promises, to all kinds of scraps of paper without any backing in efficient force, as abhorrent. It is infinitely better for a nation and for the world to have the Frederick the Great and Bismarck tradition as regards foreign policy than to have the Bryan or Bryan-Wilson attitude as a permanent national attitude. . . . A milk-and-water righteousness unbacked by force is to the full as wicked as and even more mischievous than force divorced from righteousness.²⁵

In a world regulated by power, Roosevelt believed that the natural order of things was reflected in the concept of "spheres of influence," which assigned preponderant influence over large regions to specific powers,

for example, to the United States in the Western Hemisphere or to Great Britain on the Indian subcontinent. In 1908, Roosevelt acquiesced to the Japanese occupation of Korea because, to his way of thinking, Japanese-Korean relations had to be determined by the relative power of each country, not by the provisions of a treaty or by international law:

Korea is absolutely Japan's. To be sure, by treaty it was solemnly covenanted that Korea should remain independent. But Korea was itself helpless to enforce the treaty, and it was out of the question to suppose that any other nation . . . would attempt to do for the Koreans what they were utterly unable to do for themselves.²⁶

With Roosevelt holding such European-style views, it was not surprising that he approached the global balance of power with a sophistication matched by no other American president and approached only by Richard Nixon. Roosevelt at first saw no need to engage America in the specifics of the European balance of power because he considered it more or less self-regulating. But he left little doubt that, if such a judgment were to prove wrong, he would urge America to engage itself to re-establish the equilibrium. Roosevelt gradually came to see Germany as a threat to the European balance and began to identify America's national interest with those of Great Britain and France.

This was demonstrated in 1906, during the Algeiras Conference, the purpose of which was to settle the future of Morocco. Germany, which insisted on an "open door" to forestall French domination, urged the inclusion of an American representative, because it believed America to have significant trading interests there. In the event, the American consul in Morocco attended, but the role he played disappointed the Germans. Roosevelt subordinated America's commercial interests—which in any event were not large—to his geopolitical view. These were expressed by Henry Cabot Lodge in a letter to Roosevelt at the height of the Moroccan crisis. "France," he said, "ought to be with us and England—in our zone and our combination. It is the sound arrangement economically and politically."²⁷

Whereas in Europe, Roosevelt considered Germany the principal threat, in Asia he was concerned with Russian aspirations and thus favored Japan, Russia's principal rival. "There is no nation in the world which, more than Russia, holds in its hands the fate of the coming years," Roosevelt declared.²⁸ In 1904, Japan, protected by an alliance with Great Britain, attacked Russia. Though Roosevelt proclaimed American neutrality, he leaned toward Japan. A Russian victory, he argued, would be "a blow to

civilization.²⁸ And when Japan destroyed the Russian fleet, he rejoiced: "I was thoroughly pleased with the Japanese victory, for Japan is playing our game."²⁹

He wanted Russia to be weakened rather than altogether eliminated from the balance of power—for, according to the maxims of balance-of-power diplomacy, an excessive weakening of Russia would have merely substituted a Japanese for the Russian threat. Roosevelt perceived that the outcome which served America best would be one in which Russia "should be left face to face with Japan so that each may have a moderative action on the other."³⁰

On the basis of geopolitical realism rather than high-minded altruism, Roosevelt invited the two belligerents to send representatives to his Oyster Bay home to work out a peace treaty that limited the Japanese victory and preserved equilibrium in the Far East. As a result, Roosevelt became the first American to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, for producing a settlement based on maxims like balance of power and spheres of influence which, after his successor, Wilson, would appear quite un-American.

