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# 1

## Intimations of Multipolarity

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The twentieth century has been unique in modern history; for three centuries the structure of international politics remained multipolar, in the twentieth century it has changed three times. Multipolar at the outset, it became bipolar after the Second World War, unipolar with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and as the new millennium dawns it is gradually becoming multipolar once more.

For the first time since Rome, one country dominates world politics, though one must add that even a dominant power does not always get its way. The United States has a gross domestic product one-and-a-half times that of its nearest rival and spends more on its military forces than the next six biggest spenders combined.<sup>2</sup> The numbers give a sense of the disparity in capabilities but are hardly conclusive. Countries less closely matched in productivity have been considered great powers, and the gross imbalance of military spending may not long endure. In fact, the world is unipolar simply because the United States is the only great power left.

In the light of structural theory, unipolarity appears as the least durable of international configurations. This is so for two main reasons. One is that dominant powers take on too many tasks beyond their own borders, thus weakening themselves in the long run. Ted Robert Gurr after examining 336 polities reaches the same conclusion that Robert G. Wesson had reached earlier: 'Imperial decay is . . . primarily a result of the misuse of power which follows inevitably from its concentration.'<sup>3</sup> The other reason for the short duration of unipolarity is that even if a dominant power behaves with moderation, restraint and forbearance, weaker states will worry about its future behaviour. America's founding fathers warned against the perils of power in the absence of checks and balances. Is unbalanced power less of a danger in interna-

tional than in national politics? Throughout the Cold War, what the United States and the Soviet Union did, and how they interacted, were dominant factors in international politics. The two countries, however, constrained each other. Now the United States is alone in the world. As nature abhors a vacuum, so international politics abhors unbalanced power. Faced by unbalanced power, some states try to increase their own strength or they ally with others to bring the international distribution of power into balance. The reactions of other states to the drive for dominance of Charles I of Spain, of Louis XIV and Napoleon I of France, of Wilhelm II and Adolph Hitler of Germany, illustrate the point.

Will the preponderant power of the United States elicit similar reactions? Unbalanced power, whoever wields it, is a potential danger to others. The powerful state may, and the United States does, think of itself as acting for the sake of peace, justice and well-being in the world. These terms, however, are defined to the liking of the powerful, which may conflict with the preferences and interests of others. In international politics, overwhelming power repels and leads others to try to balance against it. With benign intent, the United States has behaved, and until its power is brought into balance will continue to behave, in ways that sometimes frighten others.

For almost half a century, the constancy of the Soviet threat produced a constancy of American policy. Other countries could rely on the United States for protection because protecting them seemed to serve US security interests. Even so, beginning in the 1950s West European countries and, beginning in the 1970s, Japan had increasing doubts about the reliability of the American nuclear deterrent. As Soviet strength increased, West European countries began to wonder whether America could be counted on to use its deterrent on their behalf, thus risking its own cities. When President Carter moved to reduce American troops in Korea, and later when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and strengthened its forces in the Far East, Japan developed similar worries.

With the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the United States no longer faces a major threat to its security. As General Colin Powell said, when he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: 'I'm running out of demons. I'm running out of enemies. I'm down to Castro and Kim Il Sung.'<sup>14</sup> Constancy of threat produces constancy of policy; absence of threat permits policy to become capricious. When few if any vital interests are endangered, a country's policy becomes sporadic and self-willed.

The absence of serious threats to American security gives the United

States wide latitude in making foreign-policy choices. A dominant power acts internationally only when the spirit moves it. One example is enough to show this. When Yugoslavia's collapse was followed by genocidal war in successor states, the United States failed to respond until Senator Robert Dole moved to make Bosnia's peril an issue in the forthcoming presidential election; and it acted not for the sake of its own security but to maintain its leadership position in Europe. American policy was generated not by external security interests but by internal political pressure and national ambition.

Aside from specific threats it may pose, unbalanced power leaves weaker states feeling uneasy and gives them reason to strengthen their positions. The United States has a long history of intervening in weak states, often with the intention of bringing democracy to them. But American behaviour over the past century in Central America provides little evidence of self-restraint in the absence of countervailing power. Contemplating American history and measuring its capabilities, other countries may well wish for ways to fend off our benign ministrations. Concentrated power invites distrust because it is so easily misused. To understand why some states want to bring power into a semblance of balance is easy, but with power so sharply skewed, what country or group of countries has the material capability and the political will to bring the 'unipolar moment' to an end?