In 1914, Roosevelt initially took a relatively clinical view of Germany's invasion of Belgium and Luxembourg, though it was in flagrant violation of treaties which had established the neutrality of these two countries:

I am not taking sides one way or the other as concerns the violation or disregard of these treaties. When giants are engaged in a death wrestle, as they reel to and fro they are certain to trample on whoever gets in the way of either of the huge, straining combatants, *unless it is dangerous to do so.*³¹

A few months after the outbreak of war in Europe, Roosevelt reversed his initial judgment about the violation of Belgian neutrality, though, characteristically, it was not the illegality of the German invasion that concerned him but the threat it posed to the balance of power: "... do you not believe that if Germany won in this war, smashed the English Fleet and destroyed the British Empire, within a year or two she would insist upon taking the dominant position in South and Central America...?"³²

He urged massive rearmament so that America might throw its weight behind the Triple Entente. He regarded a German victory as both possible and dangerous for the United States. A victory for the Central Powers would have forfeited the protection of the British Royal Navy, permitting German imperialism to assert itself in the Western Hemisphere.

That Roosevelt should have considered British naval control of the Atlantic safer than German hegemony was due to such intangible non-power factors as cultural affinity and historical experience. Indeed, there were strong cultural ties between England and America for which there was no counterpart in U.S.-German relations. Moreover, the United States was used to Great Britain ruling the seas and was comfortable with the idea, and no longer suspected Great Britain of expansionist designs in the Americas. Germany, however, was regarded with apprehension. On October 3, 1914, Roosevelt wrote to the British ambassador to Washington (conveniently forgetting his earlier judgment about the inevitability of Germany's disregard of Belgian neutrality) that:

If I had been President, I should have acted [against Germany] on the thirtieth or thirty-first of July.³³

In a letter to Rudyard Kipling a month later, Roosevelt admitted to the difficulty of bringing American power to bear on the European war on the basis of his convictions. The American people were unwilling to follow a course of action cast so strictly in terms of power politics:

If I should advocate all that I myself believe, I would do no good among our people, because they would not follow me. Our people are short-sighted, and they do not understand international matters. Your people have been short-sighted, but they are not as short-sighted as ours in these matters. . . . Thanks to the width of the ocean, our people believe that they have nothing to fear from the present contest, and that they have no responsibility concerning it.³⁴

Had American thinking on foreign policy culminated in Theodore Roosevelt, it would have been described as an evolution adapting traditional principles of European statecraft to the American condition. Roosevelt would have been seen as the president who was in office when the United States, having established a dominant position in the Americas, began to make its weight felt as a world power. But American foreign-policy thinking did not end with Roosevelt, nor could it have done so. A leader who confines his role to his people's experience dooms himself to stagnation; a leader who outstrips his people's experience runs the risk of not being understood. Neither its experience nor its values prepared America for the role assigned to it by Roosevelt.

In one of history's ironies, America did in the end fulfill the leading role Roosevelt had envisioned for it, and within Roosevelt's lifetime, but

it did so on behalf of principles Roosevelt derided, and under the guidance of a president whom Roosevelt despised. Woodrow Wilson was the embodiment of the tradition of American exceptionalism, and originated what would become the dominant intellectual school of American foreign policy—a school whose precepts Roosevelt considered at best irrelevant and at worst inimical to America's long-range interests.

In terms of all established principles of statecraft, Roosevelt had by far the better of the argument between these two of America's greatest presidents. Nevertheless, it was Wilson who prevailed: a century later, Roosevelt is remembered for his achievements, but it was Wilson who shaped American thought. Roosevelt understood how international politics worked among the nations then conducting world affairs—no American president has had a more acute insight into the operation of international systems. Yet Wilson grasped the mainsprings of American motivation, perhaps the principal one being that America simply did not see itself as a nation like any other. It lacked both the theoretical and the practical basis for the European-style diplomacy of constant adjustment of the nuances of power from a posture of moral neutrality for the sole purpose of preserving an ever-shifting balance. Whatever the realities and the lessons of power, the American people's abiding conviction has been that its exceptional character resides in the practice and propagation of freedom.

Americans could be moved to great deeds only through a vision that coincided with their perception of their country as exceptional. However intellectually attuned to the way the diplomacy of the Great Powers actually operated, Roosevelt's approach failed to persuade his countrymen that they needed to enter the First World War. Wilson, on the other hand, tapped his people's emotions with arguments that were as morally elevated as they were largely incomprehensible to foreign leaders.

Wilson's was an astonishing achievement. Rejecting power politics, he knew how to move the American people. An academic who arrived in politics relatively late, he was elected due to a split in the Republican Party between Taft and Roosevelt. Wilson grasped that America's instinctive isolationism could be overcome only by an appeal to its belief in the exceptional nature of its ideals. Step by step, he took an isolationist country into war, after he had first demonstrated his Administration's devotion to peace by a passionate advocacy of neutrality. And he did so while abjuring any selfish national interests, and by affirming that America sought no other benefit than vindication of its principles.

In Wilson's first State of the Union Address, on December 2, 1913, he laid down the outline of what later came to be known as Wilsonianism.

Universal law and not equilibrium, national trustworthiness and not national self-assertion were, in Wilson's view, the foundations of international order. Recommending the ratification of several treaties of arbitration, Wilson argued that binding arbitration, in essence, should become the method for resolving international disputes:

There is only one possible standard by which to determine controversies between the United States and other nations, and that is compounded of these two elements: Our own honor and our obligations to the peace of the world. A test so compounded ought easily to be made to govern both the establishment of new treaty obligations and the interpretation of those already assumed.⁴⁵

Nothing annoyed Roosevelt as much as high-sounding principles backed by neither the power nor the will to implement them. He wrote to a friend: "If I must choose between a policy of blood and iron and one of milk and water . . . why I am for the policy of blood and iron. It is better not only for the nation but in the long run for the world."⁴⁶

By the same token, Roosevelt's proposal to respond to the war in Europe by increasing defense spending made no sense to Wilson. In his second State of the Union address on December 8, 1914, and after the European war had been raging for four months, Wilson rejected an increase in America's armaments, because this would signal that "we had lost our self-possession" as the result of a war "whose causes cannot touch us, whose very existence affords us opportunities for friendship and disinterested service. . . ."⁴⁷

America's influence, in Wilson's view, depended on its unselfishness; it had to preserve itself so that, in the end, it could step forward as a credible arbiter between the warring parties. Roosevelt had asserted that the war in Europe, and especially a German victory, would ultimately threaten American security. Wilson maintained that America was essentially disinterested, hence should emerge as mediator. Because of America's faith in values higher than the balance of power, the war in Europe now afforded it an extraordinary opportunity to proselytize for a new and better approach to international affairs.

Roosevelt ridiculed such ideas and accused Wilson of pandering to isolationist sentiments to help his re-election in 1916. In fact, the thrust of Wilson's policy was quite the opposite of isolationism. What Wilson was proclaiming was not America's withdrawal from the world but the universal applicability of its values and, in time, America's commitment to spreading them. Wilson restated what had become the conventional

American wisdom since Jefferson, but put it in the service of a crusading ideology:

- America's special mission transcends day-to-day diplomacy and obliges it to serve as a beacon of liberty for the rest of mankind.
- The foreign policies of democracies are morally superior because the people are inherently peace-loving.
- Foreign policy should reflect the same moral standards as personal ethics.
- The state has no right to claim a separate morality for itself.

Wilson endowed these assertions of American moral exceptionalism with a universal dimension:

Dread of the power of any other nation we are incapable of. We are not jealous of rivalry in the fields of commerce or of any other peaceful achievement. We mean to live our own lives as we will; but we mean also to let live. We are, indeed, a true friend to all the nations of the world, because we threaten none, covet the possessions of none, desire the overthrow of none.³⁸

No other nation has ever rested its claim to international leadership on its altruism. All other nations have sought to be judged by the compatibility of their national interests with those of other societies. Yet, from Woodrow Wilson through George Bush, American presidents have invoked their country's unselfishness as the crucial attribute of its leadership role. Neither Wilson nor his later disciples, through the present, have been willing to face the fact that, to foreign leaders imbued with less elevated maxims, America's claim to altruism evokes a certain aura of unpredictability; whereas the national interest can be calculated, altruism depends on the definition of its practitioner.

To Wilson, however, the altruistic nature of American society was proof of divine favor:

It was as if in the Providence of God a continent had been kept unused and waiting for a peaceful people who loved liberty and the rights of men more than they loved anything else, to come and set up an unselfish commonwealth.³⁹

The claim that American goals represented providential dispensation implied a global role for America that would prove far more sweeping than

any Roosevelt had ever imagined. For he had wanted no more than to improve the balance of power and to invest America's role in it with the importance commensurate with its growing strength. In Roosevelt's conception, America would have been one nation among many—more powerful than most and part of an elite group of great powers—but still subject to the historic ground rules of equilibrium.