The countries of the European Union have been remarkably successful in integrating their national economies. The achievement of a large measure of economic integration without a corresponding political unity is an accomplishment without historical precedent. On questions of foreign and military policy, however, the European Union can act only with the consent of its members, making bold or risky actions impossible. The European Union has all the tools – population, resources, technology and military capabilities – but lacks the organizational ability and the collective will to use them. Policies that must be reached by consensus can be carried out only if they are fairly inconsequential. Its inaction as Yugoslavia sank into chaos and war signalled that the European Union will not act to stop wars even among near neighbours. Western Europe was unable to make its own foreign and military policies when it was an organisation of six or nine states living in fear of the Soviet Union. With less external pressure and more members, it can hardly hope to do so now. Only when the United States decides on a policy, are European countries able to follow. As far ahead as the eye can see, Western Europe will remain an international-political cipher.

The fate of European states continues to depend on decisions made in America. NATO's expansionist policy illustrates how the absence of external restraints on the United States affects its policy. The states of the European Union generally showed no enthusiasm for expanding NATO eastwards, have expressed some doubts and have revealed little willingness to bear a share of the costs entailed. Germany, for obvious reasons, is the only West European country to show enthusiasm. In a statement that would be hard to credit were it not made by a European Union official, Hans van der Broek, commissioner for external relations with countries from Central Europe to Russia, has said that the Union takes no position on NATO's expansionist policy because it has no 'competence' on NATO enlargement.<sup>5</sup>

In the old multipolar world, the core of an alliance consisted of a small number of states of comparable capability. Their contributions to one another's security were of crucial importance because they were of similar size. In the new bipolar world, the word 'alliance' took on a different meaning. One country, the United States or the Soviet Union, provided most of the security for its bloc. The defection of France from NATO and of China from the WTO (Warsaw Treaty Organization) failed even to tilt the central balance. Properly speaking, NATO and the WTO were more treaties of guarantee than military alliances old-style.

I expected NATO to dwindle at the Cold War's end and ultimately to disappear as the four previous grand coalitions had done once their principal adversaries were defeated. In one sense, the expectation has been borne out. NATO is no longer even a treaty of guarantee since one can not answer the question, guarantee against whom?

Glenn Snyder has remarked that 'alliances have no meaning apart from the adversary threat to which they are a response.'<sup>6</sup> How then can one explain NATO's survival and growth? Liberal institutionalists take NATO's seeming vigour as confirmation of the importance of international institutions and as evidence of their resilience. Realists, noticing that as an alliance NATO has lost its major function, see it simply as a means of maintaining and lengthening America's grip on the foreign and military policies of European States. The survival and expansion of NATO tell us much about American power and influence and little about institutions as multilateral entities. The ability of the United States to extend the life of a moribund institution nicely illustrates how international institutions are created and maintained by stronger states to serve their perceived or misperceived interests. Weaker states have trouble fashioning institutions to serve their own ends in their own ways, especially in the security realm. The proposition is borne out by

the defeat of the European Defence Community in 1954 and of the inability of the Western European Union to find a significant role independent of the United States. Realism reveals what liberal institutionalist theory obscures: namely, that international institutions serve primarily national rather than international interests.

The reasons for expanding NATO are weak, most of them the product not of America's foreign-policy interests but of its domestic political impulses. The reasons for opposing expansion are strong.<sup>7</sup> NATO's expansion draws new lines of division in Europe, alienates those left out, and can find no logical stopping place west of Russia. It weakens those Russians most inclined towards liberal democracy and a market economy. It strengthens Russians of opposite inclination. It reduces hope for further major reductions of nuclear weaponry. It pushes Russia towards China instead of drawing Russia towards Europe and America. Late in 1996, expecting a measure of indifference, I asked an official in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs whether India was concerned over our expansive NATO policy. He immediately replied that a policy seemingly designed to bring Russia and China together was of course of great concern to India. Despite much talk about the 'globalization' of international politics, American political leaders to a dismaying extent think of East *or* West rather than of their interaction.