Wilson moved America onto a plane entirely remote from such considerations. Disdaining the balance of power, he insisted that America's role was "not to prove . . . our selfishness, but our greatness."⁴⁰ If that was true, America had no right to hoard its values for itself. As early as 1915, Wilson put forward the unprecedented doctrine that the security of America was inseparable from the security of *all* the rest of mankind. This implied that it was henceforth America's duty to oppose aggression *everywhere*:

. . . because we demand unmolested development and the undisturbed government of our own lives upon our own principles of right and liberty, we resent, from whatever quarter it may come, the aggression we ourselves will not practice. We insist upon security in prosecuting our self-chosen lines of national development. We do more than that. We demand it also for others. We do not confine our enthusiasm for individual liberty and free national development to the incidents and movements of affairs which affect only ourselves. We feel it wherever there is a people that tries to walk in these difficult paths of independence and right.⁴¹

Envisioning America as a beneficent global policeman, this foreshadowed the containment policy, which would be developed after the Second World War.

Even at his most exuberant, Roosevelt would never have dreamt of so sweeping a sentiment portending global interventionism. But, then, he was the warrior-statesman; Wilson was the prophet-priest. Statesmen, even warriors, focus on the world in which they live; to prophets, the "real" world is the one they want to bring into being.

Wilson transformed what had started out as a reaffirmation of American neutrality into a set of propositions laying the foundations for a global crusade. In Wilson's view, there was no essential difference between freedom for America and freedom for the world. Proving that the time spent in faculty meetings, where hairsplitting exegesis reigns supreme, had not been wasted, he developed an extraordinary interpretation of what George Washington had really meant when he warned against for-

eign entanglements. Wilson redefined "foreign" in a way that would surely have astonished the first president. What Washington meant, according to Wilson, was that America must avoid becoming entangled in the *purposes* of others. But, Wilson argued, nothing that concerns humanity "can be foreign or indifferent to us."⁴² Hence America had an unlimited charter to involve itself abroad.

What extraordinary conceit to derive a charter for global intervention from a Founding Father's injunction against foreign entanglements, and to elaborate a philosophy of neutrality that made involvement in war inevitable! As Wilson edged his country ever closer to the world war by articulating his visions of a better world, he evoked a vitality and an idealism that seemed to justify America's hibernation for a century just so it could now enter the international arena with a dynamism and an innocence unknown to its more seasoned partners. European diplomacy had been hardened, and humbled, in the crucible of history; its statesmen saw events through the prism of many dreams proved fragile, of high hopes dashed and ideals lost to the fragility of human foresight. America knew no such limitations, boldly proclaiming, if not the end of history, then surely its irrelevance, as it moved to transform values heretofore considered unique to America into universal principles applicable to all. Wilson was thus able to overcome, at least for a time, the tension in American thinking between America the secure and America the unsuspected. America could only approach entry into World War I as an engagement on behalf of peoples everywhere, not just itself, and in the role of the crusader for universal liberties.

Germany's announcement of unrestricted submarine warfare and its sinking of the *Lusitania* became the proximate cause of America's declaration of war. But Wilson did not justify America's entry into the war on the grounds of specific grievances. National interests were irrelevant; Belgium's violation and the balance of power had nothing to do with it. Rather, the war had a moral foundation, whose primary objective was a new and more just international order. It is a heartening thing, Wilson reflected in the speech asking for a declaration of war,

to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts, for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.⁴³

In a war on behalf of such principles, there could be no compromise. Total victory was the only valid goal. Roosevelt would almost certainly have expressed America's war aims in political and strategic terms; Wilson, flaunting American disinterest, defined America's war aims in entirely moral categories. In Wilson's view, the war was not the consequence of clashing national interests pursued without restraint, but of Germany's unprovoked assault on the international order. More specifically, the true culprit was not the German nation, but the German Emperor himself. In urging a declaration of war, Wilson argued:

We have no quarrel with the German people. We have no feeling towards them but one of sympathy and friendship. It was not upon their impulse that their government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval. It was a war determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old, unhappy days when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties.⁴⁴

Though William II had long been regarded as a loose cannon on the European stage, no European statesman had ever advocated deposing him; nobody had viewed the overthrow of the Emperor or of his dynasty as the key to peace in Europe. But once the issue of Germany's domestic structure had been advanced, the war could no longer end in the sort of compromise balancing conflicting interests that Roosevelt had achieved between Japan and Russia ten years earlier. On January 22, 1917, before America had entered the war, Wilson proclaimed its goal to be "peace without victory."⁴⁵ What Wilson proposed, however, when America did enter the war was a peace achievable only by total victory.

Wilson's pronouncements soon became conventional wisdom. Even as experienced a figure as Herbert Hoover began to describe the German ruling class as inherently wicked, preying "upon the life blood of other peoples."⁴⁶ The mood of the times was aptly expressed by Jacob Schurman, President of Cornell University, who saw the war as a struggle between the "Kingdom of Heaven" and the "Kingdom of Hun-land, which is force and frightfulness."⁴⁷

Yet the overthrow of a single dynasty could not possibly bring about all that Wilson's rhetoric implied. In urging a declaration of war, Wilson extended his moral reach to the entire world; not only Germany but all other nations had to be made safe for democracy; for peace would require "a partnership of democratic nations."⁴⁸ In another speech, Wilson went even further by saying that America's power would atrophy unless the United States spread freedom around the globe:

We set this Nation up to make men free, and we did not confine our conception and purpose to America, and now we will make men free. If we did not do that, all the fame of America would be gone, and all her power would be dissipated.⁴⁹

The closest Wilson ever came to stating his war aims in detail was in the Fourteen Points, which will be dealt with in chapter 9. Wilson's historic achievement lies in his recognition that Americans cannot sustain major international engagements that are not justified by their moral faith. His downfall was in treating the tragedies of history as aberrations, or as due to the shortsightedness and the evil of individual leaders, and in his rejection of any objective basis for peace other than the force of public opinion and the worldwide spread of democratic institutions. In the process, he would ask the nations of Europe to undertake something for which they were neither philosophically nor historically prepared, and right after a war which had drained them of substance.

For 300 years, the European nations had based their world order on a balancing of national interests, and their foreign policies on a quest for security, treating every additional benefit as a bonus. Wilson asked the nations of Europe to base their foreign policy on moral convictions, leaving security to result incidentally, if at all. But Europe had no conceptual apparatus for such a disinterested policy, and it still remained to be seen whether America, having just emerged from a century of isolation, could sustain the permanent involvement in international affairs that Wilson's theories implied.

Wilson's appearance on the scene was a watershed for America, one of those rare examples of a leader who fundamentally alters the course of his country's history. Had Roosevelt or his ideas prevailed in 1912, the question of war aims would have been based on an inquiry into the nature of American national interest. Roosevelt would have rested America's entry into the war on the proposition—which he in fact advanced—that, unless America joined the Triple Entente, the Central Powers would win the war and, sooner or later, pose a threat to American security.

The American national interest, so defined, would, over time, have led America to adopt a global policy comparable to Great Britain's toward Continental Europe. For three centuries, British leaders had operated from the assumption that, if Europe's resources were marshaled by a single dominant power, that country would then have the resources to challenge Great Britain's command of the seas, and thus threaten its independence. Geopolitically, the United States, also an island off the shores of Eurasia, should, by the same reasoning, have felt obliged to

resist the domination of Europe or Asia by any one power and, even more, the control of *both* continents by the *same* power. In these terms, it should have been the extent of Germany's geopolitical reach and not its moral transgressions that provided the principal *casus belli*.

However, such an Old World approach ran counter to the wellspring of American emotions being tapped by Wilson—as it does to this day. Not even Roosevelt could have managed the power politics he advocated, though he died convinced that he could have. At any rate, Roosevelt was no longer the president, and Wilson had made it clear, even before America entered the war, that he would resist any attempt to base the postwar order on established principles of international politics.