Adept statesmen keep their countries' potential adversaries divided. The American administration seems to delight in bringing them together. Even while American leaders were assuring Russia that NATO's expansion was not motivated by animosity towards Russia, American and NATO estimates of the costs entailed depended in large measure on speculations about when Russia would once again pose a military threat to Europe.<sup>8</sup> Russia and China have a long history of mutual suspicion and enmity, which we are helping them to overcome. As Boris Yeltsin said in Moscow, with President Jiang Zemin at his side: 'Someone is longing for a single-polar world.'<sup>9</sup> Pressure from the west helps to unite them in opposition to this condition. Both parties now speak of a 'constructive partnership aimed at strategic cooperation in the 21st century.'<sup>10</sup> The American rhetoric of globalization turns out to be global-*aloney*: we fail to understand how our policy for one region affects another.

Winners of wars, facing few impediments to the exercise of their wills, have often acted in ways that created future enemies. Thus Germany, by taking Alsace and most of Lorraine from France in 1871, earned its lasting enmity; and the Allies' harsh treatment of Germany after the First World War produced a similar effect. In contrast, Bismarck per-

sueded the Kaiser not to march his armies along the road to Vienna after the great victory at Königgrätz in 1866. In the Treaty of Prague, Prussia took no Austrian territory. Thus Austria, having become Austria-Hungary, was available as an alliance partner for Germany in 1879. Rather than learning from history, the United States is repeating past errors by extending its influence over what used to be the province of the vanquished.

Throughout modern history, international politics centred on Europe; the Second World War ended Europe's dominance. The all-but-inevitable movement from unipolarity to multipolarity is taking place not in Europe but in Asia. Restoration of a world balance of power now depends on the internal development and the external reaction of China and Japan. China will emerge as a great power even without trying so long as it remains politically united and competent. Militarily, China achieved nuclear parity with the United States some time ago;<sup>11</sup> economically, China's growth rate, given its present stage of economic development, can be sustained at 8 or 9 per cent for another decade or more. Such a growth rate doubles a country's economy every nine or eight years.

Unlike China, Japan is obviously reluctant to assume the mantle of a great power. Its reluctance, however, is steadily waning. Economically, Japan's power has grown and spread remarkably. The growth of a country's economic capability to the great-power level places it at the centre of regional and global affairs. It widens the range of a state's interests and increases their importance. The high volume of a country's external business thrusts it ever more deeply into world affairs. In a self-help system, the possession of most but not all of the capabilities of a great power leaves a state vulnerable to others who have the instruments that the lesser state lacks. Even though one may believe that fears of nuclear blackmail are misplaced, one must wonder whether Japan will remain immune to them.

Countries have always competed for wealth and security, and the competition has often led to conflict. Historically, states have been sensitive to changing relations of power among them. Japan is made uneasy now by the steady growth of China's military budget. Its three-million-strong army, undergoing modernization, and the growth of its sea and air-power projection capabilities produce apprehension in all of China's neighbours and add to the sense of instability in a region where issues of sovereignty and territorial disputes abound. The Korean peninsula has more military forces per square kilometre than any other portion of the globe. Taiwan is also an unending source of tension. Disputes exist

between Japan and Russia over the Kurile Islands, and between Japan and China over the Senkaku Islands. Cambodia is a troublesome problem for both Vietnam and China. Half a dozen countries lay claim to all or some of the Spratly Islands, strategically located and supposedly rich in oil. The presence of China's ample nuclear forces, combined with the drawdown of American military forces, can hardly be ignored by Japan, the less so since economic conflicts with the United States cast doubt on the reliability of American military guarantees. Reminders of Japan's dependence and vulnerability multiply in large and small ways. For example, as rumours about North Korea's developing nuclear capabilities gained credence, Japan became acutely aware of its lack of observation satellites. Uncomfortable dependencies and perceived vulnerabilities will lead Japan to acquire greater military capabilities, even though many Japanese may prefer not to.

Given the expectation of conflict, and the necessity of taking care of one's interests, one may wonder how any state with the economic capability of a great power can refrain from arming itself with the weapons that have served so well as the great deterrent. For a country to choose not to become a great power is a structural anomaly. For that reason, the choice is a difficult one to sustain. Sooner or later, usually sooner, the international status of countries has risen in step with their material resources. Countries with great-power economies have become great powers, whether or not reluctantly. Some countries may strive to become great powers; others may wish to avoid doing so. The choice, however, is a constrained one. Because of the extent of their interests, larger units existing in a contentious arena tend to take on system-wide tasks. Profound change in a country's international situation produces radical change in its external behaviour. The United States broke sharply with its centuries-long tradition of isolationism after the Second World War. Japan's behaviour in the past half century reflects the abrupt change in its international standing suffered because of its defeat in war. In the previous half century, after victory over China in 1894–95, Japan pressed for preeminence in Asia, if not beyond. Does Japan once again aspire to a larger role internationally? Its concerted regional activity, its seeking and gaining prominence in such bodies as the IMF and the World Bank, its obvious pride in economic and technological achievements indicate that it does. The behaviour of states responds more to external conditions than to internal habit if external change is profound.

When external conditions press firmly enough, they shape the behaviour of states. Increasingly, Japan will be pressed to enlarge its conven-

tional forces and to add nuclear ones in order to protect its interests. Japanese reasons for hesitating to take the final step into the great-power arena are obvious and need not be rehearsed. Yet, when a country receives less attention and respect and gets its way less often than it feels it should, internal inhibitions about becoming a great power are likely to turn into public criticisms of the government for not taking its proper place in the world. India, Pakistan, China, and perhaps North Korea have nuclear weapons capable of deterring others from threatening their vital interests. How long can Japan live alongside other nuclear states while denying itself similar capabilities? Conflicts and crises are certain to make Japan aware of the disadvantages of being without the military instruments that other powers command. Japanese nuclear inhibitions arising from the Second World War will not last indefinitely; one may expect them to expire as generational memories fade.

Japanese officials have indicated that when the protection of America's extended deterrent is no longer thought to be sufficiently reliable, Japan will equip itself with a nuclear force, whether or not openly. Like a number of other countries, Japan has put itself politically and technologically in a position to do so. Consistently since the mid-1950s, the government has defined all of its Self-Defense Forces as conforming to constitutional requirements. Nuclear weapons purely for defense would be deemed constitutional should Japan decide to make some.<sup>12</sup> As a secret report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs put it in 1969:

For the time being, we will maintain the policy of not possessing nuclear weapons. However, regardless of joining the NPT or not, we will keep the economic and technical potential for the production of nuclear weapons, while seeing to it that Japan will not be interfered with in this regard.<sup>13</sup>

In March of 1988, Prime Minister Takeshita called for a defensive capability matching Japan's economic power.<sup>14</sup> Only a balanced conventional-nuclear military capability would meet this requirement. In June 1994, Prime Minister Tsutumu Hata mentioned in Parliament that Japan had the ability to make nuclear weapons.<sup>15</sup>

Where some see Japan as a 'global civilian power' and believe it likely to remain one, others see a country that has skilfully used the protection America has afforded and adroitly adopted the means of maintaining its security to its regional environment. Prime Minister Yoshida

suggested 'The day [for rearmament] will come naturally when our livelihood recovers. It may sound devious [*zurui*], but let the Americans handle [our security] until then.'<sup>17</sup> Japan has laid a firm foundation for doing so by developing much of its own weaponry instead of relying on cheaper imports. Remaining months, or perhaps moments, away from having a nuclear military capability is well-designed to protect the country's security without unduly alarming its neighbours.

Much that I have said about Japan can also be said of Germany. At least for the time being, however, Germany's environment is more benign than Japan's. The hostility of China, of both Koreas and of Russia combines with inevitable doubts about the extent to which Japan can rely on the United States to protect its security.<sup>18</sup> Whether reluctantly or not, Japan will follow China on the route to becoming a great power.