Wilson saw the causes of the war not only in the wickedness of the German leadership but in the European balance-of-power system as well. On January 22, 1917, he attacked the international order which had preceded the war as a system of "organized rivalries":

The question upon which the whole future peace and policy of the world depends is this: Is the present war a struggle for a just and secure peace, or only for a new balance of power? . . . There must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace.⁵⁰

What Wilson meant by "community of power" was an entirely new concept that later became known as "collective security" (though William Gladstone in Great Britain had put forward a stillborn variation of it in the course of 1880).⁵¹ Convinced that all the nations of the world had an equal interest in peace and would therefore unite to punish those who disturbed it, Wilson proposed to defend the international order by the moral consensus of the peace-loving:

. . . this age is an age . . . which rejects the standards of national selfishness that once governed the counsels of nations and demands that they shall give way to a new order of things in which the only questions will be: "Is it right?" "Is it just?" "Is it in the interest of mankind?"⁵²

To institutionalize this consensus, Wilson put forward the League of Nations, a quintessentially American institution. Under the auspices of this world organization, power would yield to morality and the force of arms to the dictates of public opinion. Wilson kept emphasizing that, had the public been adequately informed, the war would never have occurred—ignoring the passionate demonstrations of joy and relief

which had greeted the onset of war in *all* capitals, including those of democratic Great Britain and France. If the new theory was to work, in Wilson's view, at least two changes in international governance had to take place: first, the spread of democratic governments throughout the world, and, next, the elaboration of a "new and more wholesome diplomacy" based on "the same high code of honor that we demand of individuals."⁵³

In 1918, Wilson stated as a requirement of peace the hitherto unheard-of and breathtakingly ambitious goal of "the destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world; or, if it cannot be presently destroyed, at the least its reduction to virtual impotence."⁵⁴ A League of Nations so composed and animated by such attitudes would resolve crises without war, Wilson told the Peace Conference on February 14, 1919:

... throughout this instrument [the League Covenant] we are depending primarily and chiefly upon one great force, and that is the moral force of the public opinion of the world—the cleansing and clarifying and compelling influences of publicity... so that those things that are destroyed by the light may be properly destroyed by the overwhelming light of the universal expression of the condemnation of the world.⁵⁵

The preservation of peace would no longer spring from the traditional calculus of power but from worldwide consensus backed up by a policing mechanism. A universal grouping of largely democratic nations would act as the "trustee of peace," and replace the old balance-of-power and alliance systems.

Such exalted sentiments had never before been put forward by any nation, let alone been implemented. Nevertheless, in the hands of American idealism they were turned into the common currency of national thinking on foreign policy. Every American president since Wilson has advanced variations of Wilson's theme. Domestic debates have more often dealt with the failure to fulfill Wilson's ideals (soon so commonplace that they were no longer even identified with him) than with whether they were in fact lending adequate guidance in meeting the occasionally brutal challenges of a turbulent world. For three generations, critics have savaged Wilson's analysis and conclusions; and yet, in all this time, Wilson's principles have remained the bedrock of American foreign-policy thinking.

And yet Wilson's intermingling of power and principle also set the stage for decades of ambivalence as the American conscience tried to reconcile its principles with its necessities. The basic premise of collective

security was that all nations would view every threat to security in the same way *and* be prepared to run the same risks in resisting it. Not only had nothing like it ever actually occurred, nothing like it was destined to occur in the entire history of both the League of Nations and the United Nations. Only when a threat is truly overwhelming and genuinely affects all, or most, societies is such a consensus possible—as it was during the two world wars and, on a regional basis, in the Cold War. But in the vast majority of cases—and in nearly all of the difficult ones—the nations of the world tend to disagree either about the nature of the threat or about the type of sacrifice they are prepared to make to meet it. This was the case from Italy's aggressions against Abyssinia in 1935 to the Bosnian crisis in 1992. And when it has been a matter of achieving positive objectives or remedying perceived injustices, global consensus has proved even more difficult to achieve. Ironically, in the post-Cold War world, which has no overwhelming ideological or military threat and which pays more lip service to democracy than has any previous era, these difficulties have only increased.