Adjusting to changes in the distribution of national power has usually proved difficult and has often been accompanied by war. In a multipolar world, the relations of states are more complex and less predictable than they are when bipolarity prevails. With two great powers, balancing is done mainly by internal means. Because one of the foundations of the postwar peace – nuclear weapons – will remain, and one – bipolarity – will disappear, we have to compare the problems of balancing in conventional and nuclear worlds. In a bipolar-conventional world, a state has to estimate its strength only in relation to one other. In a multipolar-conventional world, difficulties multiply because a state has to compare its strength with a number of others and at the same time has to estimate the strength of actual and potential coalitions. Moreover, in a conventional world, no one category of weapons dominates. States have to weigh the effectiveness of present weapons, while wondering about the effects that technological change may bring. To be sure, Georg Simmel remarked, 'the most effective presupposition for preventing struggle, the exact knowledge of the comparative strength of the two parties, is very often only to be obtained by the actual fighting out of the conflict.'<sup>19</sup> In a conventional world, miscalculation is hard to avoid.

In a nuclear world one category of weapons is dominant. Comparing the strategic strength of nations is automatically accomplished when they have second-strike forces. The only way to move beyond second-strike forces is to create a first-strike capability or to put up effective strategic defenses. Since no one will fail to notice another state's performing either of those near-miracles, war through miscalculation is practically ruled out. Since no one has been able to figure out how to use strategic nuclear weapons other than for deterrence, nuclear

weapons eliminate the thorny problems of estimating the present and future strengths of competing states and of trying to anticipate their strategies.

Multipolar systems, though more durable than bipolar ones, are also more war prone. Multipolarity abolishes the stark symmetry and pleasing simplicity of bipolarity, but nuclear weapons restore both of those qualities to a considerable extent. Over a period of fifty years, nuclear weapons have proved to be the world's only reliable means of deterrence. Major wars cannot be fought in their presence because any significant victory by one party risks nuclear retaliation by the other, and no country's leaders can fail to realize this. Nuclear weapons eliminate neither the use of force nor the importance of balancing behaviour. They do limit force at the strategic level to a deterrent role, make estimating the strategic strength of nations a simple task, and make balancing easy to do.

With the end of the Cold War, some people assert that the importance of nuclear deterrence has declined.<sup>20</sup> It has, for the United States. We hardly have anyone left to deter, and anyway our overwhelming conventional superiority makes our nuclear weapons superfluous. The question of the continued importance of nuclear weapons entails further questions that few Americans ask: important to whom, for what?

A country's nuclear weapons deter other countries from using force against it in ways that threaten vital interests much more surely than its conventional weapons can. Against countries that have nuclear weapons, the United States loses much of the advantage of its conventional superiority. Pointing this out, however, rather gives the game away. Nuclear weapons deter with an effectiveness that conventional weapons do not approach. That is the most important reason for wanting to have them. The 1973 war in the Middle East provides one illustration. The scope of Egypt's and Syria's combined attack on Israel was apparently limited by fear of Israel's nuclear deterrent.<sup>21</sup> If Egypt and Syria had believed that their forces could have joined hands by slicing Israel in two before a retaliatory strike could be mounted, they might have been tempted to try. For further illustration, we need look no farther than America's war in Iraq. If the United States had thought that Iraq had a few bombs, it would have had to manage the Iraq-Kuwait crisis differently, say by relying more heavily on an embargo and limiting the use of military force to the liberation of Kuwait.<sup>22</sup> Invasion of Iraq *might* have prompted Iraq to dump a couple of warheads on Haifa and Tel Aviv. The United States would not have wanted to run the risk, and Israel surely would not have complained about America's unwill-

ingness to use force in a headlong attack. A big reason for America's resistance to the spread of nuclear weapons is that if weak countries have some they will cramp her style. Militarily punishing small countries for behaviour we dislike would become much more perilous. Nuclear weapons in the hands of the weak limit what the strong can do to them. That is why the spread of nuclear weapons is so hard to stop, and why some leading American military experts have become abolitionists.

Nuclear forces in the hands of other states depreciate the value of American conventional forces. So long as America's conventional superiority lasts, devaluing nuclear weapons would seem to serve American interests. The possession of nuclear weapons has brought not only security to states individually but also peace among nuclear states collectively. Weapons bringing such benefits are rarely found; states that believe their security endangered will want to keep or to get them.<sup>23</sup>

But what about the rogue states that Americans talk so much about? If such countries as Iraq, Iran and North Korea had nuclear weapons, might they not use them to back their expansive ambitions? Despite North Korea's weakness, some people, Americans especially, worry that North Korea might invade the South, even using nuclear weapons in doing so. How concerned should we be? No one has figured out how to use nuclear weapons except for deterrence. Is a small and weak state likely to be the first to do so? Countries that use nuclear weapons have to fear retaliation. Why would the North now invade the South? It did in 1950 only after prominent American congressmen, military leaders and other officials said that we would not fight in Korea.

One cannot understand the present situation on the Korean peninsula without recalling the conditions surrounding North Korea's invasion of the South in June of 1950. By 1950, the Soviet threat agitated America greatly. In the spring of that year, a National Security Council Paper (number 68) reappraised the threat and called for increased military preparations to meet it. Korea received a great deal of attention in the United Nations and in Washington, and in both the executive and legislative branches the question of what the United States should do if the North invaded the South was debated. A firm consensus formed: intervention in a war in Korea would not be in America's interest. Secretary of State Dean Acheson's speech of 12 June 1950, excluding Korea from America's defense perimeter, subsequently received much of the blame for encouraging North Korea to believe that invasion would not meet American resistance. Acheson's speech was, however, but one of many weighty statements to the same effect. General Douglas

MacArthur made much the same point. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, with Dwight D. Eisenhower as one of its members, unanimously advised the President not to send forces to Korea in the event of war, forcefully arguing that our interests did not require doing so. General George C. Marshall agreed and so did Tom Connally, the influential Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. That the United States almost instantly responded militarily to the invasion could only give North Korea the impression that it had fallen into a well-laid trap.

Ever since the Korean War, the South Korean government has kept its people in fear of another invasion. Yet South Korea has twice the population of the North, outproduces it by a large and ever-widening margin, year after year spends more on its military forces, and has about 37 000 American troops on its soil. North Korea's large army and air force are outmoded, lack the fuel for proper training, and would suffer rapid and disastrous defeat in a war with the South, whether or not supported by American forces. Table 1.1 summarizes the pertinent data.

War on the Korean peninsula would put North Korea at severe risk. Kim Il Sung threatened war, but anyone who thinks that when a dictator threatens war we should believe him is lost wandering around somewhere in a bygone conventional world.<sup>24</sup> The weaker and the more endangered a state is, the less likely it is to engage in reckless behaviour. North Korea's external behaviour has sometimes been ugly, but certainly not reckless. Its regime has shown no inclination to risk suicide.

Senator John McCain, a former naval officer, nevertheless believes that a nuclear-armed North Korea would be able to attack without fear

*Table 1.1* The military balance between North and South Korea

	<b>North Korea</b>	<b>South Korea</b>
GDP	\$20 billion (estimated)	\$473 billion
GDP per capita	\$1000	\$12400
Population	24.6 million	45.9 million
Defense budget	\$2.4 billion	\$15.5 billion
Armed Forces	1 055 000 (active duty) 4 700 000 (reserve)	672 000 (active duty) 4 500 000 (reserve)
Battle tanks	3000	2130
Armoured personnel carriers	2500	2490
Combat aircraft	607	461

*Source:* *The Military Balance 1997/98* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1997), pp. 183–6.

of failure because a South Korean and American counterattack would have to stop at the present border for fear of North Korean nuclear retaliation.<sup>25</sup> America's vast nuclear forces would not deter an attack on the south, yet the dinky force that the North may have would deter the USA! A land-war game played by the American military in 1994 showed another side of American military thinking. The game pitted the United States against a Third World country similar to North Korea. Losing conventionally, it struck our forces with nuclear weapons. For unmentioned (and unimaginable) reasons, our superior military forces had no deterrent effect. Results were said to be devastating. With such possibilities in mind, Air Force General George Lee Butler and his fellow planners called for a new strategy of deterrence, with 'generic targeting' so that the USA would be able to strike wherever 'terrorist states or rogue leaders . . . threaten to use their own nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.'<sup>26</sup> This new strategy will supposedly deter states or terrorists from brandishing or using their weapons. Yet General Butler himself believes, as I do, that Saddam Hussein was deterred from using chemicals and biologicals in the Gulf War.