Wilsonianism also accentuated another latent split in American thought on international affairs. Did America have any security interests it needed to defend regardless of the methods by which they were challenged? Or should America resist only changes which could fairly be described as illegal? Was it the fact or the method of international transformation that concerned America? Did America reject the principles of geopolitics altogether? Or did they need to be reinterpreted through the filter of American values? And if these should clash, which would prevail?

The implication of Wilsonianism has been that America resisted, above all, the method of change, and that it had no strategic interests worth defending if they were threatened by apparently legal methods. As late as the Gulf War, President Bush insisted that he was not so much defending vital oil supplies as resisting the principle of aggression. And during the Cold War, some of the domestic American debate concerned the question whether America, with all its failings, had a moral right to organize resistance to the Moscow threat.

Theodore Roosevelt would have had no doubt as to the answer to these questions. To assume that nations would perceive threats identically or be prepared to react to them uniformly represented a denial of everything he had ever stood for. Nor could he envision any world organization to which victim and aggressor could comfortably belong at the same time. In November 1918, he wrote in a letter:

I am for such a League provided we don't expect too much from it. . . .
I am not willing to play the part which even Aesop held up to derision

when he wrote of how the wolves and the sheep agreed to disarm, and how the sheep as a guarantee of good faith sent away the watchdogs, and were then forthwith eaten by the wolves.⁵⁶

The following month, he wrote this to Senator Knox of Pennsylvania:

The League of Nations may do a little good, but the more pompous it is and the more it pretends to do, the less it will really accomplish. The talk about it has a grimly humorous suggestion of the talk about the Holy Alliance a hundred years ago, which had as its main purpose the perpetual maintenance of peace. The Czar Alexander by the way, was the President Wilson of this particular movement a century ago.⁵⁷

In Roosevelt's estimation, only mystics, dreamers, and intellectuals held the view that peace was man's natural condition and that it could be maintained by disinterested consensus. To him, peace was inherently fragile and could be preserved only by eternal vigilance, by the arms of the strong, and by alliances among the like-minded.

But Roosevelt lived either a century too late or a century too early. His approach to international affairs died with him in 1919: no significant school of American thought on foreign policy has invoked him since. On the other hand, it is surely the measure of Wilson's intellectual triumph that even Richard Nixon, whose foreign policy in fact embodied many of Roosevelt's precepts, considered himself above all a disciple of Wilson's internationalism, and hung a portrait of the wartime president in the Cabinet Room.

The League of Nations failed to take hold in America because the country was not yet ready for so global a role. Nevertheless, Wilson's intellectual victory proved more seminal than any political triumph could have been. For, whenever America has faced the task of constructing a new world order, it has returned in one way or another to Woodrow Wilson's precepts. At the end of World War II, it helped build the United Nations on the same principles as those of the League, hoping to found peace on a concord of the victors. When this hope died, America waged the Cold War not as a conflict between two superpowers but as a moral struggle for democracy. When communism collapsed, the Wilsonian idea that the road to peace lay in collective security, coupled with the worldwide spread of democratic institutions, was adopted by administrations of both major American political parties.

In Wilsonianism was incarnate the central drama of America on the world stage: America's ideology has, in a sense, been revolutionary while,

domestically, Americans have considered themselves satisfied with the *status quo*. Tending to turn foreign-policy issues into a struggle between good and evil, Americans have generally felt ill at ease with compromise, as they have with partial or inconclusive outcomes. The fact that America has shied away from seeking vast geopolitical transformations has often associated it with defense of the territorial, and sometimes the political, *status quo*. Trusting in the rule of law, it has found it difficult to reconcile its faith in peaceful change with the historical fact that almost all significant changes in history have involved violence and upheaval.

America found that it would have to implement its ideals in a world less blessed than its own and in concert with states possessed of narrower margins of survival, more limited objectives, and far less self-confidence. And yet America has persevered. The postwar world became largely America's creation, so that, in the end, it did come to play the role Wilson had envisioned for it—as a beacon to follow, and a hope to attain.