Former CIA director James Woolsey has said that he 'can think of no example where the introduction of nuclear weapons into a region has enhanced that region's security or benefitted the security interests of the United States.'<sup>27</sup> But surely nuclear weapons helped to maintain stability during the Cold War and to preserve peace throughout the instability that came in its wake. Except for interventions by major powers in conflicts that for them were minor, peace has become the privilege of states having nuclear weapons, while wars have been fought mainly by those who lack them. Weak states cannot help noticing this. That is why states feeling threatened want to have their own nuclear weapons and why states that have them find it so hard to halt their spread.

Pakistan is another recent worry. The worry runs to form. When the weak fear the strong, the weaker party does what it can to maintain its security. When asked why nuclear weapons are so popular in Pakistan, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto answered,

It's our history. A history of three wars with a larger neighbor. India is five times larger than we are. Their military strength is five times larger. In 1971, our country was disintegrated. So the security issue for Pakistan is an issue of survival.<sup>28</sup>

From the other side, Shankar Bajpai, former Indian Ambassador to Pakistan, China and the United States, has said that 'Pakistan's quest for

a nuclear capability stems from its fear of its larger neighbor, removing that fear should open up immense possibilities' – possibilities for a less worried and more relaxed life.<sup>29</sup> And so it has done.

To proliferate means to increase rapidly. Conventional weapons have proliferated while nuclear weapons have spread at a glacial pace from one country to another over the past fifty years. Under these circumstances, wars have been fought not at the centre but at the periphery of international politics. The likelihood of war decreases as deterrent and defensive capabilities increase. Nuclear weapons make wars hard to start. These statements hold for small as for big nuclear powers.

The end of bipolarity, rather than decreasing the utility of nuclear weapons overall, has made them more useful to a larger number of states: first, to Russia whose economic deterioration and military disarray increase its dependence on nuclear weapons; second, to those cast adrift by the demise of their great power protector (for example North Korea); third, to those who became of less interest to their sometime patron because of the disappearance of Soviet regional threats (for example Pakistan); fourth, to those who have further doubts that a distant deterrent will protect them in a world in which threats to American interests are lower and more diffuse (for example Japan).

## Conclusion

Because the end of the Cold War left only one great power standing, the traditional limitations and restraints of international politics apply weakly to it. This, however, is a self-correcting condition. Peace is sometimes linked to the presence of a hegemonic power, sometimes to a balance among powers. To ask which view is right misses the point. It does so for this reason: the response of other countries to one among them seeking or gaining preponderant power is to try to balance against it. Hegemony leads to balance, which is easy to see historically and easy to understand theoretically. That is now happening, but haltingly so because the United States still has benefits to offer and many other countries have become accustomed to their easy lives with the United States bearing many of their burdens.

When Americans speak of preserving the balance in East Asia through our military presence,<sup>30</sup> Chinese understandably take this to mean that we intend to maintain the strategic hegemony we now enjoy in the *absence* of a balance of power. When China makes steady but quite modest efforts to improve the quality of its inferior forces, we see a future threat to our and others' interests.<sup>31</sup> Whatever worries the United

States has and whatever threats it feels, Japan has them earlier and feels them more severely. Japan has gradually reacted to them. China then worries as Japan improves its airlift and sealift capabilities and as the United States raises its support level for forces in Korea.<sup>32</sup> The actions and reactions of China, Japan and Korea, with or without American participation, are creating a new balance of power in East Asia, which is becoming part of the new balance of power in the world.

Historically, encounters of East and West have often ended in tragedy. Yet, as we know from happy experience, nuclear weapons moderate the behaviour of their possessors and render them cautious whenever crises threaten to go out of control. Fortunately, the changing relations of East to West, and the changing relations of countries within the East and the West, are taking place in a nuclear context. The tensions and conflicts that intensify when profound changes in world politics take place will continue to mar the relations of nations while nuclear weapons keep the peace among those who enjoy their protection.

America's policy of containing China by keeping 100 000 troops in East Asia and by providing security guarantees to Japan and South Korea is intended to keep a new balance of power from forming in Asia. By continuing to keep 100 000 troops in Western Europe, where no military threat is in sight, and by extending NATO eastwards, America pursues the same goal in Europe. The American aspiration to freeze historical development by working to keep the world unipolar is doomed. In the not very long run, the task will exceed America's economic, military and political resources; and the very effort to maintain a hegemonic position is the surest way to undermine it. The effort to maintain dominance stimulates some countries to work to overcome it. As theory shows and history confirms, that is how balances of power are made. Charles Kegley has sensibly remarked that if a multipolar system emerges from the present unipolar one, realism will be vindicated.<sup>33</sup> Seldom in international politics do signs of vindication appear so quickly. Multipolarity is developing before our eyes. Moreover, it is emerging in accordance with the balancing imperative.

## Notes

1. I want to thank Karen Adams, Robert Rauchhaus and Mark Sheetz for their help with, and criticisms of, this chapter.
2. Based on data from *The Military Balance, 1997/1998* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1997), pp. 293–7.

3. Quoted by Ted Robert Gurr, 'Persistence and Change in Political Systems, 1800–1971', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 68(4) (December 1974), p. 1504. cf. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987).
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5. *Europe: Magazine of the European Union*, June 1997, p. 16.
6. Glenn H. Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 192.
7. See Michael Brown, 'The Flawed Logic of Expansion', *Survival*, vol. 37(1) (Spring 1995), pp. 34–52. Michael Mandelbaum, *The Dawn of Peace in Europe* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996). Phillip Zelikow, 'The Masque of Institutions', *Survival*, vol. 38(1) (Spring 1996).
8. Steven Erlanger, 'A War of Numbers emerges over Cost of Enlarging NATO', *New York Times*, 13 October 1997, p. A1.
9. Michael R. Gordon, 'Russia–China Theme: Contain the West', *New York Times*, 24 April 1997, p. A3.
10. 'Yeltsin in China to Put an End to Border Issue', *New York Times*, 10 November 1997, p. A8.
11. Nuclear parity is reached when countries have second-strike forces. It does not require quantitative or qualitative equality of forces. See K. Waltz, 'Nuclear Myths and Political Realities', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 84(3) (September 1990).
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15. David E. Sanger, 'In Face-Saving Reverse, Japan Disavows any Nuclear-Arms Expertise', *New York Times*, 22 June 1994, p. 10.
16. Matthew L. Wald, 'U.S., Criticized for Helping Japan over Plutonium, will Stop', *New York Times*, 9 September 1994, p. A12.
17. Kenneth B. Pyle, *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1992), p. 26.
18. Andrew Hanami, for example, points out that Japan wonders whether the United States would help defend Hokkaido. 'Japan and the Military Balance of Power in Northeast Asia', *Journal of East Asian Affairs*, vol. 7(2) (Summer/Fall 1994), p. 364.
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20. John Gerard Ruggie, 'Peace in our Time? Causality, Social Facts, and Narrative Knowing', *Proceedings*, American Society of International Law, 1995, p. 94. cf. Bruce M. Russett, 'The Real Decline in Nuclear Hegemony',

- in Ernst-Otto Czempiel and James N. Rosenau (eds), *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges: Approaches to World Politics in the 1990s* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989), pp. 181–4.
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  22. See Barry R. Posen, 'U.S. Security in a Nuclear-Armed World – Or: What if Iraq had had Nuclear Weapons?' *Security Studies*, vol. 6(3) (Spring 1997), pp. 1–31.
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  25. John McCain, letter, *New York Times*, 28 March 1994, p. A10.
  26. Eric Schmitt, 'U.S. is Redefining Nuclear Deterrence, Terrorist Nations Targeted', *International Herald Tribune*, 26 February 1993.
  27. James Woolsey, 'Proliferation Threats of the 1990s', Hearing before the Committee on Governmental Affairs, US Senate, 103rd Congress, 1st sess., 24 February 1993 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1993), p. 134.
  28. Claudia Dreifus, 'Benazir Bhutto', *New York Times Magazine*, 15 May 1994, p. 39.
  29. Shankar Bajpai, 'Nuclear Exchange', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 24 June 1993, p. 24.
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  32. Michael J. Green and Benjamin L. Self, 'Japan's Changing China Policy: From Commercial Liberalism to Reluctant Realism', *Survival*, vol. 38(2) (Summer 1996), p. 43.
  33. Charles W. Kegley, Jr., 'The Neoidealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths and the New International Realities', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 37 (June 1993), p. 139.

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*Note:* 'n.' after a page reference indicates the number of a note on that page.

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